

EXERCISE: NECESSARY FOR YOUR PUP'S BODY AND MIND!



**Aurora
Animal
Shelter**

One favorite phrase we have here at the shelter is that 'a tired dog is a good dog'. The importance for physical and mental stimulation for your dog cannot be overstated. Each dog will have their own individual needs for exercise and mental stimulation, but it is something every dog owner should plan on incorporating into their daily routine.

New adopters should research the breed of dog they are adopting to ensure that they are adequately meeting that animal's needs. A dog lacking physical and mental exercise is much more likely to display negative behaviors. You can imagine how quickly a dog who is bored or pent up might become mischievous, leading to issues such as destroying items and escaping. Providing plenty of physical and mental exercise will enrich your dog's life to make them happier and healthier!



PHYSICAL EXERCISE

Consistent exercise is crucial to your dog's physical and mental well being. When adopting, be sure that you are able to accommodate a dog's physical needs into your everyday life. Many dogs will have MUCH more energy than the average person does, especially if the pup sleeps while the owner works all day. It may be necessary for some dogs to have extended physical exercise every day, while others may be fully content skipping a walk some days of the week.

NOTE: *While living somewhere with a yard can be a wonderful addition to a dog's life, it cannot be utilized as their main or only source of exercise. A dog will quickly grow bored without new experiences, exploration and varied exercise opportunities.*

Different dogs will have different preferences and needs to their exercise. Some great options include:

- **Walking, running, or biking with your dog** - These can be great ways to get their body moving! Some breeds were created to run and run, so they need this release of movement.
- **Play games such as fetch, chase or tug** - For some dogs, these games may be the pinnacle of fun. Be sure to work breaks into play time so your dog does not get too worked up - sometimes they forget to even drink water!
- **Hiking** - If you are a Colorado resident, then you know we are spoiled with hiking options, tons of which are leashed pet friendly! Hiking gets them moving and gives them the option to experience new places.
- **Swimming** - While not every dog loves the water, for those that do swimming is a fantastic way to tucker out your pup! Be sure to check with your local lake or watering hole that it is dog and swimming friendly!
- **Day care** - While this can be great for some pups, it is definitely NOT the right option for every dog or every owner. It can be stressful and overwhelming for some pets, and costly for some owners.
- **Dog parks** - Similar to day care, dog parks are NOT right for every dog. New adopters should avoid the dog park until they have a deep understand of how their dog interacts with others. It is also extremely imperative to have a reliable recall of their dog in exciting situations, such as this.
- **Dog sports** - These are great options for all sorts of dogs! There are a wide array of sports (agility, nose work, flyball, barn hunt, etc.)



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continued

MENTAL EXERCISE

Keeping your dog's brain active and sharp is another critical element of providing them with the enrichment they need. Some great ways to get that brain active are listed below:

- **Training** – Don't believe the old adage that you can't teach a dog new tricks! No matter the age of the dog you take home, training will be an integral part to their adjustment into your family. Incorporating training into their weekly schedule will help to keep their skills sharp and mind busy.
 - Training includes practices manners such as sit, down, heel, etc. Teaching tricks to your dog is another fun way to get their brain moving! These may not have the same practicality of the manners, but can be a great way to keep their mind stimulated.
 - **Exploration time** – There is an important distinction between walk time and exploration time. Many dog owners want their dog to be calmly by their side as they are being walked, which is a valid expectation of your pup. However, being able to explore new smells, scents and experiences is a vital component to physical exercise. Incorporating time when they are allowed to explore is important stimulation for them. Talk to your dog's trainer about working with long line leads to give your dog more room to roam!
- **New Places** – Being taken to new places can be great brain work for your dog. This may be as simple as a new walking route around the neighborhood, a trip to a local hardware store that allows dogs, or exploring new parks. Always be aware of your dogs comfort threshold, as you want to be sure you are not overwhelming them.
- **Variety of stimuli** – Variety is the spice of life! If every day at 9 am your dog gets a jerky chew, that no longer is enrichment but routine. However, if one day they get a chew and the next day you blow some pet safe bubbles for them, now that is unexpected and fun!

- **Use that nose!** – Scent is a major way that dogs get to know their world – make them use it! Simple games such as "Find It" can be easy for you but great for the pups! Details of "Find It" game can be found on our Enrichment at Home handout.
- **Puzzle toys** – There are TONS of types of puzzle toys on the market. Depending on your dog's preference, there may be some that work better for them. Dogs prone to chewing may prefer a Kong, while others may prefer a treat ball. Be sure to ask your local pet store what puzzle toy options may best suit your dog. Ideas for DIY at home puzzle toys can be found on our Enrichment at Home handout.
- **Chews** – Chewing is a natural behavior for any dogs. You will always want to be sure your dog has options to chew on! Talk to your vet about what are the best chew options for your dog.

While this information may seem overwhelming, it is just to illustrate how many options there are when it comes to meeting your dog's physical and mental needs through enrichment! Check out our Enrichment at Home handout for specific ideas that utilize household items!

