

## Winter Exercise



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The weather outside is frightful. Snow and ice are everywhere, at least in most parts of the country, and it feels like it's 13 below zero. Nobody wants to go outside for anything, and a trip to the mailbox is an Alaskan adventure. But the dog is giving you that look again: if you don't take him outside, shredding the cushions might become his new favorite activity.

Some people think that dogs don't need as much exercise in the winter as they do during other parts of the year. This is not the case. They need the same amount

of exercise. If anything, the winter months are a time when exercise is most crucial. If you are stuck inside, use the time indoors to think of ways to get exercise and stimulation, without either one of you freezing your tail off.

The weather may be cold and uninviting, but that doesn't mean outdoor time can't happen at all. It just means it can't be for as long, and there are some extra precautions to consider.

### Outdoor Play:

If you're going to engage in outdoor play in winter weather here are some things to keep in mind:

- Don't walk on the sidewalks or streets that have recently been treated with sand or salt. These can cause abrasions to the dog's foot pads, which can lead to more serious foot problems
- Keep your dog warm. He may have fur, but that doesn't mean he won't catch hypothermia. Heating up too fast during exercise, and cooling down may bring on symptoms. Avoid over exercising.
- Avoid long exposure. This can cause the dog to become hypothermic as well. Spending too much time in the wet snow and ice can also cause frostbite in your dog's feet. So bundle Fido up with a sweater and boots before venturing out!
- Watch your dog during his play out in the snow. The new substance on the ground may have covered up many of his familiar smells, causing disorientation. This effect is very unlikely to have any bad effects (if it occurs at all) since, like any good pack leader, you'll be with him. But it's worth the consideration.
- Older dogs. The senior members of your house may have joint problems, so be sure the cold won't aggravate those conditions, before taking older dogs outside.

### Indoor Play:

For ease, for time's sake, for health and safety, or for whatever the reason—if you've chosen indoor play for your dog—here are a few ideas to get the ball rolling. (Remember: the activity should be just as stimulating for his mind as it is his body).

- Do some training. Obedience or trick training can be a good way to keep an intelligent and energetic dog happy while being stuck inside. His brain will be simulated, and you'll have some new entertainment for guests.

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