

SUN LIFE

DID YOU KNOW: Heat stroke in dogs

Keep an eye on your dog on very hot days. Initial symptoms of heat stroke include restlessness, excessive or fluctuating panting, excessive drooling, foaming at the mouth, dry tacky gums and laboured breathing.



Fit with Fido

Dogs are 'the workout buddy that will never judge you,' says trainer

LISA EVANS
Special to QMI Agency

If you lack motivation to exercise and need a dedicated workout partner to encourage you, get a dog.

Michael Hutchinson has lost 35 pounds working out alongside his Border Collie mix, Noah. Hutchinson and his four-legged pal are participants in Fetching, a Toronto-area workout program that encourages dog owners to improve their physical fitness while strengthening the emo-

tional bond with their canine partners.

"We both develop from this," says Hutchinson, referring to his weight loss and Noah's improved hip strength and concentration. "He's calmer and he's happier."

Dogs jog alongside their human companions and sit or lay down while owners do strength-training exercises such as squats, lunges, push-ups and planks. "If you work your dog, you'll have a very calm, relaxed dog," says Janet Ward, whose

Standard Poodle, Penny, accompanies her to Fetching classes. Giving your dog a regular energy release can not only curb destructive behaviour, but fight canine obesity and make for a healthier pooch.

Cat Repetowski, who runs 6Llegs to Fitness classes in Surrey, B.C., says working out together is a great strategy for busy dog owners. "A lot of people want to go to the gym and then they get home and have to walk the dog," she says.

Intimidated by gyms full of six packs and bulging biceps, doggie-and-me fitness classes attract participants who want a supportive workout environment. "Your dog is) the workout buddy that will never judge you," says Zaz Wright, Fetching's personal trainer.

If you can't attend a class, take advantage of hiking trails and walking paths in your area. Running and playing fetch are great full-body workouts for both humans and dogs.

HELP PETS BEAT THE HEAT

Summer is the perfect time to enjoy the great outdoors, but extreme heat can be dangerous to furry pals. "Pets are just as sensitive to the heat and sun as humans," says John DiAntonio, president of the National Association of Professional Pet Sitters.

Here's how to keep pets safe and cool under the summer sun:

- Provide shade and clean water, especially after exercise.
- Avoid walking on concrete or asphalt during extreme heat as the hot ground can burn sensitive paw pads. Early mornings and cool evenings are the best times to go for a walk.
- When giving your pets a trim, leave enough fur to protect their skin from harmful rays.
- Never leave your pets in a parked car, even for just a few minutes.
- Watch for signs of overheating — heavy panting, difficulty breathing, drooling and weakness — and move out of the heat immediately.



LISA EVANS PHOTOS
Christina Nolan enjoys the physical and mental benefits of working out with her dog Jessie. "Her obedience and my endurance and stamina and strength have gotten better," says Nolan



Penny keeps a close eye on her owner, Janet Ward, while she does her reps in Norwood Park in Toronto.



Jessie isn't lying down on the job. The pooch is encouraging owner Christina Nolan to improve her fitness.