



MEDIA CONTACT

Deborah Smith-Roges
(310) 305-2989 or (310) 420-8322
smithdpr@earthlink.net

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RUNNING WITH YOUR DOG

**Breeder's Choice Active Care Dishes Up Tips
to Developing a Great Exercise Partnership with Your Dog**

IRWINDALE, CA (February 17, 2005) – Tired of paying personal trainers and trying to commit reluctant friends, neighbors and spouses into a regular running routine? Why not turn to the family dog? Exercising with your dog may be one of the best things you can do for your own, and your four-legged friend's health. Dogs love to go for a walk and whether you're starting a new exercise routine or training for a marathon, your dog could be the most loyal training partner you'll find. Breeder's Choice Pet Foods, makers of Active Care, the only food and treat available with FDA approved, therapeutic-levels of joint supplements, has outlined some starting points for fostering a positive and healthy training relationship between you and your dog.

1. **DOGGIE PHYSICAL** – Before you head out the door to run, take your dog for a full veterinarian check-up to find out if there are any underlying conditions such as heart disease, hip and joint issues, etc. Unlike their human counterparts, dogs will run through the pain to please their owner, so be sure to talk to your vet about how often and for what duration your dog should be exercising based on factors including age, weight and breed composition. Finally, check to make certain your dog is up to date on all vaccinations and they are wearing proper identification.
2. **PROPER GEAR** – The right gear will make the running experience more rewarding and safer for both you and your dog. Cars are the biggest and most avoidable risk to your dog while running together, so take the advice of trainers and veterinarians alike: always keep your dog on a leash. Today, there are several leash options on the market, from a standard 6-foot, to retractables as well as hands-free leashes. Think about buying a special "running time leash" that your dog will learn to associate with running vs. walking. While matching attire is not a must, if you run at dusk or late at night think about suiting up your pooch in a reflective or flashing collar. Don't forget your doggie fanny pack. Dogs can dehydrate more easily than a human, so plenty of water is a must have item, along with poop bags, pet foot balm or spray, pepper spray for aggressive dogs and simple first aid supplies.
3. **BRUSH UP ON OBEDIENCE.** If you don't regularly walk your dog, think about brushing up on basic obedience skills before starting to run together. Not only will it be easier to run together, but you will lower your risks of tangling up with other runners and dogs you meet along the way. A pulling dog does nothing for your training session, and may inhibit your dog's breathing, or worse, cause damage to its trachea. Starting a running program at an early age is helpful, but be careful as puppies need 6 months to two years, depending on the breed, for their skeletal frame to mature, and running too early with a puppy may create long-term health problems. No matter the age of your dog, always start slowly with proper training and with time, your dog will pick up great running techniques.

4. **PROPER DIET AND NUTRITION.** A complete and balanced diet will allow your dog to keep its energy up during a run. Next to dehydration, one of the more vulnerable parts of a dog's body is their joints. Invest in a nutrition program that feeds their body high quality essential proteins, carbohydrates and supplements to prevent injuries from happening. Just as we take supplements for joints it is a good idea to incorporate a dog food and/or supplements that targets joint maintenance such as veterinarian-approved Active Care dog food and chews – which can improve and prevent joint injuries. Active Care is the only dog food on the market offering therapeutic levels of absorbable glucosamine chondroitin sulfate and shown in veterinary testing to improve and maintain joint health. Timing is also very important in feeding. Be sure not to feed your dog right before or immediately following a workout as it may cause intestinal stress. And, always make sure that your dog has access to clean, fresh water. While running keep water on hand and offer it to your dog every 20 minutes.
5. **DEVELOP A REALISTIC EXERCISE PROGRAM.** We humans work with physicians, trainers, and read countless help books to design an effective training solution, so why not do the same for your new running companion. First, map out a routine that is the right distance, terrain and allows your dog to keep up the pace based on their level of fitness and age. Most vets recommend running no more than every other day with your dog to allow for adequate recovery. Healthy conditioned dogs can easily work up to several miles over time. Consider starting with a walking routine that can graduate into jogging and running programs as they build endurance. Also remember, dogs don't wear high-tech running shoes, and their joints and foot pads will suffer on pavement (especially hot pavement) and rocky trails, so try to find running surfaces that are soft and firm, such as grass or soil. Finally, if possible route a map that avoids heavy traffic congestion.
6. **WARM-UP ESSENTIALS.** Spending a few minutes before each run to warm up your dog's muscles can go a long way in keeping your four-legged friend healthy. Some people actually help their dogs stretch their muscles by pulling their legs back and forth, and holding the stretch. Another great way to get in a little warm up activity is to incorporate a short play session of jumping and walking for the first few yards of your route. This also is a good time to teach your dog to take care of business before the run starts, which in time, can let you keep a consistent pace during the run and prevent "smelling stops."
7. **SAFELY RUNNING TOGETHER.** Set a responsible pace, as your dog will be very excited to get out and may run until he drops of exhaustion. Start slowly, walking at first if necessary and increasing the intensity over several weeks. If you must run around high traffic areas, run against traffic with your dog on your left side. Always run with your dog under control and watch for approaching dogs and other joggers to prevent unwanted encounters.
8. **MONITOR FATIGUE.** Most of us have a pretty good understanding of our own endurance and can recognize early signs of unwanted pain. While some dogs will tell you when they have had enough, others will not, therefore, it is your responsibility to keep an eye on your dog for any signs of discomfort, not only during the run, but in the hours and days following. During your run, frequently monitor your pooch for signs such as heavy panting or salivating, taking short and awkward strides, generally hanging back or any reluctance to move on after a short break. These signs may indicate that your dog is overheating or needs some recovery time. Learn to recognize the symptoms and stop exercising to help your dog cool down using water and shade. Dog foot pad injury is the most likely and most common injury suffered by running dogs, so watch for any signs of limping or mild lameness, and monitor the health of their pads for redness, inflammation or nicks, as well as soreness around the toenails during and after exercising.

9. **COOL-DOWN.** Cool down with a short walk at the end of your jog. This is the time to keep a close eye on your dog for over-tiredness or stiffness. Make sure you have water available during the cool down walk, but offer it to your dog in small amounts. Once you've completed your cool down, don't rush into a meal or allow your dog to drink non-stop, rather, monitor their access to water and feed at least 30-minutes after exercising to avoid an upset stomach.
10. **LOVE AND AFFECTION.** After spending some time with your new running mate, you'll soon realize that their dedication is like no human could ever offer. Take the time to treat your favorite pooch to some post work-out pampering. Dog massages are a great way to work out any soreness in their muscles, as well as a good bath or brush. If you run on trails or shrubby-filled areas don't forget to inspect your dog for any imbedded foxtails and ticks.

Exercising together is a great way to give you and your dog more energy while maintaining a healthy weight and keeping muscles and joints flexible, ultimately helping both of you live longer and feel better. If you start off slow, and let a dog adapt to the exercise routine, you and your four-legged friend can become the ultimate running partners.

Additional consumer information about dog joint therapy and owning a healthy dog can be found at www.GoActiveDog.com.

About Breeder's Choice. Third-generation, family-owned and operated Breeder's Choice has been dedicated to caring for pets for more than 50 years. The Irwindale, Calif.-based company has been an industry innovator in new product development since its early days of providing high quality, diet-specific foods to breeders and zoos, and is regarded by the industry as one of the purest, premium makers of natural pet foods, biscuits and grooming aids for dogs and cats. Although many of its products were developed for specific pet health concerns, all are intended to be used as ongoing preventative care in adding longevity to a pet's life. Additional information can be found at www.breeders-choice.com.

Running Tips Provided by Dr. Craig Dunn, DVM, U.C. Davis Graduate

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