

Winter Canine Safety

- Don't leave your dog outside in the cold for long periods of time. Wind chill makes days colder than temperature readings so be attentive to your dog's body temperature & limit time outdoors.
- Adequate shelter is a necessity. Keep your dog warm, dry & away from drafts. Tiles & uncarpeted areas may become extremely cold, so place blankets & pads on floors in these areas.
- Be extra careful when walking or playing with your dog near frozen lakes, rivers or ponds. Your dog could slip or jump in & be seriously injured.
- Groom your dog regularly. Your dog needs a well-groomed coat to keep properly insulated. Short or coarse haired dogs may get extra cold, so consider a sweater or coat. Long-haired dogs should have excess hair around the toes & foot pads trimmed to ease snow removal & cleaning. If you do the trimming, take care not to cut the pads or other delicate area of the foot.
- Feed your dog additional calories if it spends a lot of time outdoors or is a working animal. It takes more energy in the winter to keep body temperature regulated, so additional calories are vital.
- Towel or blow-dry your dog if it gets wet from rain or snow. It is important to dry & clean paws, too. This helps avoid tiny cuts & cracked pads & a little petroleum jelly may soften the pads & prevent further cracking.
- Don't leave your dog alone in a car. If the car engine is left on, the carbon monoxide can endanger your dog's life. If the engine is off, the temperature in the car will get too cold.

Winter Canine Health Tips

Dogs cannot talk to us when they are sick. As a responsible dog owner, it is important to pay special attention to your dog's well-being during the winter season. Remember the following health concerns:

- Antifreeze, which often collects on driveways & roadways, is highly poisonous. Although it smells & tastes good to your dog, it can be lethal.
- Rock salt, used to melt ice on sidewalks, may irritate footpads. Be sure to rinse & dry your dog's feet after a walk.
- Provide plenty of fresh water. Your dog is just as likely to get dehydrated in the winter as in the summer. Snow is not a satisfactory substitute for water.
- Frostbite is your dog's winter hazard. To prevent frostbite on its ears, tail & feet, don't leave your dog outdoors for too long.
- Be very careful of supplemental heat sources. Fireplaces & portable heaters can severely burn your dog. Make sure all fireplaces have screens, & keep portable heaters out of reach.
- Like people, dogs seem to be more susceptible to illness in the winter. Take your dog to a veterinarian if you see any suspicious symptoms.



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Winter Canine Exercise



Don't you just hate it when bad weather spoils your day? Rainy days, snowstorms or extremes in temperature can ruin your plans to go outside with your dog & play fetch, run in the park or just spend time together

outdoors. To make matters worse, your dog can become restless or bored & begin to act out for attention. Fortunately, there are some indoor activities that can strengthen the bond between you & your dog, stimulate your dog's mind & sometimes even provide some light exercise. It might take some creativity, but the end result will make it worth your time.

Lack of exercise can result in behavior problems. The best exercise for your dog includes mental as well as physical activity & teaching your dog something as simple as a new trick will challenge his mind as well as his body. Start with easy commands, such as lie down, sit, & beg, then progress to more complicated tricks. Remember to keep training sessions short-- no longer than ten minutes-- but have them as often as necessary.

Teaching your dog new tricks helps the two of you form a closer relationship as you observe your dog's learning process. Be positive & patient when teaching your dog anything new.

Winter Canine Games

FETCH: Playing fetch with a ball or a toy is a great indoor activity. If you have stairs, one of the best ways to exercise your dog is to stand at the top & toss the ball down the stairs. Your dog runs to the bottom of the stairs, fetches the ball & runs back up the stairs to give it to you. This is an indoor activity that will tire out even the healthiest of dogs. Games of fetch with a stuffed toy are ideal for most sitting rooms.

HIDE & SEEK: Dogs love this. You leave the dog in one room while you hide in another then call the dog when you're well hidden. Some dogs can be fooled for quite a while & get plenty of exercise racing round hunting for you. It's a bit noisy but great fun.

TUG OF WAR: Tug of war is a great indoor activity because you can play tug games just about anywhere in the house because it does not require a lot of space. Playing tug games with your dog can be a quite rewarding experience. It is mentally & physically stimulating for your dog, & pretty good exercise for you, too. Have fun & be safe! Choose a dog toy that is designed for tugging. The best tug toys are durable & flexible such as a sturdy dog toy, rope, or jute typically made out of rubber or a fibrous material with a comfortable handle that keeps your hand away from the dog's mouth.



Before you begin playing tug of war with your dog, you should teach a release command, like drop it. This will help you stop the game if necessary. It is okay to let your dog win, this builds their confidence & rewards them. However, if the dog misbehaves or begins playing too rough, **you** should be the one who ends up with the toy.

Winter Canine Tricks

BOW/CURTSEY: This is a great stretching exercise for dogs. Put your dog in a stand/stay while standing in front of the dog with reward (food treat) in hand. Move both hands in towards dogs front paws (above paws) while saying "bow". As dog extends head down for treat in a bow position, reward with a treat.

CRAWL: Teaching your dog to crawl will also develop his balance and abdominal muscles. Put your dog in down/stay. Hold a treat in right hand with left hand on dog's withers (farther back on large dogs). Move hand with treat up and down (short movements) while saying crawl. As dog moves forward, hold him/her down with hand on back. Move treat hand away from dog so dog has to follow to get treat. Reward initially after any movement and then require longer distances. If dog has trouble crawling, this can be done under someone's legs or under a solid chair or low table.

BEG: Teaching your dog to beg will develop his balance and abdominal muscles. Have your dog sit, facing you. Hold his favorite treat just above his head and tell him, "Say please." Your dog will probably lift his front feet off the ground to reach the treat. As soon as the feet are lifted, even a little bit, give him the treat.

