**Exercising your puppy**

**Do you know that too much exercise can be bad for your puppy? Motivating a puppy to exercise is not usually a problem, but it’s important to keep your puppy healthy by exercising him correctly.**

**Why is exercise important?**

·                                 It strengthens respiratory and circulatory systems

·                                 It helps get oxygen to tissue cells

·                                 It wards off obesity

·                                 It keeps muscles toned and joints flexible

·                                 It releases energy, relieves boredom, and keeps mind active

·                                 It aids in digestion

·                                 It improves sleep

**Beware of over-exercise**

Don't make the mistake of over-exercising your puppy. Until 18 months of age, dogs are very susceptible to bone problems and injuries and their joints are very tender. Why? Puppies’ bodies develop much faster than their bones. The growing weight that results as their body develops combined with the stress of over-exercising can cause bone damage. Overweight puppies, and pups of very large breeds with heavy bones and bodies, are particularly susceptible to joint disorders and can develop health problems if they are over-exercised.

Young puppies (less than 6 months) tire quickly and should be allowed to exercise at their own pace. Older puppies can start on a moderate exercise program. Keep in mind that puppies may throw up if they are coaxed into exercising after eating.

**Planning an exercise program**

When planning an exercise program for your puppy try to tailor it to his breed. For example, small dogs with short legs require less walking distance than larger breeds. Also keep in mind that some breeds with short noses, such as Bulldogs, Boxers and Pekingese, may experience breathing difficulties while exercising and as a result may need a program of shorter walks more often.

Start the exercise program slowly, and gradually build up the stamina of your dog. This is especially important for puppies. After walks be sure to provide shade and cool water on hot days, and warm, draft free housing in winter.

Puppies like routines. Your exercise program should be tailored to your schedule and you should try to stick to it. If the weather is bad, make the walk short but try not to skip it. Your puppy will miss the ritual.

A half-hour walk twice a day should be sufficient for most puppies. Never push your puppy beyond his capabilities. Puppies are usually most active in the morning and evening, so it’s best to exercise them at those times.

Note: Before starting an exercise program take your dog for a veterinary checkup.

**Jogging with your puppy**

Puppies are too young to be your jogging partner. To avoid injuring your dog he should be more than 18 months old before becoming your jogging companion.

**Outdoor break**

Changing your puppy’s surroundings is critical to good health – both mental and physical. If he has been inside for most of the day an outdoor walk or outdoor play stimulates his senses.

Remember, your puppy is easily influenced by your moods. Make exercise fun and your puppy will look forward to it all day.

Go to [www.pedigree.com](http://www.pedigree.com/) for lots of great info. on puppies/dogs.