



 **Petsercise**  
Supported by **MARS**  
petcare  
UK

# what is the Pet Health Council?

The Pet Health Council aims to promote the health and welfare of pet animals in the interests of both pets and people. The Pet Health Council comprises a panel of expert veterinary and medical professionals and provides independent advice and information to the general public, healthcare and veterinary professionals.

## Associated Organisations

- Association of Pet Behaviour Counsellors
- Association of Chartered Physiotherapists in Animal Therapy
- British Small Animal Veterinary Association
- British Veterinary Association
- National Office of Animal Health
- National Pharmacy Association
- Pet Food Manufacturers Association
- Royal College of Nursing
- Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain
- Society for Companion Animal Studies

For more information, please contact the PHC:

T: 020 7255 1100 E: [phc@uk.grayling.com](mailto:phc@uk.grayling.com)

W: [www.pethealthcouncil.co.uk](http://www.pethealthcouncil.co.uk)



## You know it's good for you!

Young, middle-aged and senior dogs all have different levels of fitness, activity and desire. Different breeds and sizes of dogs vary greatly in their exercise needs and ability. Starting out slow and for short time periods is best, then you will learn what your dog is capable of and build on that.

**BE CAUTIOUS OF EXERCISING YOUR DOG ON HARD SURFACES AND IT IS ALSO IMPORTANT TO TAKE THE WEATHER INTO ACCOUNT.**

Also be aware of your own abilities, taking care to warm up and to supervise young children.

These exercises are designed for fit and healthy dogs!  
 If in doubt seek advice from a veterinary surgeon.



has been developed by fitness instructor Nicki Waterman, and the members of the Pet Health Council. Veterinary advice was provided by Alex German and Shelley Holden of the University of Liverpool.

© Petsercise 2006

## Doggy Essentials

If you are at all unsure about your dogs fitness or mobility, please seek veterinary advice before taking part in any of the activities on the following pages.

Make sure any sites where you do these activities are dog-friendly - that dogs are allowed to run off the lead, and that it is safe for them.

Always carry a poop scoop with you, don't exercise immediately after feeding.

Take fresh-water and a bowl with you if exercising strenuously or for longer than 30 minutes.

Follow the countryside codes.

Keep dogs and equipment away from busy roads and traffic.



paw o'meter

As when starting any human exercise schedule, one must consider the age, breed, and general fitness level of your dog. We have tried to rate the exercises in accordance with their difficulty - 1 doggy paw for easy to 4 doggy paws for advanced.

Check out our paw o'meter at the bottom of every page!

football	4
bat & ball	5
walking / hiking	6
jogging	8
inline skating	9
cycling	10
frisbee	11
get jumping & fetch	12
circuit / agility	14
volleyball	16
swimming	16

# contents



# football

**YOU TONE UP, GET FITTER AND MEET NEW FRIENDS. YOU'LL ALSO DEVELOP** your power, *ball skills*, speed, **endurance**, agility, co-ordination and all-round fitness.

**480** calories  
burnt per hour

*The fun thing about playing football is that each dog will come up with a different way of handling the ball to deal with the fact that it's too big to get their jaws around.*

Start the game by gently kicking the ball along the ground toward your dog. Encourage him to get it. Because the ball is too big to pick up with his teeth, it will take him a few minutes to figure out that he must push it with his nose or bat it with his paws to get the ball moving. Give him lots of praise as he begins to catch on. As he gets better at it, you can include more people in the game. For breeds too small to handle a football, soft rubber balls can be found at pet shops.

**30** minutes  
twice  
a week

**Vets Advice**

**BE CONSIDERATE**  
of the size of your dog  
- smaller toy breeds might  
not be suited to this.  
Also be sure the ball is large  
enough to not be swallowed.



# bat & ball

**20** minutes  
twice  
a week

**THIS MAY NOT BE SUITABLE**  
for dogs/breeds liable to  
suffer from joint disease.

**Vets Advice**



**HITTING THE BALL WITH A BAT WORKS**  
your **biceps, triceps** and *shoulder muscles*.

**410** calories  
burnt per hour

*Don't grip the bat too hard – keep your hand relaxed. Start by hitting the ball softly underarm, then shout, 'Race ya!' as you and your dog sprint off to go and fetch it.*

Once you're more skilled, you can hit the ball harder and add in over-arm strokes to work your shoulder and back muscles. There's nothing like the prospect of winning (or losing!) to spur you on – but because you're so absorbed in the game, you'll hardly notice the extra effort. Just imagine your dog's surprise when you bat a ball for him/her to fetch and you get to it before he does! This game can be done with a friend too. Start by standing a few feet apart and move further away from each other as you progress. Not only is it great exercise for you, but your dog will be exhausted running back and forth trying to catch the ball! It's important to watch for fatigue and stop when your pet needs to.



# walking & hiking

**UNEVEN TERRAIN TARGETS YOUR LEGS, BOTTOM & THIGH MUSCLES** in a way that **can't** be duplicated indoor or walking on a pavement!

And, if you add an incline, you'll increase your calorie burn by an extra 15%, plus you'll target the muscles of your inner thighs, which are notoriously hard to tone up.

**360** calories  
burnt per hour

Just like people who aren't used to exercise, dogs should start off slowly too. A moderately paced, 30 minute walk is a good way to start; you can build it to an hour a day if you and your dog seem up to it. Walking on uneven terrain is far better for both of you too, whether that's in an urban park or the open countryside. The fact that you have to lift your feet higher and make small adjustments to your movements, hikes up calorie expenditure – one study found an increase of 26% compared with road walking. There's another pay-off too. The variation in surfaces requires your muscles and brain to work as a team to adapt to the different challenges. If it's windy, you'll burn even more calories: studies have found that energy demand is increased by 3% to 9% when you have to overcome a moderate headwind. Plus, if you're walking outside on a cold day, you'll burn another 12% more calories, according to a study from the University of Tennessee, US.

## Vets Advice



**DOGS WITH orthopaedic problems must be careful of exercising on uneven terrains, similarly small dogs may struggle.**



## Walking tips

-  **Maintain a good posture** when you're walking by relaxing your shoulder muscles.
-  **Keep your shoulders down** and lift your rib cage slightly.
-  **You should be looking forwards**, rather than down.
-  **Walk tall**, so avoiding a tensed, hunched carriage.
-  **Hold your arms** relaxed, close to your body.
-  **Try to avoid** swinging your arms across your body.
-  **As you walk**, land on your heel and then transfer your weight onto the ball of your foot, rolling forwards in a smooth heel-to-toe movement.
-  **Keep your hips**, knees and feet aligned, feet pointing directly forwards - this may feel a little awkward at first.
-  **Keep your body upright** or angled just slightly forwards.
-  **Breathe deeply** from the diaphragm.

**30** minutes  
build up  
to one  
hour



**GETTING YOUR DOG** to run alongside you may require a lot of training, and be aware of running at a pace suited to your dog.

# jogging

**SWAP A 45-MINUTE SLOW JOG FOR A 25-MINUTE interval session** to super charge your **metabolism** and your **fitness levels**.

**Vets Advice**

Once you and your dog are able to walk briskly for 20-30 minutes without tiring, you can work up to a jog.

**600** calories  
burnt per hour

Doing intervals basically means alternating between short periods of hard work and short recovery periods during your session. As well as increasing the amount of calories you'll burn during the workout, doing intervals will also help you burn more calories afterwards. A study done at the University of Dallas, US, found that metabolic rate was raised for 15 hours after an interval session, compared with two to three hours after a normal gym session. Plus intervals will help you get fitter and faster at jogging. To introduce intervals into your jog, simply intersperse faster bursts of running with more moderate recovery periods, which allow you to get your breath back. For example, after you've warmed up, try alternating one minute at a faster pace with 90 seconds at a slower pace to recover, and repeat five times, working up to ten times as you get fitter.

**45** minutes  
once a week

paw o'meter

**GREAT FOR TONING YOUR LEG MUSCLES** and bottom and provides a **fat burning cardiovascular workout**.

# inline skating

**410** calories  
burnt per hour



For a perfect fit, choose boots half a size bigger than your normal shoes and wear them with thick sports socks. Also make sure you get, knee, elbow and wrist pads and a lead/harness for your dog that restrains from under the armpits, around the chest rather than the neck. I cannot stress enough the difference the right lead will make, especially as you are starting out. To test your control, try skating on flat ground before you attempt to control your dog on a hill. Skate quickly for a stretch, then at the first intersection where you need to check for traffic, have your dog slow down. Asking your dog to sit at traffic lights so you can safely step off of curbs is good training as well. The proper lead will help a lot with this, but you can teach your dog a "slow" command. Your dog should sense that you need him or her to slow down and help you out. If you catch the dog's attention on your way down a slope, you can make it a trip as a twosome, rather than as you trailing behind your dog. If you're not confident that your dog is obedient enough it may be best to let them run off the lead. Remember the mantra 'head over wheels' to help you stay upright and perfect your stance. **Always look ahead, never down.**

*I only skate with Hugo, in a park in the morning. If you haven't got a park nearby, find a place that is low in traffic (people and cars) for your first outing.*

*Hugo understands that "walk" means he needs to walk and that "run" means it's OK to go fast.*

**30** minutes  
once a week

paw o'meter

NICKI & HUGO'S  
**top tips**

# cycling

**20**  
minutes  
three  
times  
a week

A GENTLE NON-WEIGHT BEARING, LOW IMPACT ACTIVITY that tones your legs bottom and thigh muscles, as well as your back and shoulders.

It's not just the gradients that increase both you and your dog's energy expenditure – when you rock the bike side to side to get up a steep slope or 'loft' (pull up the handlebars to get the front wheel over obstacles in the path), you work your upper-body muscles as well as your legs, bottom and thigh muscles. If you have a puller, this might not be a great option. Your dog NEEDS to have excellent lead manners.

**500**  
calories  
burnt per hour

Go on a mountain bike adventure with your dog, this way he can be kept off the lead.

Try cycling 3 to 4 times a week for 20 - 40 minutes.

## NICKI & HUGO'S top tips

I personally LOVE to cycle. I use commands like left, right and stop. I also try to use quiet roads and go early in the morning when nobody is out - it's much safer that way. I start out with a slow bike trip to keep my dog at a nice trot.

paw o'meter

TONE YOUR ARMS AND STOMACH MUSCLES thanks to all that running about leaping and throwing.

DOGS WITH DENTAL OR ORAL CAVITY PROBLEMS should not take part in this. Similarly be aware of jumping and twisting in air as there is a risk of potential traumatic injuries. Not suitable for dogs with joint disease or prone to cruciate ligament disease.

# frisbee

Vets Advice 

If you don't have a garden or place to run your dog, check in your local area for parks where you can play with your dog off the lead. Be sure to use quality, "dog-sturdy" Frisbees.

**450**  
calories  
burnt per hour

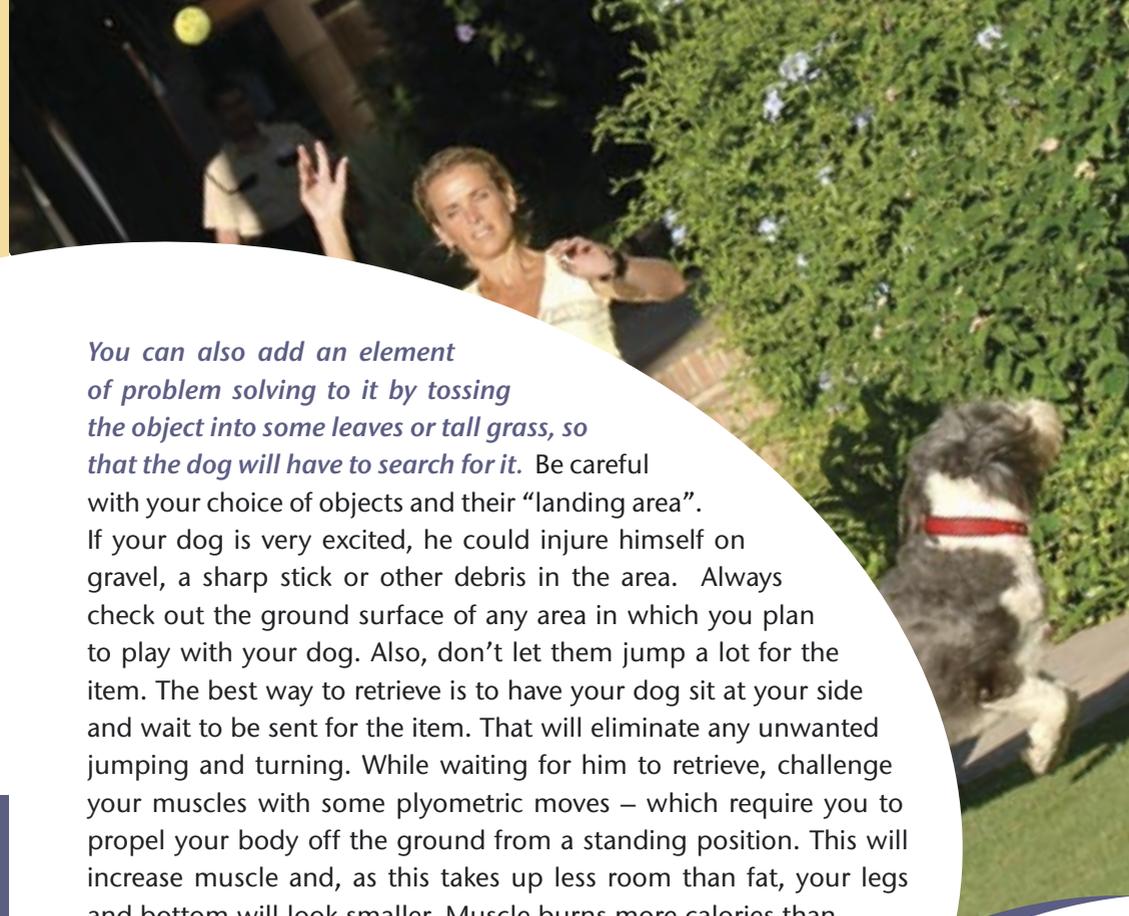
You only have to stand in one spot for a few minutes with your dog, while he exercises every muscle in his body and has a lot of fun. To throw, grip the Frisbee with your thumb on top and index finger along the rim, other fingers underneath. Throw it with your hand moving across your body, flicking your wrist and keeping the Frisbee flat. Keep your stomach taut for a better abdominal workout. Your dog will chase the Frisbee and bring it back to you. If you get a friend to come with, you can increase the intensity by getting your friend to throw the disc slightly above your head, so you have to leap up to catch it. And every time it hits the turf, do a 'golfers lift' to pick it up; stand on one foot, with the other leg extended out behind you, and bend your front knee slightly as you hinge forward from the hips. This works the thighs and bottom and increases core stability and your dog will be getting double the working from running back and forth.

**20**  
minutes  
once  
a week

paw o'meter

# get jumping & fetch

45  
minutes  
once  
a week



**DO TEN MINUTES OF PLYOMETRICS - DEVELOPING SPEED & STRENGTH THROUGH JUMPING, BOUNDING & HOPPING EXERCISES - TWICE A WEEK**  
instead of a 45-minute Legs, Bums & Tums class for a *lean & lovely* lower body.

350  
calories  
burnt per hour

*Many dogs will fetch balls & toys, for hours on end. This is good exercise for both of you, and it can be done every day.*

-  **One-legged hop:** Throw the ball then do **20** one-legged hops, alternating legs for each hop, with a balance step between hops.
-  **Two-leg jumps:** Throw a stick, then jump as high as possible from a standing position. **Aim for 10 to 20.**
-  **Jump lunges:** Stand with your feet together then step forward with one leg and go into a lunge position. From here, throw the ball as far as possible, then jump as high as you can, switching your leg position with the opposite leg forward. **Repeat 10 to 20 times.**

*You can also add an element of problem solving to it by tossing the object into some leaves or tall grass, so that the dog will have to search for it.* Be careful with your choice of objects and their “landing area”. If your dog is very excited, he could injure himself on gravel, a sharp stick or other debris in the area. Always check out the ground surface of any area in which you plan to play with your dog. Also, don’t let them jump a lot for the item. The best way to retrieve is to have your dog sit at your side and wait to be sent for the item. That will eliminate any unwanted jumping and turning. While waiting for him to retrieve, challenge your muscles with some plyometric moves – which require you to propel your body off the ground from a standing position. This will increase muscle and, as this takes up less room than fat, your legs and bottom will look smaller. Muscle burns more calories than fat, the more you have, the more calories you’ll burn, even when you’re not working out. The moves are quite testing, so take rests in-between sets and don’t do more than ten minutes at a time (avoid them altogether if you’ve got severe joint problems). The dog will probably need the rest too as continuous running and jumping can be dangerous on their joints.

**Vets Advice**



**USING TOYS PROVIDED BY your vet, rather than sticks will reduce the risk of injury to your dogs mouth, throat & neck when they are retrieving. Refer also to advice on Frisbee.**



# circuit & agility

**DO ONE 20-MINUTE CIRCUIT/AGILITY SESSION TO BURN FAT & DEVELOP MUSCLE.** Performing the tasks of **climbing, jumping and crawling** over, under, around and through various obstacles **tones, strengthens** and **stretches** your whole body.

**350** calories  
burnt per hour

*This also improves balance and builds confidence for both you and your dog!*

By alternating resistance moves (crawling through a tunnel) with short periods of cardiovascular work, you can keep your heart rate up, and therefore burn calories, while improving your lean muscle strength at the same time. The key is moving quickly between exercises to keep your heart rate elevated throughout the whole circuit. You and your dog are also less likely to get overuse injuries with circuit/agility training, as you're not doing one repetitive action – such as pounding the streets for any length of time. To keep it simple, just keep repeating the circuit/agility course for 20 minutes. With a little imagination, you can easily build all the obstacles needed to make a fun run track in your garden.



**20** minutes  
once  
a week



## How to make it easier!



Encourage your dog with a toy or a biscuit during training. You should lead him through the whole track with loud sounds (“up!”, for example) and body language (for example, showing the palm of your hand indicating “stop!”).

*Note: The goal is that you and the dog pass through each obstacle without a problem.*

-  **Bar Jumps:** Start with at least 5 hurdles, approx 3ft high, depending on the size of your dog. They should be made of PVC pipe, which are the cheapest and simplest equipment to make. You can get interesting pipe fittings and all kinds of colours and patterns with tape.
-  **Tunnel:** The 3 foot long play tunnel is a fabric tube, a favorite of many dogs and unique to agility. This is one obstacle that can be done by almost any dog, and is fun for you as well.
-  **Ramp:** It's not very hard to make. It's like a wide balance beam with a ramp at each end. For many dogs the ramp is the hardest part of the course.
-  **Slalom:** Start with a couple of bars (5 at the least) separated from each other, so that the dog can easily watch and follow you going through each one.



16

**WORKS YOUR  
STOMACH, LEG &  
SHOULDER MUSCLES**

and gets your heart racing, too!

**20**  
minutes  
once  
a week

NICKI & HUGO'S  
**top tips**

*I have trained Hugo to play volleyball with people! He thinks the game is GREAT fun so I had to come up with some way to control his impulse to be involved with the game. I taught him "play outfield" at which he takes off running until far enough out and I say "swing" and he turns around and sits. Whenever the ball goes in his area he leaps up and tries to hit it back over the net!!*

*If it doesn't make it he will push it over to the other teams side and then run back to his spot and wait for the next one.*

# Volleyball

*If you thought that football was the most advanced ball game you can teach your dog, here's news for you.* This one takes a lot of training, but is lots of fun. Make the net or rope as high as possible so you have to jump higher. Squat really low before hitting the ball – you'll hit it further and tone your thighs and bottom at the same time.

*May not be suitable for smaller breeds of dog.*

**470**  
calories  
burnt per hour

paw o'meter



**470**  
calories  
burnt per hour

# Swimming

**BREASTSTROKE IS GREAT** for strengthening your **pectoral (chest) muscles** and also tones your **arms, back and legs**.

*If you have somewhere safe, that both of you are allowed to swim, this is a wonderful exercise for you and your dog.* If you swim in the sea, the colder water will make your body burn more calories to keep warm (be careful that it's not too cold!), while the current and waves, makes swimming in open water twice as hard, giving faster results. But be sure you're not alone, and can be seen by a lifeguard. You could also try and mix 'sculling' (lie on your back, and move your arms and legs in easy circular motions) with 'scissoring' (with arms level with the water's surface and legs hanging down straight, move your legs back and forth vigorously). This is great for firming your bum and backs of your thighs.

**20-30**  
lengths  
twice a week

paw o'meter

