

Spring Exercise and Safety

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Spring is here, and if your weather is anything like mine here in Southern California, you may already be feeling the warmer climate making its move. Warmer weather means it's time to get out and start exercising with your dogs a bit more to help shed some of those added winter pounds. Actually, the added outdoor time should be good for both of you!

Sounds great—but not so fast! The more sedentary your pets have been over the winter, the more pre-exercise preparation you'll need to plan. As with any athlete starting to prep for a new season having taken a few months off, you or your dog(s) can't expect to start where you left off. To avoid problems like muscle fatigue or strain, injured pads, or exhaustion, you need to ease your pets back into their regular routine. Start slow at first, and gradually increase exercise time, as well as the degree of difficulty.

In general, as it gets even warmer there are some precautions you need to take. Firstly, make sure to exercise your pets early in the morning or later in the evening—never exercise during the heat of the day. Always bring some water with you, and make sure to take plenty of breaks. It's not a bad idea to wrap a wet bandana around your dog's neck to help keep them cool. Remember that many asphalt surfaces have a tendency to get hot, and to retain heat—so try to avoid excessive running on hot asphalt. Booties might be a good idea to help protect your dog's pads.

If you see your dog panting excessively or noticeably slowing down or weakening, STOP immediately, find some shade, offer some water, and pour some water over his or her body and feet. If this doesn't seem to help, get to the closest veterinary hospital ASAP. Heat

stroke can be deadly!! And, one more bit of advice----NEVER leave your dog or cat in a parked car—even in the shade and even with a window open. During a warm day, temperature in a car can soar to over 110° F within 14 minutes! Don't believe me? Check out [Dr. Ernie Ward's video demonstration](#)!

Get out there and have fun bonding with your dogs—they'll love it as much as you will.

Enjoy the Spring and Summer!

Dr. Jeff

If you have any questions or concerns, you should always visit or call your veterinarian - they are your best resource to ensure the health and well-being of your pets.