



## Training with your dog

### Getting started

**Running with your dog is a brilliant way to get out in the fresh air and spend quality time with your dog.** You and your canine chum can enjoy the peace and tranquillity of your surroundings and get in shape at the same time with an invigorating workout. Running with your dog:

- Helps to maintain a healthy lifestyle for you and your dog/s.
- Strengthens the bond between you and your dog/s.
- Can be enjoyed by all ages, male or female.

### Things to consider

- If your dog is unfit, run at their pace, make time for lots of breaks, give them plenty to drink and gradually increase your distance and speed. Always ensure that you have adequate water with you. There are camel packs (designed for running) that hold up to 3 litres and folding dog bowls for this purpose.
- If your dog is older or overweight, you **MUST** consult your vet **before** commencing training.
- Take it easy at first and build up slowly, alternate between walking and running, and run for short distances initially.

As with all new exercise programmes, seek the advice of your doctor and get your dog checked by your vet before starting. Ensure that you *and* your

dog are both enjoying a healthy and balanced diet, and that your dog is fully vaccinated.

### **Safety for your dog**

**Younger dogs** should not be given excessive exercise. Their bones are still growing, and if put under too much stress, may experience complications later in life. Consult your vet for the recommended level of exercise for your dog's breed.

**Training when it's hot.** Never underestimate the heat. Heat exhaustion can kill, and it will kill your dog before it kills you. Your dog will run until it drops, whereas you will stop before then. Be particularly careful with dogs with short muzzles (e.g Staffies), and dogs that are overweight or have long coats. Be responsible – always put your dog first. Forest trails benefit from the shade of trees and running in the morning or evening will help you to avoid the heat of the mid-day sun. Keep an eye on your dog in the minutes after the run, until they have fully recovered and returned to normal breathing.

Consider the surface on which you are running– dogs do not have the advantage of hi-tech trainers and could develop impact injuries from running on hard surfaces such as tarmac. Tarmac is also very abrasive and could wear away your dog's pads. For your dog, grass and dirt trails are the best, followed by sand, wood chip and crushed gravel.

We advise that you build your running distance up over several weeks/months. During training runs and hot weather some breeds (i.e. those with short muzzles like Staffies) may have difficulty cooling off. If your dog is overweight, unfit, not used to exercise, recovering from illness, elderly, or if you have any doubt about your dog's fitness, please consult your vet.

- Always carry water with you and carry a mobile phone so that you can call for help if necessary.
- Do not train for long distances during hot weather. Familiarise yourself with your dog's normal behaviour while running. If at any time your dog shows signs of struggling (excessive foaming at the mouth, shaking the head or pulling to the side), immediately find a shaded place to stop (preferably with a cool breeze), soak their coat in water and give them water to drink.
- Watch your dog's behaviour for half an hour after your run – this is the most critical time to watch for signs that your dog is overheating.

These tips are thanks to Cani-X, [www.cani-x.com](http://www.cani-x.com)