

Fit Dog Exercise Routines Into Your Schedule

How to fit doggie exercise into your hectic schedule.

Katie Lombardi

2. Hire someone who has the time Enroll your dog in doggie daycare, or hire a professional dog walker. This great socialization opportunity can also benefit dogs that experience separation anxiety.
3. Involve the whole family Divide exercise duties among all household members to avoid putting all the responsibility on one person. This decreases the chances of burnout and of the dog not getting exercised. Have each person do what's best for them. For example, younger kids might be better off playing games safely in the backyard than taking walks.
4. Do double walking duty Team up with a neighbor who owns a dog so you can trade off exercise days, with one of you walking both dogs at the same time. The dogs get at least one walk each day, but you and your neighbor only have to go out every other day.
5. Add a task-based fitness routine If you live in a rural area, walk to the mailbox instead of driving, and take your dog along. Cut back on one TV show or other non-essential commitment a week, and take up hiking instead. Walk your dog nearby during the kids' sports practice.
6. Be creative Play games in the house or in your backyard, even if they're short. Susan Kolar, DVM, of Crestwood Animal Clinic in Crestwood, Ill., suggests throwing toys for your dog to chase up and down the stairs, across the basement, or down a long hall during the winter months. For some dogs this can be a great tension reliever, she says.

Kolar also suggests that you have your dog sit at regular intervals when you're on a walk. This works her abdominal muscles and also focuses on obedience.

Regular activity helps build strong bones, improve cardiovascular health, and increase a dog's life span. A little creativity on your part can go a long way toward making exercise a regular part of your dog's (and your) day.