

Take Your Dog on a Bike Ride

Healthy dogs need exercise, and a walk simply isn't aerobic enough for most of them.

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Also keep an eye on your dog's paw pads. If it has been a couch potato or spends most of its time on grass, its pads may be soft and will need gradually increased exposure to rough surfaces to toughen them. Most active dogs learn to enjoy biking. Dax turns into a whirling dervish when I wheel my bicycle from the garage. Sometimes dogs can enjoy it so much they don't let you know when they have a problem. It's up to you to make sure the asphalt or concrete isn't burning its pads or gravel isn't cutting its feet.

In hot weather, exercise your dog in the early morning or late evening. Carry water on your bike for both of you. Watch for signs of stress, and stop immediately when your dog needs to rest. Dax and I bike about five miles three to four times a week, and we vary our route so we don't get bored. Sometimes we go along a riverbed and watch wild ducks, geese, egrets and herons. We also like to go to the beach and watch the waves and seabirds. As we ride, I talk to Dax, encouraging her, enjoying the time we spend together. It's our special time.