

Take Your Dog on a Bike Ride

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Healthy dogs need exercise, and a walk simply isn't aerobic enough for most of them. Jogging can use up some of the excess energy often leading to destructive behavior in the house or yard.

But not everyone likes to jog. I walk my dogs, but it isn't adequate for Dax, my 3-year-old Australian Shepherd. If she doesn't get more exercise, Dax is hard to live with. She paces, brings me toys to throw and generally makes a pest of herself. It's not her fault; her parents are working sheepdogs, and I knew that when I bought her as a puppy. But since I don't have sheep in my back yard for her to herd, I came up with another way for her to exercise: accompanying me when I bicycle.

Products are available that allow you to attach a leash to the bicycle. This keeps the dog away from the wheels and helps prevent accidents caused by holding the dog's leash in your hand on the handlebars.

If you decide to bike with your dog, don't simply take off and go. Train your dog as you would in any other activity. Start slowly and methodically.

First, walk your leashed dog to the bike. Stand and hold the bike. Point to it and invite the dog to sniff it. This may seem silly, but unless your dog was a bicycle chaser (a bad habit), it probably never paid any attention to a bike before, and it's important it isn't afraid. When your dog is close to the bike, walk forward and encourage it to walk next to the bicycle. When you walk your dog forward, give a command: "Fido, let's go! Walk." "Let's go" can mean "move forward with me on my bike" and walk can mean the speed of walking.