

New Year's Resolutions Fit for a Dog

Keep dogs in mind when making resolutions for the new year.

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Many people tend to make the same resolutions each year – quit smoking, lose weight, get out of debt. However, ringing in the new year doesn't have to be all about humans, in fact including dogs in resolutions may benefit owners, too.

The San Diego Animal Support Foundation, an organization that raises money to improve the lives of rescue and shelter animals, has released a few resolutions fit for a dog. They are:

Visit the veterinarian. Take dogs into the vet at least once a year for a health check and vaccinations.

Feed dogs healthy food and ensure they exercise. Overweight dogs suffer consequences similar to humans for carrying extra pounds including diabetes, arthritis, and premature death. Feed dogs a high-quality food and avoid rewarding dogs with treats. Instead, play with them or walk them to ensure they're getting proper exercise.

Spend quality time with Buddy. Spending quality time with dogs builds stronger bonds between pets and owners, and studies reveal that it is good for humans' health by way of reducing stress and lowering blood pressure. In addition, bringing them to an off-leash dog park helps them build social skills. Spend time with other dogs as well by volunteering at a shelter, or sign up to help out in a pet therapy program.

Groom regularly. Set regular appointments to trim dogs' nails and clean their teeth. As an added benefit, sometimes groomers catch health problems, such as a tumors or cysts, in their early stages.

Update ID tags, microchips, and emergency numbers. Invalid or outdated information on collars and microchips may result in lost pets not returning home. In addition, update emergency contact information with veterinarians, boarding facilities and pet sitters, and designate a friend or family member to take care of dogs in case of an emergency.

Sticking to a few simple resolutions can help keep dogs – and owners – happy and healthy throughout the new year.