

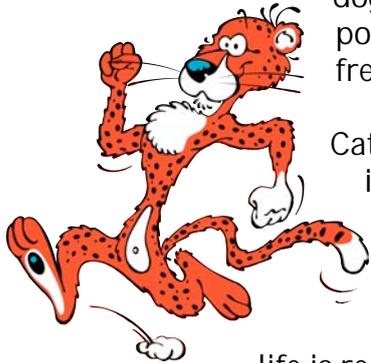


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## How important is exercise?



Exercise is very important to all pets, for their physical and psychological well-being. This is more obviously the case with dogs, but also needs to be considered when taking on any pet. Stimulation of your pet's interest in its surroundings is hugely important to its quality of life. In general dogs need to be taken for a good walk at least once daily. If they are not given this outlet, compulsive or destructive behavior can result. The distance you travel is not as important as the distance your dog travels, so if you are physically unable to manage long walks, make good use of balls / frisbee discs. Try to make it an interesting outing (for both you and your dog!). Plenty of running is important for dogs such as springers and collies and these dogs will really enjoy hours of exercise, given the opportunity. Labradors and retrievers thrive on swimming, which is great exercise; easy on the joints and builds up muscle and stamina. A note of caution, prolonged, heavy exercise (especially on hard surfaces) should be avoided until full maturity in large and giant breed dogs. Other types of dogs such as yorkies and poms don't need much exercise but will love the diversion of going on frequent short walks.



Cats tend to be their own bosses with regard to how much they exercise but if you have a cat that is restricted to the indoors you need to provide them with opportunities to play. Having two cats or two dogs often encourages them to play more within the home.

If you have guinea pigs, rabbits or other 'small furrries' their quality of life is really improved if you give them access to a good run. All pets will benefit from new things to explore in their environment. Add some interest for them, such as placing a few logs in a guinea pig run with food hidden away in little nooks, so that they move around to explore and get rewarded for their efforts.

Exercise is hugely important to your pet's well being, so bring that dog for a walk and enjoy it yourself (p.s. don't forget to bring a poop scoop).

