

Through sunshine, bitter cold, dogs need exercise

December 2 2010, By Amy Patterson Neubert

Winter weather is no excuse to avoid outdoor exercise with your dog, says a Purdue University veterinarian.

"The [obesity](#) epidemic has an impact on humans and also our canine friends," says Sandy Amass, professor and associate dean in the School of Veterinary Medicine. She is currently leading the Fat [Dogs](#) and Coughing Horses project to educate more young people about veterinary medicine and health sciences.

"Walking a dog regularly can be great way for both of you to stay fit, and it is a fun activity as well," she says. "When the weather turns colder it is easy to want to stay indoors, but it is just as important to keep exercising."

Here are some tips from Amass and Jim Weisman, director of the Student Services Center and clinical assistant professor, for exercising with your pet in [cold weather](#):

- * Dogs will develop a thicker coat over time as they are exposed to cold weather, but small dogs or dogs with short hair might be more comfortable in a coat or sweater.

- * The chemicals and salt applied to roads and sidewalks to prevent freezing can burn or irritate dogs' paw pads. There are commercially available dog boots that can offer protection from such chemicals, as well as from ice or mud. If boots are not used, wipe the dog's paw pads

with room temperature water after a walk.

* Dogs need extra drinking water. They can lose water when they pant during exercise, and the cold air that they breathe in has very little moisture.

Amass also recommends that people consult with a physician and veterinarian before beginning a fitness program for themselves and a pet.

Provided by Purdue University

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