



# An Enjoyable Alternative

With a partner to motivate you when you're feeling slack and to guilt-trip you when you're feeling down right lazy, the chances that you'll reach your training goals increase dramatically when your exercise regimen is a tandem one. Make that partner your consistently energetic pooch with a resolute bark and an expression that can sear through the most lethargic moods; add the bonus of knowing you're giving her all the benefits of exercise that you enjoy – better health, boosted immune system, longer life, and at least in her case, decreased chances of chewing up the furniture – and you've struck work-out gold.

Just as you should consult your physician before beginning any new training program, visit the vet's office to ensure your dog is up to whatever you have in mind. The possibilities are numerous, so pick something that you're both inclined toward anyway and that suits your dog's age and health.

## RUNNING

Young dogs are better suited as a sprinter's companion; they haven't yet learned to pace themselves. Older or overweight dogs, of course, probably won't have the stamina for anything more than a brisk walk but for the adolescent or adult dog in good shape, running can be the perfect shared activity. The Buddy System (\$18-\$37, 888-363-2818, buddiesys.com) is designed for hands-free control of your pet for just this purpose. You wear a one-inch wide adjustable nylon belt from which two moveable loops are suspended. An adjustable nylon leash reach from one of your belt loops to swivel hook that you clip on your dog's collar or harness and the two of you are off to the races.

Although most dogs are natural-born swimmers; there is an inherent danger in swimming together. What if she should experience trouble while you're counting strokes or submerged? An underwater leash isn't practical but the Ruff Wear K-9 Float Coat (\$49.95 & \$69.95, 888-Ruff-Wear, ruffwear.com) is giving enough support to ensure safety but letting your dog still enjoy a water workout – and the pride of your eye-catching swimsuit.

## CYCLING

If your dog is a little miniature that can ride Toto-style, visit [www.petcruiser.com](http://www.petcruiser.com) for the newest, sport style pet carrier for cyclists. This portable pet bike baskets fits with a quick click universal bracket that fits all handlebars and safely accommodates up to 15lbs with your pet and your care (\$88). For larger dogs, that will run alongside while you are doing the biking consider the Springer's bicycle dog jogger (\$45, 801-532-7941, [springerusa.com](http://springerusa.com)). The Springer is a bike-mounted leash with a safety release in case your dog heads for the wrong side of a lamppost. It also comes with a full set of instructions, so use of that quick-release mechanism can become a thing of the past.



## BLADING/SKIING

If your dog weighs more than 30 pounds and you're looking for a little more than encouragement from your pet, skijoring is your sport. Buy a basic skijor gear package (Free Spirit \$86.95, 800-355-5575) that includes a wide, padded belt with leg straps to be worn around your hips and a towline that attaches from your belt to a tug lead, which clips onto a harness for your dog. Don Rollerblades or, in winter, cross-country skis and enjoy the comfort of the built-in shock absorption that cushions you from jerks as you mush across the plains...or the park.

## HIKING

You know that hiking can be intense on your knees and ankles – now imagine it barefoot. Dog's footpads, although heartier than humans', aren't a match for rough or rocky terrain either. Ruff wear dog hiking boots ([www.ruffwear.com](http://www.ruffwear.com), \$38) are water-resistant and fleece line provide protection from chafing and thorns, and are as adorable as they are necessary.

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