



"No Sweat Fitness" Newsletter

April, 2010



Normally I send these newsletter to improve your health and promote human fitness. This month, I aim to help your furry friends as well. I hope you enjoy it!

Sincerely,

Mary Phillips
No Sweat Fitness

Fight fat with Fido

Exercising with your pets

Do you need to lose a few pounds, but don't want to do it alone? A fitness buddy may be as close as the ground at your feet. Animals can be great workout friends due to their unconditional love for you and your happiness when your pet is around. So put on those workout clothes and let's start!

If you have a dog and neither of you are in shape, you both should begin slowly with only 10-15 minutes of walking. The first 2 weeks go once a day and then work up to two times per day. Gradually, as both of your fitness levels improve you can go for longer periods of time and add some hills or off-road activities such as a hike on a local trail.

If your dog does not behave during your walks these workout times can become stressful and you will be less likely to continue; an obedience class and/or training DVDs will make both of you enjoy your time together.

But what if your pet is not of the 4-legged variety that walks on a leash, are you destined to go it alone? No way! Contact your local senior center and ask if any of their members have dogs that need exercise. Frequently, seniors are not able to give their dogs the exercise required and would love for someone else to lend a hand.

Obesity in animals--dogs

Close to 50% of all dogs are overweight and more than 20% of

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"No Sweat" Fitness Spring Break

Our Studio will be closed from 5am Tuesday, April 13 to 6pm Sunday, April 18th.

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felines need to shed some pounds. Our pets are mirroring our obesity problem and the blame lies squarely on our shoulders. Carrying too much weight causes pet populations to have joint disease, liver disease and diabetes. It is our responsibility to care for our companions since they have no way to restrict their diet nor take themselves for a walk.

Do you have an overweight pet? If you have a dog, look at it from the side as he is standing. You should be able to see good definition between the rib cage and the abdominal area. If you cannot tell where the ribs end and the abdomen begins, your dog is most likely overweight.

If you have an overweight dog a visit to your Vet is the first step. Many breeds are prone to hip problems which can be exacerbated by a sudden increase in exercise and simply reducing food intake can cause skin problems.



Invest time in taking your dog for a walk. The guidelines in the previous article about beginning slowly for your exercise program applies to your overweight pet as well. When walking, watch for signs that your pet is being overtaxed: excessive panting, lying down, or pulling back on the leash are all clues for taking a rest for a few minutes before beginning again. Exercise your pet every day and if you have a high energy breed such as a border collie you may need to exercise him twice a day. If this is not possible and you own a treadmill you can teach your dog to give himself a walk! Search the web for advice on getting him started.

Feed your dog the food recommended from the Vet and only that food. A dog begging for table scraps must be ignored and you are not loving him by giving treats. Show affection by rubbing his belly, or buying him a new ball.

Obesity in cats

If you have a cat their sedentary lifestyle is the main problem. Left alone all day with nothing to do and food left out your cat will gain weight. We share the same desire to eat when we have nothing else to do. Outdoor cats & house cats that are still allowed to roam outside typically do not get fat.

Assessing if you have an overweight cat is harder than with a dog; an excessively furry or cat with hanging skin may not be fat. Feel your cat she should have a sleek appearance, without a huge belly or pads of fat on her hips.

If you find your cat is obese the first thing to do is similar to the advice for an overweight dog, bring her to the Vet. Your Vet can give you advice on the appropriate amount/kind of food to feed your cat.

You should also increase your cat's exercise, but unlike a dog, walking your cat will not be on the agenda. You should engage her in playful activities such as chasing small balls, or jumping for strings. There are thousands of commercially available toys to help bring out the kitten in your cat. If your older cat does not show much interest in playtime, a little catnip will do wonders for a change in attitude!

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