

Dog Lovers - 7 Ways To Love Your Dog

Contributed by Connie Bowen

Our dogs add so much to our lives, giving us unconditional love and affection. Here are some suggestions to help your dog live a comfortable, happy life.

1. Regular exercise and fresh air helps your dog's immune system function at its peak. The exercise doesn't have to be strenuous in nature, but a consistent walk or friendly play at a local park can work wonders for a dog's mental as well as physical health.
2. Regular check-ups with your veterinarian are a must. Ask your doctor about the dangers of over-vaccinating and the possibility of checking your dog's immune system with a blood titer test. A yearly visit with your doctor will give you a chance to ask any questions you may have, and will give your veterinarian an opportunity to catch any problems before they develop into something serious.
3. Provide a clean, safe environment for your dog free of second-hand smoke. Give him or her a quiet, comfortable place to sleep. Most breeds of dogs prefer to live indoors with their family. Only a few large breeds meant to live outdoors to protect sheep are suited to a life in all kinds of weather away from human contact.
4. Give your canine easy access to a fenced backyard or other suitable place so that they can relieve themselves during the day if you are going to be gone for long stretches at a time. A doggie door is ideal, but if this is impractical for your home, there are professional dog walkers who would love to stop by to give your dog a much needed walk during the day or evening.
5. Plenty of fresh, wholesome food and fresh water are key to maintaining a dog's health. Raw food diets are gaining popularity, but if this is not something you or your dog would enjoy, there are other high grade alternatives. Read the labels of any product you purchase for your dog and steer clear of products with artificial colors, sweeteners or preservatives. The Whole Dog Journal is an excellent source of information and suggestions for which foods are the most nutritious and beneficial for dogs.
6. Daily grooming is important for all dogs, especially those with long coats. A quick brushing before bedtime is important for two reasons. It will remove any loose hair and skin and also will give you a chance to check for ticks or other problems your dog may have developed. Brushing your dog's teeth is also vital to their oral health. There are special canine formulas and toothbrushes made especially for this purpose. (Never use human toothpaste on your dog.)
7. Positive, enjoyable training is available from reputable professionals for you and your dog. Training should be fun for both of you. Steer clear from any dog training classes that use punishment or adverse methods. Clicker training and reward based training can help guide you and your dog to a happy understanding of what you are requesting of your dog.

Many enjoyable dog-loving years await anyone who sincerely desires to create and maintain a positive relationship with their dog.

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