The Importance of Outdoor Time

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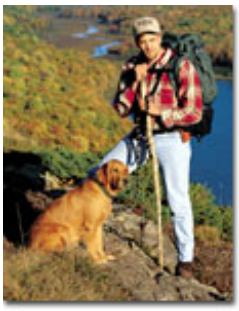
'Give your dog as much outdoor time as possible, even if you cannot be with him.'



Like people, pets get bored if there is not enough 'new' or change in their lives. And with boredom often comes laziness, non-participation in family activities, irritability, depression, and often, behavior problems.

Unfortunately, in the majority of U.S. homes today, dogs spend the better part of every day in an empty home. And even when the owners do get home from their workday, they are often too exhausted to provide the kind of outdoor stimulation and exercise dogs need.

Changing your pet's surroundings is critical to his good health - both mental and physical.

For most dogs, outdoors is where they prefer to be, especially after being cooped up all day in a quiet house with nothing to stimulate their senses. And do not think letting them outside to go to the bathroom while you prod them to hurry up is enough to fill their needs.

Give your pets as much outdoor time as possible. Walks or playing with them outside are best because of the exercise they get, and should be a part of every day. But even if you do not have time right then for a walk or play, let them stay outside for awhile for the sensory stimulation.

The sights, sounds, and especially the smells of the outdoors keep your dog's mind alert and active. The outdoors is interesting and it is a place to learn.

There are, of course, a number of things you should and should not do when you give your pet outdoor time:

- Do not leave him alone outside for extended periods. Remember, dogs are very social animals. They need human interaction - the more the better.
- Do not let him run free. Dogs should always be contained in an exercise pen, on a tie out, or in a fenced-in area. In addition to the dangers running free poses to your dog, it is against the law in most municipalities.
- Make sure he is always wearing a name tag, even when contained.
- Provide for his needs. Fresh water, shade, and a few chew toys or bones are all he will need for the time he is outside.

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