

# A FULFILLED DOG (NOT A TIRED DOG) IS A HAPPY DOG:

## FEAR FREE HAPPY HOMES

Helping pets live happy, healthy, full lives



The well known saying, 'a tired dog is a happy dog,' falls short when it comes to explaining the needs of dogs. A dog's needs extend beyond lying on the couch or wandering in the backyard.

Instead, a more accurate statement, is 'a fulfilled dog, is a happy dog'. Fulfillment is largely about meeting key physical, social and exploratory needs, which enhances overall wellbeing and contributes to a happier, healthier canine. Fulfilling activity isn't measured in miles, speed, hours, or how tired the dog is at the end. Instead, it's about providing activities that engage the dog's mind and body in ways that they value.

Keep in mind that every dog's needs will be different, according to their unique personality and individual needs. Much like planning a weekly workout schedule, fulfilling activities can be planned out and fit into your dog's everyday routine. Consider integrating the following happy dog activities into their ongoing routine:

- 🐾 **Two to three exploration walks per day. These can be kept to a length of 5-25 minutes each, or what is safe and sustainable for the fitness level of your dog.**
  - Take time and let your dog stop and smell the roses (or fire hydrant or bush). Dogs investigate the world through their nose.
- 🐾 **For dogs that love to be on the go, plan fun outings once or twice per week. This may include:**
  - A 'fun' or 'happy' visit to your pet's Fear Free vet where their visit can be rewarded with treats for showing off their favorite tricks or simply for being cute!
  - Venture to a park to allow for fun sniff and explore adventure at the end of a long leash.
- 🐾 **For dog-friendly canines who love to play with other pooches, satisfy their social needs by setting up doggy playdates with equally sociable canine friends. Or, sign your pup up for playtime at a carefully supervised doggy daycare or dog park.**
- 🐾 **Engaging games that get your dog moving:**
  - Chase after a flirt pole toy. These toys mimic the movement of small animals, encouraging dogs to chase.
  - Liven up a game of fetch by adding variety and zest to the game:
    - Use an irregularly shaped ball to keep your dog guessing where the ball will bounce
    - Try a different type of fetch toys such as rings or frisbees. Or, integrate larger toys, such as the Kong Kick toy to spice things up
- Dogs naturally love to tug and it can be a great form of interactive play as long as it's structured to keep the game calm and controlled:
  - Teach your dog to 'drop it' and release the toy on request for a treat reward when asked. Try doing this during your tug game as well to encourage the behavior.
  - No teeth on skin or clothing or the game immediately ends while you walk away
  - Only play tug with designated items, like a specific tug, rope or stuffed toy
- 🐾 **Invest in reward-based training to build better behavior and stimulate your dog's brain:**
  - Teach your dog new tricks and brush up on their manners by fitting regular training sessions into your week. Sessions should be kept short at 2-10 minutes each.
  - Dog new to training? Simply reinforce reward-worthy behaviors your dog already knows, such as sit, down, or going to their bed. Reward their success with treats or other things your dog enjoys, like a toss of a favorite toy.
- 🐾 **Ditch the food bowl and encourage dogs to 'work for' their meals and treats by using food puzzles. Puzzle toys offer a healthy mental and physical challenge as they work out ways to get at the contents.**
  - Try out a variety of toys, from those the dog works out with their tongue and teeth to those they bop with their nose and paws.
  - Or, offer a sniff and explore mealtime by hiding food in dog snuffle or activity mats that encourage your dog to sniff out treasures hidden within.
  - Don't keep all toys out at once. Regularly rotate a dog's play toys and food puzzle toys to keep items interesting and stimulating.

For more training tips, please visit  
[www.fearfreehappyhomes.com](http://www.fearfreehappyhomes.com)