

## BENEFITS OF REGULAR EXERCISE WITH YOUR DOG

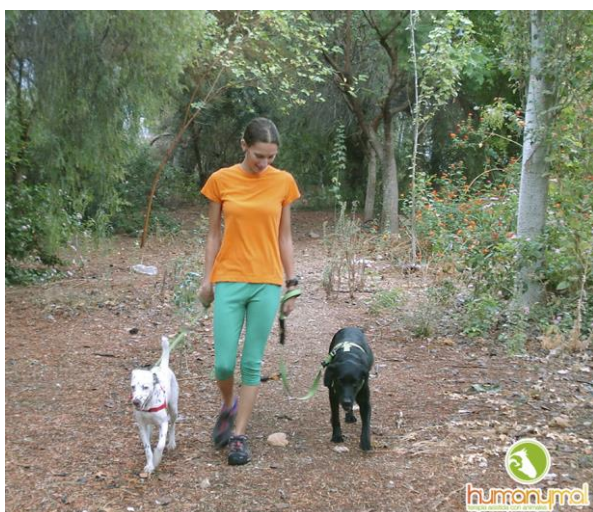
In today's world, despite the increasingly rapid pace of life, more and more people are leading a sedentary lifestyle which can bring down one's general health such as heart problems, back pain, weight gain... according to Dr. H. Cooper, physical exercise is *"the method to put more years in your life and more life in your years"*, that's the reason why we recommend you to do regular physical activity in order to improve or maintain your physical fitness as well as your health in general.



You should try to be active daily and you should do physical activity at least 3 days a week, 20 minutes (at least 150 minutes per week) increasing it gradually. Regular exercise will bring us to countless benefits (physiological, physical, psychological, psychosocial), if we do it with our dog, we multiply the benefits for both, the human and the animal.

Some of the benefits physical activity provides:

<p><b>Physiological</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Improves cardiorespiratory fitness.</li> <li>■ Improves blood pressure.</li> <li>■ Reduces the risk of coronary heart disease.</li> <li>■ Reduces the formation of blood clots within blood vessels.</li> <li>■ Lower "bad" cholesterol (LDL) and increases "good" cholesterol (HDL).</li> </ul>	<p><b>Physical</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Improves joint mobility.</li> <li>■ Improves daily life activities.</li> <li>■ Helps to prevent bone deterioration.</li> <li>■ Strengthens muscles.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Psychological</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Improves self-concept.</li> <li>■ Improves self-esteem and self-confidence.</li> <li>■ Improves mood.</li> <li>■ Helps to prevent cognitive problems (attention, memory...).</li> <li>■ Helps to improve relaxation.</li> <li>■ Increases sense of well-being.</li> <li>■ Decreases anxiety, anger and depression.</li> <li>■ Decreases stress.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Psychosocial</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Improves coping with challenges.</li> <li>■ Improves social relationship.</li> <li>■ Improves the quality of life.</li> <li>■ Helps to distract from everyday problems.</li> <li>■ Helps to improve the abandonment of unhealthy habits such as smoking, drinking alcohol...</li> </ul>



There are several kinds of exercise that can be performed along with our dog, like walking, running, cycling, etc. The presence of the animal makes any exercise more motivating, it also helps to strengthen the human-animal bond, thus keep our dog healthier both physically and psychologically.

Authors such as Anderson et al. (1991) published "Pet Owners and cardiovascular risk factors for disease" and states that pet owners had significantly lower systolic blood pressure and plasma triglycerides than non-owners. James Serpell, UK, wrote "Beneficial effects of pet ownership on some aspects of

human health and behaviour"(1991), the study showed that dog-owners reported a highly significant reduction in minor health problems during the first month of the study and this effect persisted to 10 months, while increasing self-esteem and physical exercise.

Given the benefits described by the above authors and following all guidelines given at the beginning of this article, doing exercise with your dog will let you enjoy the activity with him, get in shape, improve your health without forgetting that it will make the animal relationship closer. Nothing creates more human-animal bond that share times of the day.

