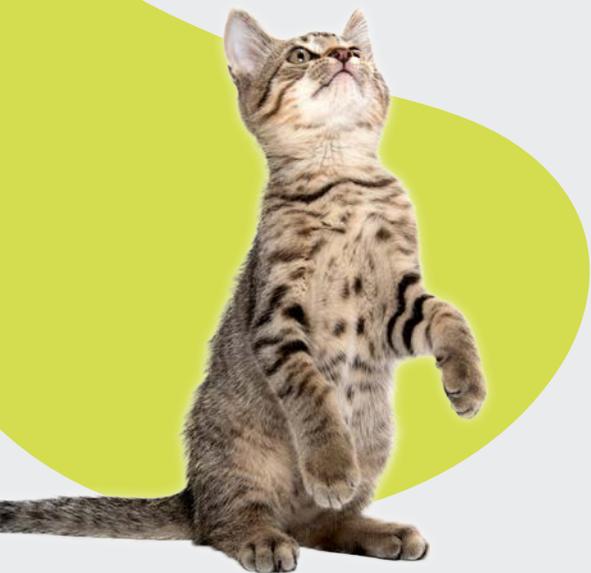


Maintain Your Pet's Healthy Weight

As pet owners, we play an essential part in our pet's lives. We take on the responsibility for feeding, sheltering and helping them stay healthy.

- + A big part of keeping our pets healthy is helping them maintain their weight.
- + Both cats and dogs need regular exercise in order to stay healthy. If they are carrying more weight than is good for them, using exercise in combination with diet will help them lose weight and make it more likely that they will keep that weight off permanently.
- + Of course, even pets that aren't overweight need exercise to keep them in good condition. The challenge is finding the time to exercise your pet and coming up with ways to encourage more reluctant pets to have a daily workout.



Fur Life Vet provides health and wellbeing information for you to help care for your pets throughout their lives.

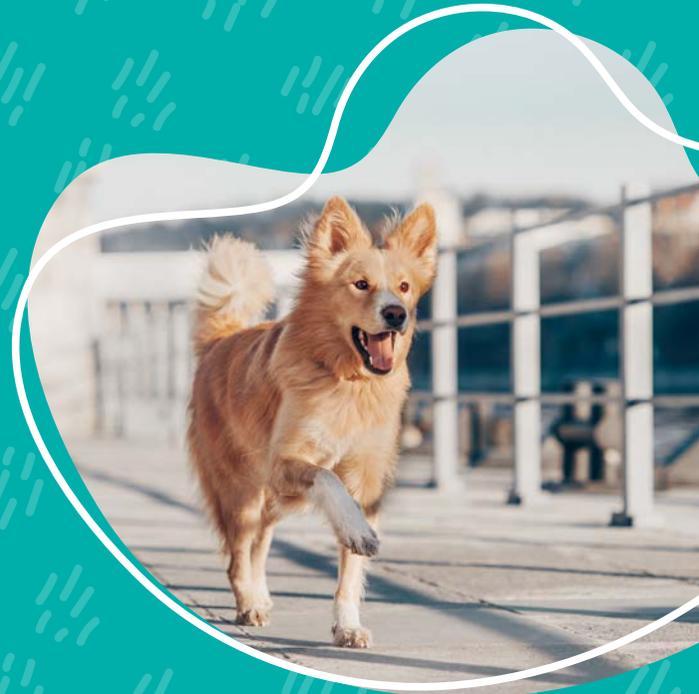

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NOW**

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Exercising Your Pet

Both cats and dogs need regular exercise in order to stay healthy.



Dogs & Cats need regular exercise

Cats & dogs are creatures of habit. If you commit to a regular time every day to give them exercise, you won't need to set an alarm on your phone or write a reminder on the back of your hand.

Your pet will remind you when it is time for exercise. As long as you're in their vicinity, they'll let you know when it's time to get started.

What counts as exercise?

Any activity that gets your pet's heart rate up is a type of exercise. Running, walking, climbing, playing with a toy – there are plenty of ways to get them moving. For pets at the more energetic end of the scale, such as a young kelpie, a good run through the park or an energetic game of fetch might be needed. For more inactive or older animals like a mature cat, it could be as simple as chasing a cat toy around the room.

Whatever you do, remember to mix it up. Just like us, pets need variety to stay engaged. Remember to start small with slow and non-strenuous activities if your pet is overweight, old or simply unfit.



Encouraging an inactive pet to exercise

Some pets are perfectly happy to spend their days lounging in the sun and will only exercise if prompted by their owners. If your pet is like this, think about ways to pique their interest. Cats and dogs both love to search for food. One way to get them exercising is to stimulate this love by making them track down their dinner.

For dogs, their keen sense of smell lets you play hide and seek games, getting them to use their nose to seek out their hidden dinner. For cats, it's more about stalking. Putting their food in a simple toy designed to entice a cat, can give them all the stimulation they need to get up and moving. You'll find plenty of these toys in pet stores for both cats and dogs.

Most cats also love to climb and scratch. Tempting them with food at the top of a staircase or by giving them a climbing tree that includes a full-height scratching post can help trigger their instinct to exercise.

Just remember that if you use these methods to entice your pet to get moving, that you need to use the food from their daily food allocation. Giving extra food will defeat the purpose of this exercise!



Adjust exercise with age & stage

The older your pet, the less likely they are to have the endurance or the attention span to stay engaged.

They're also less able to cope with over-exertion and could end up injured if pushed too hard. As your pet ages, keep an eye on them to make sure they cope during exercise. Sometimes that can even mean stopping them from doing regular activities so they don't hurt themselves. Ask your vet for specific exercise recommendations if you have an older, or less mobile pet.

How long should an exercise session last?

Your pet's exercise needs are based on a number of different factors. A fit, young dog should be getting at least 30 minutes to an hour every day. Whereas an older cat may only need a short daily session of 10 to 15 minutes.

If your pet is carrying a little too much weight or has mobility issues caused by old age or illness, your Vet can also advise you on how much your pet can handle in any one session.

