



Grafton Dog Obedience Club Inc.

EXERCISING HIGH ENERGY DOGS

Many dog owners consider a walk around the block as being the only exercise their dog needs. But for many dogs this is the equivalent of us walking to our front gate and back - it barely counts as exercise.

Some working breeds (Border Collies, Kelpies, Cattle Dogs etc) are bred to cover distances of 50 km or more in the course of a day's work. Gundogs (Labradors, Golden Retrievers, German Shorthaired Pointers, etc.) are also bred to walk/run/swim long distances flushing and retrieving game. Hounds (Beagles, Afghan Hounds, Rhodesian Ridgebacks, etc) may follow their quarry long distances during a hunt. Often owners consider their dogs to be hyperactive when in fact their dog is simply showing normal energy levels for that breed.

So you have realised that your dog needs much more exercise than it is getting at present and you don't fancy becoming a marathon runner to keep your dog happy. How can you give your high energy dog sufficient exercise without spending all day exercising your dog or becoming super fit yourself?

If you have a suitable area to exercise your dog you can walk your dog on a retractable lead or long lead. Active dogs will cover 2 to 3 times the distance you walk if they are able to run to and fro on a long lead, so a 3 km walk for you becomes a 6 - 9 km walk for your dog.

Dogs that fetch can be given lots of strenuous exercise chasing a ball, frisbee or other suitable fetch toy. Specially designed throwing toys (such as a ball on a rope) can be thrown further than a plain ball. For those high energy, ball crazy dogs that destroy a tennis ball with one bite, there are specially designed tough balls available.

Try a game of tug-o-war with a dog that prefers to tug rather than fetch. Use thick cotton rope or other suitable material that won't injure your dog or burn your hands. If your dog is reluctant to give up the ball or the tug toy, offer him a treat in exchange for the toy. It's impossible to keep hold of a ball or tug toy and eat a treat at the same time! Aussie Dog Products make super tough balls and fetch toys and can be found at www.aussiedog.com.au

If your dog would prefer to go for a good long run rather than chase a ball or toy, consider a Springer or Walkie Dog, gadgets that attaches to your pushbike so you can safely exercise your dog while riding your bike. When your dog is attached to the Springer or Walkie Dog he is positioned a safe distance away from the wheels of your bike and you are able to ride safely with both hands on the handlebars. Both gadgets incorporate a spring that prevents you being pulled off your bike if your dog suddenly stops or lunges sideways. The Springer is currently difficult to find in Australia but the Walkie Dog is available from www.callicoma.com.au

Now your high energy dog can get all the exercise he needs!

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