

# Walk Your Dog & Lose Weight

By Comfort for Critters

Dogs can truly be the best weight-loss tool around. Think of them as a treadmill with fur....but one that will plead to be used and then reward you with a wagging tale and happy grin. Generally speaking, treadmills just don't do that.

Study after study provides the data that a simple daily walk with your dog can, and will, help you lose weight. A study of 5,000 Britons even found that people who own dogs get more exercise than people with gym memberships! Here are a few more statistics to get you to lace up those sneakers:

- Harvard Health Publications reports that public housing residents, who walked their dogs for 20 minutes a day, five days a week, lost over 14 pounds in a year. That's without a single change to their diet.
- The University of Missouri showed in a study that the same 100 minutes of dog-walking exercise a week produced a 14 pound weight loss in a bit under a year.
- Dog owners in a University of Michigan study were shown to be 34% more likely to meeting their personal fitness goals, by walking their dog for at least 150 minutes per week.
- The American College of Sports Medicine found that pet owners, who walked their pets just 25 minutes a week, had lower Body Mass Index scores, than non-walkers.

On top of the beneficial weight-loss, participants in these studies found that they actually looked forward to taking their dog on a walk, rather than coming up with excuses to stay home from the gym. The participants also reaped many other benefits, including fresh air, a mental boost, socialization and of course the chance for a big sloppy kiss at the end. One more thing treadmills simply don't do!

**Your turn:** *How often do you walk your dog? What do you get out of it?*

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