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Hiking with your Pup

A Practical Guide to Ensure your Adventure is Positive

Hiking isn't for everyone, just like people not every dog will be enthusiastic about a day of hiking. Before you decide to take your dog on a hiking adventure ask yourself these questions and carefully consider your answers. "Is this something Buster would enjoy?" Does your dog enjoy long walks, new people, other dogs and wildlife? Can you walk your dog on a loose leash? Is your dog quiet? Are you prepared to carry the extra supplies needed for your dog?

If you answered yes to all of these questions, then start packing. If there was a "no" or two in there then let's review why each question is so important.

Going on a hike can be very strenuous on the body. You want to ensure your dog is good physical shape before heading out. Dogs that are overweight should not be taken on long strenuous hikes. The uneven ground can put a lot of strain on their body. Once you are committed on a trail it may be a really long road back if you have to carry your dog back out. Build up their endurance prior to your planned hike to ensure a great experience. This should also include getting them used to different gear like boots, coats or backpacks.

Make sure your pup is up to date on their vaccinations. If you are planning on hiking out of province phone a local veterinary clinic to see what they are vaccinating against in their area. You should also put this clinics phone number and address in your phone in case you needed them. Check out what they do after hours if there was an emergency.

Although you are planning on being out in the Wide-Open Wilderness the chances of you encountering many different groups of people and animals is very high. How does your dog react to people? Are they happy-go-lucky, or do they automatically try and guard you? Can you have a nice loose leash while walking or is your dog pulling you up the trail?





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Having your dog off leash is not an option. You need to be in control at all times no matter what lies ahead on the trail. The best option for that is having your dog on a 6' leash. Retractable leashes are a hazard as they can wrap around everything and get tangled very quickly. Make sure you have tags on your dog in case they did get loose. In every interaction you want to show your dog that you will look after them. In order to do this, you want to position yourself between your dog and "potential danger." Having your dog understand heel will be a key component in this exercise. For example, if you encounter something on the trail heel your dog on your left, then you in the middle so the "potential danger" will be on your right. Positioning yourself this way will show your dog that you are in the leadership role and will protect and look after them.

The next consideration is how your dog reacts when it sees another dog, or other wildlife. What if a rabbit runs by or they spot a deer or a moose? Will they start barking hysterically or calmly watch?

This is just a small snapshot of what you could encounter on the trail to show the importance of having a well-balanced dog at your side. Just because your pup has a lot of energy does not mean that they are perfect for the trail. Proper training and socialization are key prior to you deciding to take your dog on the trails with you.

Happy Hiking,

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CEO/Founder of CW Canine Consulting

calming chaos one paw at a time!





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Here are a few things you should have for your pup in your pack

- 🐾 Plenty of water for both you and your pup. If you are bringing purifying tablets make sure they are pet friendly
- 🐾 Portable water dish – something big enough that you can also dip their feet in. Once they are done drinking dip their paws in the water. This will help them cool down...dogs sweat through their feet
- 🐾 Food – you may need to feed them a bit more than their normal quota if you are burning more calories. Be sure NOT to feed them any full meals on the hike. They need downtime to digest. Little snacks if needed are ok, dogs can get hangry too!
- 🐾 Poop bags – Yes you are responsible for picking up after your dog
- 🐾 Antiseptic spray for dog wounds – if they get cut or injured
- 🐾 Roll of vet wrap – this can be a lifesaver if your dog gets hurt eg. the pads on their paw
- 🐾 Roll of gauze – you can use this if you need to bandage your pup or make a soft muzzle. If your dog gets hurt and is in pain they may bite
- 🐾 Light but strong blanket – if your dog was injured and you had to carry them out or keep them warm. Also, great to spread out on a winter hike to keep them dry and off the snow when you stop for a break
- 🐾 Quick dry towel – if you are planning on going into any water
- 🐾 Bug spray – possibly for ticks and mosquitoes
- 🐾 Tick removing tool with an empty pill bottle. You need to keep any ticks you remove to have them tested for Lyme disease
- 🐾 Raincoat, boots and a dog backpack – having a raincoat can be a lifesaver if it decides to rain on your hike. Boots can be a great way to protect your dog's feet from rocks, tree needles etc. A dog backpack can also be a great way to carry gear but DO NOT use it if the weather is hot. Having a well-padded backpack is also key if you are planning to take longer hikes