

Pooch to 5K Training Tips

- It is important to remember a pet is always dependent on you regarding breaks. Your dog will run as long as you do, whether he/she is exhausted or not so don't drag him/her on your marathon training run. Cap your pooch-accompanied runs at 10 miles.
- Dogs don't sweat like humans do. They cool down through panting and disperse heat through their feet, though neither are very efficient.
- Knowing your dog's resting heart rate and respiratory rate so you can assess recovery is helpful. A rapid heart rate and respiratory rate that doesn't slow with the rest is one of the first signs of heat exhaustion. Also look out for collapsing, unresponsiveness, high-pitched wheezing or gasping for breath, or unconsciousness.
- Take frequent water breaks, choose shady running routes and work out in the cooler parts of the day.
- Teach your dogs to drink from a portable hydration pack or water bottle to avoid a quick drink from contaminated puddles, ponds or lakes. A collapsible dog bowl is also handy to have along with your walk/run.
- A diet rich in meat protein and digestible calcium with lots of micro-nutrients, good bacteria and enzymes will help your dog maintain a healthy body weight and endure rigorous workouts. Joint-easing supplements like glucosamine and chondroitin may be beneficial for older dogs.
- Be careful not to feed your dog for one hour before and after you run. A dog's stomach acts as a holding tank during digestion and eating too close to exercise time can make your dog vulnerable to dangerous gastric torsion or bloat.
- Beyond endurance training, safety habits and diet tips, what is most valuable is your relationship with your dog. Running really takes up a small part of your day and the rest of your time with your dog will be spent living a normal life. Your dog needs to be a good match for you and your lifestyle.