

Trouble-free winter fun for dogs

Winter is often full of surprises with sudden icy temperatures or downpours of rain at the start of the New Year. Experts from the specialist retail chain, Maxi Zoo, clarify everything dog owners should be aware of to prevent their pet from coming to any harm on a winter walk.

KEEP AN EYE ON THE PAWS

Hard clumps of ice and strewn grit and salt can cause severe damage to your dog's paws. You can prevent cracked pads and other injuries by taking care of the paws and warding off a potential invasion of foreign bodies: trim the fur between the pads with a pair of scissors. You can protect the paws by applying protective paw balsam or paw care spray to the pads before going for a walk. However, excessive care has the opposite effect and makes the pads soft - so always make sure that the hard skin surface is intact and strong. There are also special, waterproof shoes available for dogs with very sensitive paws. After the walk, a dog's paws can be cleaned with a damp, warm



cloth; salt residue can only be washed out by direct application of warm water. If your pet has lacerated pads it is best to visit your vet.

PROTECTION AGAINST THE COLD

Dogs can cool down and catch cold, too - especially whelps, older animals or those with a short or sparse undercoat. A dog coat provides excellent protection against the freezing cold. If your dog still loves to splash around in streams in these weather conditions, it is best to take along a towel for drying its fur when you go for a walk. Finally, dogs need to keep on the move to prevent their body temperature from falling. When the weather is cold and damp, you should rub down your four legged friend as soon as you get home. Make sure that it snuggles down in a warm, dry and cosy corner afterwards.

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WALKING IN THE COLD IS HUNGRY WORK!

Bear in mind that your pet uses up far more calories than normal during cold weather and from frolicking around in the cold weather. So, if you keep up the accustomed intensity of your walks during the winter, compensate for increased calorie burning by giving your pet extra food. When doing this, pay close attention to the feeding instructions on the packet

and adjust the size of the portion to the higher calorific requirement accordingly. A balanced diet is especially important for strengthening the immune system during winter and covers the increased need for vital nutrients. On the other hand, if you don't walk your dog so often when it's cold, it will not need any extra food.



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