

How Much Exercise? Marcia Albert

How much exercise your dog needs depends on his age, breed, health and personality. Usually I suggest 20 minutes of aerobic exercise in the morning and 20 minutes in the afternoon. Almost anything that gets his heart rate up and gives him a good workout is great. Max is more apt to be quieter and less busy after exercising, and a calmer dog is much easier to work with. Retrieving, running, swimming, playing Frisbee or Hide and Seek, going for a long walk and walking on a treadmill will tire Max out, and interacting with him as you play strengthens your relationship.

Please remember that dogs are similar to children. There's a fine line between just enough activity and over stimulation. Children on Christmas night are a great example of this. Not only does the dog become overly active, but he's also building endurance. The 30 minutes that used to tucker him out becomes 45 minutes which soon becomes an hour.

Along with physical exercise Max needs some mental stimulation. Concentration uses as much energy as running and playing fetch. Think of how you feel after you've filled out your tax return. Try these ideas---

- stuff a Kong® with peanut butter and treats
- put his kibble for dinner in a Buster Cube and Max will work to get the food out
- play Find It - hide a treat in the room and have him FIND IT!
- practice obedience training
- teach him some tricks
- take him for a walk and let him sniff and explore all he wants

Here are a few rules for any time you interact with Max.

- 1) You always initiate the activity - he doesn't
- 2) You make up the rules and he follows them
- 3) You end the activity