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Your Smart Dog

Together Time: You and Your Dog

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My parents were visiting recently and Nemo hopped up onto the sofa, flopped down into my mother's lap and promptly fell asleep. He stayed there for over an hour and wouldn't have moved, except my mom got up. That's one of the many reasons I love living with dogs. They love to be with you. **There's nothing better in my opinion than having a dog as part of the family.** An active and essential part.

So to start this new year, I have a challenge for you. Do more with your dog. Go more places. Have more fun. Spend more time together. Really enjoy your dog. I guarantee that your dog will love it!

I know it's tough – today we're multi-tasking, trying to pack 28 hours into 24. Too often, the craziness of life takes over and we shorten the dog's walks, or skip a play session with the dog. Unfortunately, if that becomes the norm, your dog's behavior may deteriorate. **An under-exercised dog is an unhappy dog.** You might see a "hyper" dog, a dog who barks more than he used to, a dog who's not listening, or has become "stubborn." **This newsletter will give you some ideas on how to spend quality time with your dog. I challenge you to find the time to be with your dog, and make that time count.**

Ideas for Time Well Spent with Your Dog

Young, active dog

- Hide and Seek
- Chase
- Fetch
- Laser Pointer Chase
- Hikes in the woods
- Swim in the lake or pond
- Fun training sessions

Older, less active dog

- Massage
- Leisurely walks
- Nursing home visits
- Snuggle-time
- Fun training sessions

All dogs love...

- Just hanging out with you
- Sleeping on your lap
- Affection and petting

Think Small

You don't have to go on a weekend hike with your dog right out of the gate. A nice walk would be great. But not *just* a walk. Let your dog lead the way. If he wants to sniff for two minutes, let him! If he wants to meander here and there, let him! **Let it be his walk. No time limits, leave your watch at home.**



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Family Affair

Share your dog-plans with your family, let them join in on the fun. Making sure that the dog centers prominently in your plans, **take the family along** when you and your dog are headed out to find some fun.

The Dog Has Fun

The dog is the center of this plan, it's all for him. It's important the dog isn't forced to endure situations and people that aren't fun for the dog. You may love going for a five mile jog, but does your dog really enjoy it? Remember, this is *for the dog*. Don't force the dog into situations in which he's uncomfortable, scared, or unsure.

Quiet Time Is Good, Too

Not all of your activities need to be active ones. Dogs like some quiet, one-on-one time, too. A snuggle on the couch, a relaxing massage or grooming session, or working on some fun tricks is enjoyable for your dog.

I hope you take me up on my New Year's challenge and spend more quality time with your dog. Keep me updated on what you're doing, where you're going, and how much fun you're having together!

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