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Prepping Your Dog for the Post-COVID Life

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Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic led us into a new normal.

However, for our canine friends, the situation came as a blessing. They get to spend more time with their owners. Naturally, this extra time leads to longer walks and even more playtime, and perhaps, more rewards.



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Well, with the world returning to normal, especially with vaccination at full tilt, you need to prepare your dog for the future.

The biggest concern in this regard is a return to working in the office, especially for dog parents who have been working at home for over a year. The same is true if you are planning to go back to school, or will be spending a large part of the day outside the house.

Your pet might have to spend a long duration on his or her own, and your friends and family might not be able to look in on them. So, what do you need to do?

Read on to find out!

Why You Need to Set a Regular Routine

The major concern pet parents are facing at this time is due to the pandemic. It has brought about a change in their lifestyle because of the lockdown. As a result, their pet canines are no longer following the same schedule as before.

In fact, since a majority of people are working from home or on a freelance basis, they have no fixed hours. Depending on their workload, they keep changing their routine, and naturally, this has an effect on their dogs as well.

A simple hack to overcome this issue is setting a regular routine. Naturally, you might find it extremely difficult to stick to the pre-pandemic routine with your dog. However, as we move towards a post-pandemic scenario, getting back into a routine can help.

Here are a few ideas that you can explore:

Setting an Exercise Routine

The simplest way to restore your dog's routine is by setting a schedule for daily exercise. Studies show that a majority of dogs function best when they get up to 45 minutes of aerobic exercise in a day.



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You might assume that just because you have more time on your hands, you can take your dog out for longer walks. What you need to realize is that there is only so much exercise your pet's body can take.

Therefore, you need to set a routine you can maintain, especially once you get back to your normal daily pattern. 30 to 45 minutes of physical activity is more than enough, in most cases.

Allow Your Dog to Sleep

On average, dogs sleep for 10 to 14 hours a day. This duration often depends on the time their owners are away from home. In other words, the amount of sleep your dog needs is determined by how long you leave him or her alone on a daily basis.

Obviously, younger dogs tend to spend more time sleeping. Also, if you are giving your dog a good workout every day, the tiredness might compel your pet to sleep more. What you need to do is to allow your dog to sleep as much as he or she wants.

Don't wake up your dog if you feel bored or want to play with them. Otherwise, your pet's sleep pattern might get attuned to your routine when staying at home 24/7, which is not ideal when you return back to work.

Your Pet Needs Toys

You need to find ways to encourage your dog to play with toys. There are certain tips and tricks you can try, including:

- Rotating the toys during your dog's playtime, as he/she might feel bored when playing with the same toys over and over
- Smearing some lick-able food on the toys, such as peanut butter, though it would be a good idea to talk to your vet beforehand
- Buying a variety of toys, since, as mentioned above, dogs might not show interest in playing with the same toys over and over



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Training and Re-Training

As with exercise and toys, you might need to inculcate new habits in your dog or help him/her get rid of habits that you don't want to be carried into the post-pandemic life. You can look for online resources to learn about training methods that work.

Thanks to COVID-19, a number of trainers are now sharing valuable information about training and re-training your dog, especially when preparing for life after the pandemic. In fact, it might be a good idea to revisit the basic habits that you taught your dog, including commands.

Leaving Your Dog Alone: The Risk of Separation Anxiety

The most pressing concern you might face when returning back to work or school is separation anxiety. Dogs tend to 'act out' when separated from their owners.

You might be getting ready for work and just at that time, your pet pooch might decide to knock over things or even howl. These destructive behaviors are a means for the dog to express the distress they face at the prospect of being away from their owner.



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The risk of separation anxiety is even greater since you would have been spending more time than usual with your dog at home. Since the attachment is greater, the risk of anxiety is higher as well.

There are ways to mitigate this risk on your own. However, if your dog is behaving badly and you are unable to do anything about it, the best option is to talk to your vet.

Here are some tips you can try:

1. You can start off by leaving your dog alone for a few minutes every day. On the first day, you can give your dog some alone time for let's say half an hour. Once your dog gets used to this, you can increase the time in certain increments.
2. Before you leave your dog alone, you can put his/her toys within reach as well as leave rewards and treats around. This way, your dog will view alone time as a positive exercise as compared to feeling distressed.
3. Do not, under any circumstances, punish your dog for any bad behavior caused by being separated from you. You will end up making the situation worse.

Conclusion: How to Plan for the Future

As you can see, prepping your pet canine for the post-COVID life is no rocket science. A few simple tips and tricks can help you and your pet transition from the new normal, back into some semblance of the old normal.

You can also find other ways to keep your dog involved in your day-to-day life. For instance, you can take your pet along with you if you are taking your kids to school or going to get your car washed.

If you feel you won't have enough time to care for your dog after life goes back to the pre-pandemic state, you can invest in hiring a walker.

Use this eBook as a basic guide to making life easier for your dog while ensuring you can transition to the post-COVID life with one less thing to worry about!

