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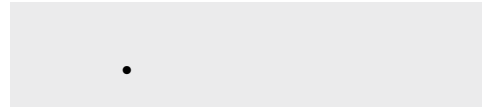
Current Issue

Survival of the Fittest

Jen Sinkler, Experience Life senior editor, compiles a hodgepodge of fitness information, including perspectives on sports-oriented training, random fitness trivia and tales from the gym.

Take Your Dog to Work — or to Work Out

Friday, June 20th, 2008



[Zoey and Ellie: BFFs. Photo credit: Lisa Dombroski]

Today is **Take Your Dog to Work Day**, which Erica pointed out in the comments section of the **CrossFit Philly blog** yesterday. But if taking yer pooch to work isn't possible, consider making him or her your workout buddy.

About Jen



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“Forty percent of pet dogs are overweight or obese. That’s close to thirty million dogs in the United States alone dealing with health implications of weight problems ... like diabetes, heart problems, aching joints, difficulty breathing, intolerance of exercise, even an increased risk of cancer,” according to [Fitness Unleashed!: A Dog and Owner’s Guide to Losing Weight and Gaining Health Together](#) by Marty Becker, DVM, and Robert Kushner, MD. So gradually amping up the exercise is good for both of you.

Many of you are already out there with Buffy, Fluffy and Spike. According to [this Fit Sugar post](#), which cites research published in the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, dog owners walk an average of 300 minutes per week, whereas folks without dogs only walk around 168 minutes.

Co-owners of [Thank Dog Boot Camp](#), Jill and Jamie *Bowers* (don’t you love [aptonyms?](#)), have based a business on the concept of working out with your doggie friend, and I think they’re on to something. Lately, I’ve been working out early in the morning with a group of friends, and taking the pooches pictured above for a trail run by [Wissahickon Creek](#) afterward. Their sheer joy in being unleashed upon nature is almost enough to make me forget about the pain and tightness in my lower calves. Almost. (But on my to-do list is getting my gait checked out, because something is up. Jogging should *not* be so painful.)

LASTLY, I CAME ACROSS AN ARTICLE about the very cool [Seattle Animal Shelter’s Get Fit With Fido](#) program. Every Wednesday and Saturday, you can volunteer to run adoptable dogs from the shelter on 2- to 4-mile routes. The volunteers wear bright yellow, and the dogs wear “I’m available for adoption” banners.

The program has been so successful that there’s a spinoff (kind of like “[Private Practice](#)”) called the [SAS Annual Furry 5K](#), where 2,500 runners/walkers, 1,000 dogs, and one “very brave” (or very stupid?) cat participate in a five-kilometer event each June to raise money for the [Help the Animals Fund](#). Looks like the race was last Sunday, but there’s always next year to do your doggone duty.



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