

# 5 New Year's Resolutions for Dog Owners

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It's the time of year for making New Year's Resolutions! The usual list of resolutions includes commitments to do more of this, less of that, and get these and those things done. For pet parents, here are some New Year's Dog Resolutions to help your furry friend make the most of this new year too.

You're likely to discover when setting a few resolutions for your dog that they're not very different from some you've probably set for yourself at one time or another. Here are some excellent New Year's resolutions you may want to set for your dog. They're all goals you and your pal can achieve together to make this a happy year for you both!

## Walk With Your Dog Every Day

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It's easy to slump into a sedentary lifestyle, especially in January and February. But, it's much more fun and rewarding to get some fresh air and sunshine, and exercise, especially with your dog. It's so much more satisfying to be out, active, experiencing the world with your best friend, especially after you develop a routine. So, if you live in a region where the climate permits, bundle up and get out for brief walks with your dog as often as possible. Or, substitute with lots of indoor playtimes that keep you both physically active.

Give it a week or so. You'll find that after just a few walks, it will be as hard to make yourself stop as it was to get started. It's exhilarating and fun to be outdoors and watch your dog thrilled with the wonder of the experience every single time.

## Improve Your Dog's Nutrition

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Update your knowledge of nutritional recommendations for dogs and the best brands to give your pet a well-balanced diet. Learn the healthiest treats too. Work some real meat into the rotation. When you cook real meat for your own meals, buy and cook a little extra to substitute the canned dog food for fresh-cooked chicken, turkey, hamburger, or pork once or twice per week.

Of course, you'll want to make sure that your dog's foods, including treats, are delicious, so any option you introduce will have to pass the test of your dog's preferences. Ask your veterinarian to recommend some healthy options too.

## **Maintain Your Dog's Dental Health**

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Routinely give your dog enzymatic chew treats to help keep your pet's teeth cleaner between dental care sessions at your veterinary office. Schedule an oral health assessment with your veterinarian to determine the condition of your pet's teeth and gums. Ask your vet for advice on caring for your dog's dental health, to prevent tooth decay and gum disease.

## **Have New Adventures With Your Dog**

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It's rewarding to have a different experience, see a new sight, find out what's around that next corner, or over that next hill. Dogs love all those things too. It doesn't have to be about traveling long-distance. If you want to venture out, maybe find a new park or a nearby waterfront at a river, creek, or lake, and spend some quality time hanging out with your dog.

Times enjoyed doing fun activities with your dog are moments to treasure. Or put one of those small plastic toddler's wading pools in your backyard. Or invest in a Frisbee, or a new ball, or a bottle of bubbles! That's a lot of excitement for a couple of dollars and some extra time outdoors.

## **Teach Your Dog Something New**

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It's always fun to learn something new, master a new skill. It's the same for dogs. It builds confidence in people and dogs to learn new things. Maybe start with teaching your dog a new trick. You can both take pride in accomplishing that together.

Teaching your dog something new is a fun little journey of a very special kind. Why not start with one of the basics, like sit, or stay. Remember to use the positive reinforcement method for your training, rewarding each instance of success, and near success, with praise and a treat, a toy, or a few minutes of playtime.

## **Spending Quality Time with Your Dog**

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Notice that three of the five resolutions suggested above involve routinely spending time in quality interaction with your dog. Above all, in the new year and beyond, prioritize making more time for just bonding with your pet.

Play together, cuddle on the couch. Just enjoy being pals. Spending time with your dog is much more than merely a dog owner's responsibility, like medical care. Time spent having fun with your dog can become some of your life's best memories. The healthiest, happiest, and most rewarding way to be a pet parent is to make time regularly to have some fun with your dog and just to relax together!

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