

# Seasonal Trainer's Tips

## FALL

- As summer fades into fall, daylight hours become increasingly darker. It is important that you and your dog are visible while walking alongside traffic at night. Evening walks with your dog may be safer with the use of a reflective dog collar and leash.
- Daylight Savings Time is not only a good time to change your clocks and the batteries in smoke detectors but also a good time to check with your dog's veterinarian to make sure all medical records are up-to-date.
- Is your dog frightened when it's time for a nail clipping? Try taking your dog for a walk on rough pavement or concrete sidewalks. With daily walking, the coarse asphalt and concrete may help to slowly wear down nails.
- Halloween can be an exciting time for children as they walk through the neighborhood in their costumes. Those very costumes, however; may be extremely frightening to a dog. If your dog is not accustomed to children in Halloween costumes, leaving your dog at home may be a safer alternative during trick or treating.
- One way of preventing your dog from getting into Halloween candy is to store the candy in a hard-to-reach location. Plastic wrappers, sugary snacks and chocolate can be potentially life-threatening to a dog. If you suspect your dog has eaten some Halloween candy, please contact your veterinarian.

## WINTER

- You may wish to use caution this winter if your dog walks on surfaces treated with rock salt and/or other ice melting products. A dog can collect these chemicals on its paws and try to lick them clean. Always wash off your dog's paws when returning indoors to prevent your dog from ingesting these harmful chemicals.
- Dogs are at risk for frostbite and hypothermia during the harsh winter months. There are some dogs that can remain outdoors in the cold weather longer than others. No pets; however, should remain outside without access to a warm and dry shelter, clean and unfrozen drinking water and food.
- Does your dog have cabin fever on those icy winter days? If your dog has received a clean bill of health from your veterinarian, the stairs in your home may serve as an alternate way to exercise your pet indoors.

Try hiding a treat or favorite toy at the top of the stairs and ask your dog to go find it. Stairs with carpeting or rubber matting may provide a safer surface to climb since they offer traction.

- "Sit", "Down" and "Stay" are the commands most dog owners teach their pets. Training your dog to "Stand" may be beneficial as well. Teaching your dog to keep all four paws on the floor and remain still may help on those slushy winter days when a dog enjoys wiggling more than being dried off by a towel!

## **SPRING**

- Inspect all of your dog's chew toys for wear and tear, even the ones that remain outdoors throughout the winter. Worn out or weather-beaten toys can be a choking hazard for your dog.
- Check your dog's bed or pillow for any broken zippers and tears. Replacing a torn bed today may prevent your dog from swallowing more than a helping of stuffing from the bed or pillow tomorrow.
- Take a look around your property and drain any standing water from pool covers, flower pots, children's toys, etc. Standing water can be a breeding ground for mosquitoes. Heartworm is transmitted by mosquitoes which is harmful to dogs.
- If your yard is fenced in, take a walk around the property to inspect the fence. Check for any loose or missing parts, broken gates or hinges and any low lying areas of the fence in order to prevent your dog from getting out.

## **SUMMER**

- Chances are your dog won't be wearing flip-flops this summer! When walking your dog, try to steer clear of streets and sidewalks in direct sunlight. Streets and sidewalks absorb the sun's heat and may cause a dog's paws to blister.
- Try to avoid taking prolonged walks with your dog on exceptionally hot and/or humid days. Early morning or late evening temperatures tend to be cooler and more favorable for a walk rather than midday.
- Leaving a dog in a parked car during warm weather even with the windows partially open can be a potentially fatal mistake. The sun can dramatically raise the temperature inside a vehicle within minutes.
- Skunk season is here! Routinely check your property prior to letting your dog out to prevent an encounter with a skunk. Contact your veterinarian if your dog clashes with a skunk and verify that your pet has been vaccinated for rabies.

- Fertilizers and pesticides are typically applied to areas around the home and/or parks during the early and late summer months. Always stay away from treated areas to prevent any potential injury or illness to your family and/or pets.