

SHAPE UP *for Spring*

JILL BOWERS, founder of a boot camp for dogs and people, shares five fun fitness tips

The weather is warming up, and it's time to start heading outdoors. But after the long winter months, both you and your dog may need to get back in shape.

And to Jill Bowers, founder of Thank Dog! Bootcamp, dogs are the perfect partners for doing just that. Jill founded Thank Dog! in 2007. "I have an identical twin sister who was skinnier than me," says Jill. "So I decided to get back in shape and start working out using a boot camp training method, which worked great for me." It worked so well, in fact, that she lost 40 pounds.

Inspired, she and her twin, Jamie, decided to create their own exercise boot camp, incorporating their favorite workout partners: their dogs!

"I have been a dog trainer for almost 10 years, and dogs have always inspired me to work out," says Jill.

Now, Thank Dog! Bootcamp programs can be found in several cities across California, with many new locations planned (including one in Toronto). Although tailored for the climate in each region, all programs combine a physical workout for both dog and dog owner, while simultaneously teaching dogs the kind of basic obedience that strengthens the human-canine bond. In each hour-long workout session, dogs and owners engage in cardiovascular training, strength training, and obedience training.

If you aren't near a Thank Dog! program site, you can still kick-start your spring fitness regimen by incorporating these tips from Jill Bowers in your daily workout. Good luck! —Stephanie Todaro

5 TIPS for Springtime Exercise

Dogs who are able to roam freely while on a leash don't get the concentrated exercise they require, so to center your dog on the task at hand, keep him close. Doing so will also allow you to better focus on your own workout.

Make sure you walk or run in an on-leash park. Although letting your dog roam free in an enclosed area is great, for a true workout he needs both mental and physical stimulation, both of which are best achieved when use leash training.



Start a swimming routine. If you live in an area of the country where it gets warm early in the spring, move your workout into a pool. It's the best exercise a dog or human can get. Plus, water naturally relaxes most dogs.

Take a hike! If your dog is off-leash, he'll be the one setting the pace, so, again, be sure to use a leash at all times. We recommend a longer, 50-foot lead, so Rover will have some room to roam, but can still be recalled at any time.

Incorporate obedience training into all exercise; it will keep your dog mentally and physically challenged. And having a dog who understands "sit" and "stay" will allow you to work lunges or lifting into your own routine.