



## Dog Parks

Dog parks are being very popular and provide a fenced in area to exercise dogs off leash. These parks can be a wonderful place to exercise your dog and socialize your dog. If you are considering taking your dog to a dog park for the first time, do some homework first before taking your dog there.

### Observe the Dogs

The most important things you can do before entering the dog park is observe the dogs that are in the dog park. Humans are creatures of habit, just like dogs. If you want to take your dog to the park at a specific time, check out what dogs are at the dog park at that time. See if the owners are monitoring their dogs play. Meet the owners and chat with them about who attends at this time and what their dogs are like. Sometimes, play groups can be established to help make it a fun and safe experience for all.

### Check Out the Park

As a dog owner, make sure the dog park is safe and completely enclosed. Check out the fencing to make sure it's high enough and walk through the park. Check for holes or other obstructions that could cause injury. Is the park clean or is there fecal matter everywhere? Close monitoring of the park helps to ensure that your dog is safe and won't become sick or injured.

### Obey the Rules

Know and obey the rules of the dog park. Some dog parks are public parks, others are restricted and have membership fees. Clean up after your dog. Make sure your dog is up to date on the required vaccinations, is licensed, and wearing its tags. It's not a bad idea to have proof of rabies vaccination with you. Keep your dog in your site at all times.

### Dog Park Necessities

- \* Make sure your dog is wearing a flat, buckle collar. This helps avoid injuries.
- \* A sturdy leash for controlling your dog. No flexi leads! Make sure to remove it before letting your dog play.
- \* Doggie clean up bags. Cleaning up after your dog is the right thing to do.
- \* A canister of citronella based spray. It comes in handy if you have to break up a fight.
- \* ***Don't bring treats into the park.*** Leave them in the car. Food is a high value item and can cause problems
- \* Water, for you and your dog, but leave it in the car. It can cause problems too.

### Know Your Limit

If you have multiple dogs, make sure you can handle the dog(s) you bring to the dog park. If you own multiple dogs, it might be best to only bring one or two at a time. If one gets injured or a fight breaks out, it's a lot easier to care for one or two dogs than three or more.

### Too Much of a Good Thing

If the weather is hot and muggy or cold and windy, be aware of your dog and how much exercise he/she is getting. Dogs can suffer from heat exhaustion, heat stroke, or frost bite, just like humans. As the caretaker of your dog, make sure he/she isn't over doing it.