

Buddy and Soul

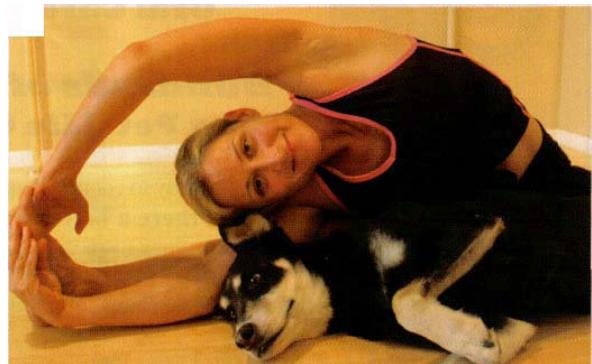


Workouts With A Wag

Pet-friendly sweat sessions make exercise a whole lot more fun

If you ever think about how ironic it is to be doing Downward Dog without Fido by your side, you're not alone. Dog-loving personal trainers, yoga instructors and outdoor enthusiasts feel the same way, and are creating opportunities to bring your four-legged pal along for a workout. Recently, exercise regimes that allow people to work up a sweat with their dog are sprouting up around the country. Things like human and doggie boot camps, yoga classes and hiking groups are making it a thing of the past to come home from a long day of work, only to say good-bye to your pooch once again as you take off for the gym.

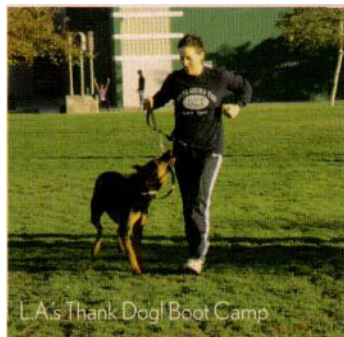
Kari Harendorf, a New York City-based dog trainer and yoga instructor, blended her two passions to create Doga classes at East Yoga in East Village. "Back when I was doing my first yoga certification in 2001, started bringing my dog Charlie to yoga class with me," she says. Her Husky mix was a hit, and her fellow yogis loved having him in the studio, "Then started teaching at that facility, and when they closed, I didn't want to not be able to bring him, because everyone in the studio loved having him in class, they all wanted to be beside him when we were there or across from him so they could see him." Not only did Harendorf and her classmates get a kick out of Charlie putting his eggs up the wall and doing a twist, but it was calming for



him. "He would lie there perfectly still. He loved the Oms at the end of class, when they Omed, he would get up, so he knew class was over," she says.

When Harendorf would practice yoga at home, Charlie would lie in the middle of her mat. "The yoga really helps humans kind of take

a breath and come into the present moment, and think the animals sense that. So just started working around him, modifying poses," she says, "Doing a lunge, bringing my foot over him, or his paw would be on top of my hand for Downward Facing Dog, or I'd do a balancing pose and I'd put my hand on him instead of on the floor." So Harendorf figured, why not do what she does at home in the studio? After opening East Yoga in 2004, she began leading a weekly vinyasa 45-minute Doga class for people and their dogs. The class begins with massaging the dogs, and participants learn relaxing and stress-reducing touch, helping their furry friends become less fearful. Then, non-weight-bearing movements are incorporated on the canines, like lifting a leg and working with their range of motion in the shoulder and hips. "Then we take the dog through sun salutations," she says, and depending on the size of the dog, the pet parent is either standing, kneeling or sitting on the floor. And dogs are on a leash, which helps make the class less chaotic, Harendorf says. "After 20 minutes of your favorite person in the world rubbing your ear and telling you how wonderful you are, and rubbing your belly, the dog is like, 'More.'" The humans also do their own yoga poses, often using the dogs as a prop, and get a good Zen workout themselves. However, Harendorf stresses that the focus is on bonding with your dog, and not as much on getting in a tough



workout. "It's not a rigorous yoga class, by any means," she says. "The focus is primarily on the dog, and it's on your relationship with the dog and bonding between person and canine."

Across the country in California, outdoor workouts with dogs are becoming popular. Thank Dog! Boot Camp in L.A. is one such boot camp program that takes your relationship with your pooch as seriously as your workout routine. Sisters Jill and Jamie Bowers started the company about a year ago after working in the dog training arena and also losing weight while participating in the area's Barry's Bootcamp. The sisters recognized that working out with your dog was simply more fun than working out alone, and have gained a large following in the process.

The dog portion also includes obedience training (both human and animal!), which Jamie says is essential for the program to work. In order to participate, every human and their dog must have a consultation and learn an hour of obedience commands. During the actual boot camp, during which there is at least one dog trainer and one personal trainer, the dogs are practicing stay and wait commands while the humans are weight training. When it comes time for cardio, the dogs participate. "The reason why this is different and awesome is

that mental stimulation is just as important as physical stimulation," Jamie says. "So when you're constantly giving the dogs commands, they get really tired, because they're in-the-moment animals." So, what do the humans think of their dog-friendly workouts? "They can't imagine working out without dogs now," Jamie says. "When you're working out and focused on the dogs and their commands, it takes away from the workout, so you don't even feel like you're working out. People have been losing weight, and we have a dog that's lost 5 pounds."

And if you're interested in the program but don't have your own dog, many programs offer opportunities to borrow one. Thank Dog! Boot Camp, for instance, posts pictures of dogs that are available to borrow for a workout, and Harendorf often hosts at least one shelter dog in the class that's available for adoption. It helps increase their sociability as well as helps get them adopted!

Dawn Celapino also runs a workout program in San Diego, Calif. Although she's been a personal trainer for about 13 years, she stopped going to the gym after getting her dog about four years ago. "I felt so bad about leaving him behind," she says. "I started doing all my work-outs outside, and most of my clients have dogs." So, she did what any dog-loving personal trainer would do: "I told them to bring [their dog]." What did her clients think about the idea? "They love it, especially the

ones who don't like to do cardio," she says. "They would have a lot of fun, so incorporated it into a business. I want to teach them that you can incorporate your dog in your workout and still get a great workout." Like Thank Dog! Boot Camp, Celapino's program features interval training, and also includes a lot of core work.

The mental stimulation, Celapino says, is important for your dog. "You're getting your dog to do things out of their comfort zone. None of the dogs know how to do these things at first," she says. But after coming a few times, they get more agile and more obedient. "It's really good to incorporate those dog commands in exercise because a lot of times if you watch people walk their dog, the dog has total control and they're pulling them all over the place. It makes the dog really have to think." Celapino also started Jack's blog, in honor of her dog, and features monthly events like hikes, doggie kayaking and doggie surfing.

Hiking clubs and meet-up groups are also integrating dogs into their activities, which is another way to experience some leisure time that includes your pup. So, next time you tie your laces and strap on your iPod, consider bringing your favorite furry pal along for the ride, too.

For more information on these programs, visit www.eastyoga.com, www.thankdogbootcamp.com or www.leashyourfitness.com