



Pawsitive Experience
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Winter Sports with Your Dog

I love going out skiing, snowshoeing and running in the winter time with my dogs. These sports aren't even close to being the same without them along. The joy of seeing them rollick in the snow is more than half the fun of the outing.

Precautions need to be taken when taking your dog out in the winter. They can suffer from dehydration, frostbite and hypothermia just like we can. They also need to be fit. Our dogs don't have the luxury of equipment attached to their feet to help them through the snow so make sure your outing fits their fitness level. Our dogs can be miserable if ice and snow build up on their coat and feet.

Here are some suggestions to make your dogs outings more fun, safe, and comfortable.

Protect their coat: **Mushers wax** can protect your dog's feet from chafing and drying and also repels snow and ice built up. Ice and snow builds up on the coat as well. **Show Sheen**, a product that is more commonly used to keep coats conditioned and shiny, also repels snow and ice on the coat and feet. These products can be found at Bend Pet Express.

Short haired dogs and any dog going snow camping need a coat. Don't assume since your dog is a hunting breed they can withstand the cold. You can find coats at any pet store in town, but make sure they are rugged and made of a good insulating synthetic. During hunting season a very bright color, preferably orange, is best. Coats with reflective material help with visibility as well.

There are many "designer" looking coats that serve well for short walks in town, but are not designed for extreme conditions. Bend Pet Express and Healthy Paws have a good selection of quality coats.

Protect their feet: You can cover the feet with booties. Make sure to get your dog used to the feel of them before you take them out. Take your dog in to be sized and make sure they fit snugly. If they don't fit properly, they can fall off in the deep snow. **Booties** can be found at Bend Pet Express and Healthy Paws.

Hydration: Being adequately hydrated keeps us from getting tired and cold and gives us more energy. The same goes for our dogs. Bring enough water for both you and your dog. Don't assume your dog will eat the snow and even then, the snow may not provide enough water depending on the water content of the snow.

Whistles: Whatever the season, I highly recommend to whistle train your dog when going on trails. My whistle training article gives you a step by step. Dogs chase animals or get on scent and can easily wander out of voice range before you know it or can respond.

Lighting: It's a good safety measure to have a light attached to your dog's collar or overcoat. It gets dark early and when storms are coming in, visibility can decline quickly. A red flashing light is the best kind to get.

See you out on the trail this winter!

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