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Picture the scene... the wind is rattling your window panes, you have just managed to peel off your rain soaked clothes after a hard day at work, and now the dog is pestering you to venture back outside for a walk when all you want to do is snuggle up by the fire!

Winter exercise is really important to keep your pet healthy so Vets Now has put together a list of tips to help you get out there with your pet and enjoy some safe winter walks...

Healthy Pet, Healthy Owner!..

If the sappy big eyes and constant pestering wasn't enough to encourage you to take your furry friend out for a walk, perhaps knowing that winter walks are one of the best ways to stay in shape will! In fact not only will the chilly weather increase cardiovascular activity, our bodies need to stay warm in the colder weather meaning that these winter walks with your pet will help you burn even more calories! So, if you are watching your weight or simply want to stay fit and healthy, don't let the British weather put you off outdoor walks as the health benefits could be substantial!

Road Safety

Firstly following the rules of the road will naturally help ensure the safety of you and your pet,



so don't forget the basics:

- Walk against the traffic so that you can see oncoming cars
- Use footpaths where possible
- Make sure you and your pets are visible in the dark. There is a whole range of visible clothing for us and there are now self illuminating collars, leashes and coats now available for pets which can be seen from up to half a mile away. Have a look in your local pet store and make sure that your pet can be seen by motorists.

Personal Safety

Secondly, don't overlook personal safety, after all with the number of hours of daylight reduced during winter months, no one wants to find themselves alone in the middle of a pitch black field walking the dog! You should always make sure you always stick to well lit areas and try to let someone know your planned route. When possible don't walk alone at night.

Winter Grooming

And when it's time to come back home, the following tips will help you with grooming your animal:

- If you have been caught in the rain, toweling dry any wet hair when you return home will help warm your pet
- If you pet has particularly thick or long hair a hair dryer on low heat is a good way to dry him off, although make sure the dryer is kept away from his ears as the noise can cause irritation
- Check your pets paws after walks as chemicals and salts that are used to keep roads and paths clear are not only toxic but will result in irritation if not washed off

So with these simple reminders in mind we hope you are inspired to get out there for these wintery walks and spend some all important bonding time with your pet.

