



# HAPPY NEW YEAR!!



## Goals Aren't Just for People

The start of a new year can also signal a fresh start for your pet needing a change in their routine. For example, with over 50 percent of pets in the U.S. classified as overweight, there's no better time for owners to commit to a new food and exercise regimen for their pet. Need some ideas?

### Measure Your Pet's Food - Every Time



Many owners “eyeball” their pet’s daily intake and pour that into a bowl, usually resulting in overfeeding and weight gain. It’s important to use an 8-ounce measuring cup to ensure your pet isn’t taking in more calories than they need. The recommended feeding guidelines on the bag are good place to start to figure out how much food your pet really needs. Older pets usually have lower energy needs than young ones.

### Choose an Age-Appropriate Food



Growing pet have very specific nutrient requirements to ensure their bodies grow healthy and strong. For example, some senior dogs may have lower energy requirements, but have other medical issues like degenerative joint disease that may be helped with the appropriate food. Choosing a food specifically tailored to your dog’s life stage is a great way to keep them in optimal health.

### Try a New Activity with Your Pet



From doga to hiking, skijoring to kayaking, it’s easier than ever for people to incorporate their dog into a new exercise routine. It’s a great way to bond, it’ll get you both out of the house, and both owner and dog will reap the rewards of a healthy physical activity. Meet-up groups are a great way to find like-minded dog owners to join you in your exercise, too!

### Incorporate (More) Playtime into Your Routine



Cats love the thrill of chasing a laser toy; just don’t tell them it’s exercise! Toys that trigger a cat’s predatory instinct are a great way to get them off the couch and engaged in a little aerobic activity. Experiment to see what really gets your cat going — in addition to lasers, catnip toys, crinkly balls, and climbable cat trees are perennial feline favorites. Even a cardboard box can become a cat cave that satisfies a cat’s desire for a hiding place.

### Teach an Old Dog a New Trick



Studies show that mental stimulation can help reduce cognitive deterioration in aging animals. In other words, keeping your senior pet’s brain active can actually make it healthier! Teaching your pet new tricks and practicing those they already know are a great way to keep those neurons firing. Puzzle feeders, which force a pet to think through a task in order to be rewarded with a treat, are also an excellent way to keep a pet’s mind engaged.

### Update Pet ID Info



Over the course of a year, a lot can change — people move, get new phone numbers, and forget to update their pet’s tags. Often they only remember once the pet is lost. If any of your contact information has changed in 2012, don’t wait — update their tags and microchip information today! It’s the best way to ensure a lost pet makes their way safely home.