

Activities you can do with your dog

Owning a dog is more than just walking around the street, throwing a ball or taking a trip to the beach. There's a whole world of fun activities that you and your dog can become involved in while learning amazing skills and making new friends!

Agility

A fun dog sport that involves a handler-dog team negotiating their way through an obstacle course. There are three levels in Australian National Kennel Council (ANKC) agility – novice, excellent and masters. Each level has increasing difficulty and more obstacles. Find an agility club near you to start basic agility training. Your dog will also need good off-lead skills. Agility and jumping trials occur all year round – the details of trials and agility clubs are available on your state's dog association website. Working breeds excel in this sport.



Dances with Dogs

A team sport where an owner and their dog work through a choreographed music routine so it looks like they are dancing. Contact your state's dog organisation for workshops and dedicated clubs to get started. Poodles (miniature), Australian Shepherds, Shetland Sheepdogs and Border Collies are common participants, but any dog can get involved.

Flyball



A dog sport where teams compete against each other for the fastest time. This sport is suited to ball-focussed dogs, as they need to run, take a series of jumps and then press a lever to release a ball. The dog then returns through the course with the ball to its handler. Working dogs (Border Collies, Kelpies, Cattle Dogs), gun dogs (Labradors, Golden Retrievers, Weimaraners, German Short Haired Pointers), plus other ball-focussed breeds of dogs do well, e.g. Staffordshire Bull Terriers, German Shepherds and even Pugs.

Earth Dog

An activity designed to simulate hunting and chasing 'quarry' and dogs 'going to ground'. Today dogs can safely compete in this activity via tunnels ranging from 3 to 15 metres in length and earn titles. The best-suited breeds include Dachshunds and smaller terriers, including Australian, Silky, Bedlington, Cairn, Border, Fox, Jack Russell and West Highland White. Both pure and mixed bred dogs can enter. Check your state's Dog Association page for further details.

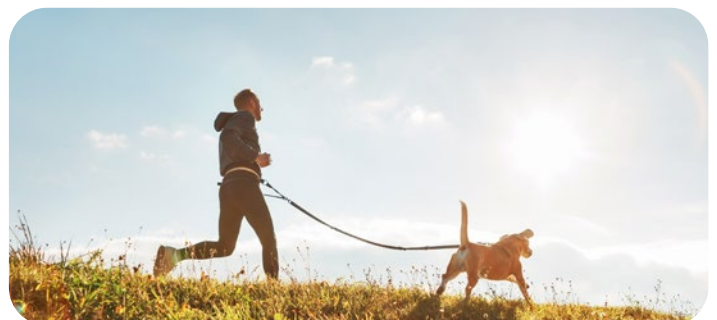
Tracking

A scent-based activity where dogs follow a scent trail. Once trained, the dog can compete in trials where the degree of difficulty and course length increases at higher levels. For some dogs, this could be an introduction to a career in search and rescue. Dogs wear a leather harness attached to a 10-metre long line in this sport. Scented items called 'articles' are placed along the trail, and the dog must 'indicate' by standing, sitting or dropping until the handler picks up the item. The breeds best suited to track are the hounds, gun dogs and working dogs, e.g. Beagles, Bloodhounds, Vizslas, German Shepherds, Brittany Spaniels, Golden Retrievers and Border Collies.



Endurance

A long-distance dog running event. You and your dog must complete a 20 km course with two 15-minute breaks where your dog is vet-checked to ensure they are fit to continue. The entire test usually takes 2–3 hours. The handler can ride a bike or jog with the dog. Dogs remain on lead for the duration of the test. After the 20 km run, the dogs must also complete a simple obedience test before being awarded their endurance title. All breeds can enter the endurance test provided they have a good fitness level. People usually begin training dogs in March and do the test in August. Check your state's dog association for further details.



Herding

A dog sport that involves training your dog to work livestock – usually sheep. The dog and handler team must work together to move the livestock around a yard. The dog learns various signals – when to move forward, stop, go around the stock, push the stock, go left, go right, etc. The ANKC has a herding program and runs training days and trials. Check out your state's dog association webpage for further details. The most suitable breeds include the Group 5 Working Dogs, e.g. Bearded, Border, Rough and Smooth Collies, German Shepherds, Corgis, Kelpies, Cattle Dogs, etc. Mixed breeds can also participate, provided they are a working dog mix.



Lure Coursing

A chasing activity for dogs with a high prey drive or instinct to chase. An irregular shaped course is set up using pulleys, spindles and rope. Plastic bags are tied to the rope's end and pulled to simulate fleeing prey. Dogs work off-lead and attempt to catch the lure. Any breed of dog can try lure coursing. Sighthounds are most suited to this activity, e.g. Whippets, Greyhounds, Salukis and Afghans, but all breeds can and do enjoy the chase.

Australian Dog Associations

For further information about any of these dog sports and others please follow the link for your state's dog association. While many clubs hold competitions, dogs can also participate at many clubs on a casual basis or just for fun and fitness. As well as being a great activity for your dog, many dog clubs offer great social outlets for guardians too!

Australian Capital Territory

www.dogsact.org.au

New South Wales

www.dogsnsw.org.au

Northern Territory

www.dogsnt.com.au

Queensland

www.dogsqueensland.org.au

South Australia

www.dogssa.com.au

Tasmania

www.tasdogs.com

Victoria

www.dogsvictoria.org.au

Western Australia

www.dogswest.com

Retrieving Trials

An activity held under actual hunting conditions and divided into three groups. Pointers and Setters must point the game, wait till the handler approaches, and flush the game so the handler can shoot it. The dog then points again or retrieves the dead game. Utility Gundogs – these dogs point and then retrieve the game on land or water. Spaniels and Retrievers – these dogs flush out the game so it can be shot and then retrieve it when asked. Retrieving trials are conducted at varying degrees of difficulty – an item is launched from a mechanical thrower. The dog must hunt for and retrieve the 'game' and return it to the handler. Trials are held all year round. Only purebred Gundogs (Group 3 breeds), e.g. spaniels, retrievers, pointers, setters, etc., may enter these trials.

Sledding

Sled dogs pull a modified bicycle or 3-wheeled sled rig on dirt tracks – usually fire trails as there are limited opportunities to take dogs into the snow, as most snow areas are also National Parks. Sledding competitions occur when temperatures fall below 15°C. Each year, the Siberian Husky Club of NSW (SHCNSW) holds an introductory sledding weekend for people who want to try this sport. The Club supplies all equipment and instruction, but owners need to bring their dog and bicycle helmet. Siberian Huskies and Alaskan Malamutes are well-suited to sledding, but any medium to large breed can participate.

