



For immediate release

TOP PET FITNESS AND WEIGHT LOSS PRODUCTS OF 2009

Calabash, NC—December 1, 2009. With half of America’s pets now estimated to be overweight, the demand for pet fitness products has never been greater. This year the Association for Pet Obesity Prevention (APOP) is proud to announce its Top Pet Fitness and Weight Loss Products for 2009. If you’re looking to give your pet a healthy gift this holiday season, consider these innovative offerings.

Harnesses and Leashes

“One of the keys to fitness and weight loss in pets is exercise,” states Dr. Ernie Ward, Founder and President of the Association for Pet Obesity Prevention and lead product researcher. “Exercise begins with a comfortable leash and harness and this year we saw several innovations in this category.”

Easy Walk Harness and Leash – ECO

Earth-friendly, no-pull walking harness for your dog. Made of 100% recycled milk cartons and all of the packaging is recycled. “This is quite simply the best and most earth-friendly exercise product we’ve run across this year,” comments Gina Toman, registered veterinary technician and one of the testers.

Come With Me Kitty Harness and Leash

“For owners of pudgy felines who think they can’t take their cat for a walk, there’s a harness for you,” says Ward. With its innovative, easy-to-use and secure design, the Come With Me Kitty Harness and Leash is a must for any overweight cat who needs exercise.

Sporn Simple Control Harness

Every dog needs a go-to, everyday harness. Some harness systems require a book of instructions and an engineering degree—not this one. “Sporn has one of the easiest and most comfortable harnesses we’ve tested. On and off in a matter of seconds, our users commented that this was the one harness they could take with them anywhere (and they did),” remarks Ward.

EzyDog Leash

It’s pretty hard to improve on the standard dog leash: handle, rope, and clip. The secret to a better leash is the handle. EzyDog has basically taken a mini water-ski handle and attached it to a dog leash that results in a surprisingly comfortable walking leash. They also added a shock-absorbing stretch material that eases the arm and shoulder strain of abrupt pulls. “Even our most stubborn puller failed to cause dreaded “hand pinch” common with traditional leashes. Walkers with arthritis or other painful hand conditions will appreciate the EzyDog’s unparalleled cushion and comfort,” comments Ward.

Toys

“Play is an important part of staying healthy for pets,” emphasizes Ward. “You are the best toy for your pet, although we found several impressive products that can make playtime more fun—and beneficial—for everyone.”

Dog Tornado

The Dog Tornado is the perfect solution to entertaining your dog (or cat). This interactive food game has four layers with rotating discs, and three of these layers have compartments for hiding dog snacks. When your dog rotates a layer, she reveals a hidden snack. The game can be made more or less challenging by altering the layers. “The Dog Tornado provides a workout for the brain as well as a way for improving physical coordination. I recommend hiding sliced veggies for a healthy play period,” advises Toman.

Dura Doggie Disc

“Many dogs love to play Frisbee. Trouble is, after a few outings, the disc is trashed,” muses Ward. Dura Doggie Disc is an incredibly tough, chew-resistant flying disc that doubles as a water bowl (how cool!). No more shredded palms or cut lips from frayed Frisbees.

ChuckIt! Ball Launcher

“As a guy, the thought of using anything other than my rocket arm to play fetch with seemed insulting,” laments Ward. “However, after injuring my elbow and being unable to throw for several weeks, I fell in love with my ChuckIt! Ball Launcher. In fact, my dog loved it so much that even when I resumed my mere mortal ball tossing to her, she insisted on the ChuckIt.” Men, women, and children everywhere will find their play sessions more beneficial when using this easy-to-use and inexpensive ball launcher. Men, prepare to be humbled. Dogs, prepare to be thrilled.

FroliCat BOLT Automatic Laser Toy for Cats

“We had a hard time finding an interactive exercise toy that a majority of cats liked. This laser toy comes the closest to pleasing a wide variety of kitties,” states Toman. It couldn’t be easier to use: set up, turn on, and watch the fun! The FroliCat shines a laser dot in a seemingly random pattern your cat will chase, leap, and pounce on for the 15 minute cycle. “If your cat chases the FroliCat twice a day for 15 minutes, it will be well on its way to better health,” adds Dr. Ward

Rumble Bumps

Dogs love anything that makes noise. Dogtronics has designed a line of interactive, touch-activated toys our testers found irresistible. “Our favorite noisy toy was the Rumble Bumps. The test dogs liked the fact that the toy made a variety of sounds when it was batted and chewed and their owners appreciated the silence when it was still. We found it to be a great toy to keep your puppy engaged while home alone,” shares Toman.

Food Bowls

“Everybody feeds their dog, so we decided to look at how food bowl selection could impact weight loss and healthy eating habits. Our findings may surprise you,” says Ward.

Brake-Fast Dog Bowl

“While this bowl was marketed as an aid to slow eating, we found another use: less feeding guilt,” states Dr. Ward. The bowl has three columns in the middle that magically make that half-cup of diet food appear larger. It also takes a dog a little longer to eat, thereby delaying any guilt. “We found it to be a great crutch for pet owners who feel the need to fill the bowl.”

Neater Feeder

Perhaps the most-used product is also the messiest. “We observed dogs that are what we term “enthusiastic eaters. These dogs tend to spill their food on the floor, leading to owners adding additional food into the bowl, thereby promoting weight gain,” explains Toman. The Neater Feeder solves most of your pet’s food and water messes with an innovative edge and drainage system. Our testers liked the different sizes and the ease of cleaning. Your floors will love the no-spill design.

Technology Products

“Technology common for human exercise is now becoming available for pets,” notes Ward, who is also a certified personal trainer and Ironman triathlete. “I expect even better products in the next few years that will aid in pet weight loss.”

Fitbit

“Quite simply, this product wowed everyone,” reports Ward. “While not technically a pet weight loss product, the Fitbit tracks your calories burned, steps taken, distance traveled, and sleep quality. This is important because you can accurately measure how far you’ve walked your dog and at the same time you’re getting in better shape.” The tiny Fitbit uses the same type of controller used in Nintendo’s Wii system and fits easily into a pocket or on a belt or waistband. Your data is wirelessly transmitted to your computer where you can view your exercise and sleep patterns. For less than a hundred bucks, this is one weight loss tool every pet owner should have.

The Beacon by Ruff Wear Dog Safety Light

“We liked this product because it was small, easy-to-use, inexpensive, and a life-saving idea,” says Toman. During the cooler months, we’re often forced to walk our dogs when it’s dark outside. Everyone’s key concern is visibility. Ruff Wear has created a tiny LED light that can be seen up to a half mile away. “Testers liked the three settings, continuous, slow, and fast flash, and that it was easy to clip on or off using the split ring or built-in clip.”

DogTread by PetZen Doggie Treadmill

For the dog that has everything—except a good daily walk—you can’t beat a treadmill. “With straightforward controls and quiet operation, the DogTread from PetZen is one of our favorite dog treadmills,” reports Ward. For busy people or individuals with physical limitations, a dog treadmill is an excellent alternative to outdoor walking.

Other Products

Liver Biscotti

“Dog owners always ask me what the best treat is for pets. Crunchy vegetables are my favorite,” answers Ward. For owners desiring a commercial dog treat, it’s hard to find a tasty dog treat with less than 1 calorie per piece, but somehow Liver Biscotti has done just that. “Dog owners need to

remember it's not the size of the reward that matters to dogs; getting a reward is what's important," advises Ward.

The Port-A-Poo Poop Bag Holder

"Walking your dog is fun; handling your dog's unexpected bathroom run is not," muses Dr. Ward. Fortunately, there's an easier way to pick up where your dog left off, the Port-A-Poo. With two sizes to fit either on a standard or retractable leash, the Port-A-Poo is a hands-off solution to one of life's messier problems.

DOOG Walkie Belts

"Ok, we were skeptical when we first saw this dog walking belt (for people) from Down Under. I mean, do you really need it? Was this an Aussie gag?" jokes Ward. "However, after just a few strolls, we couldn't walk our dog without it." Its two quick-dispenser pockets for poop bags and hand wipes were enough but the Walkie also holds an mp3 player, cell phone, treats, wallet, keys and other small essentials. "The ability to stylishly hold all our stuff without dragging our walking shorts down was worth the price alone," adds Ward. They also come in matching dog collar styles for all you fashionistas.

VizVest Safety Vest for Dogs

Sure, we know there are tons of dog reflective vests available. This one caught our eye because it easily adjusted to a variety of dog shapes, stayed in place, was lightweight enough for year-round wear, and inexpensive. We also liked the fact that there was an opening on the top that allowed the use of certain walking harnesses. It's true your dog may look like a road-side worker but because the VizVest uses the same materials used in human safety vests, it just may save both your lives.

All products mentioned are trademarks of their respective owners.

About this Report and Product Selection

None of the products tested and selected were obtained free of charge nor did APOP inform the product manufacturers that their product was being considered. Further, the manufacturers did not contact APOP or product testers during the evaluation process. The manufacturers were notified of their selection only after the final report was complete. Products were rated on innovation, practicality, availability, cost/benefit, durability, ease of use, and pet/owner acceptance.

About APOP and Dr. Ward

















The Association for Pet Obesity Prevention is an independent organization not associated with any veterinary pharmaceutical, pet food, or other veterinary industry organization founded in 2005. Dr. Ernie Ward is a licensed veterinarian, certified personal trainer, and USA Triathlon accredited coach. He and APOP help people and pets lose weight and sustain a healthy lifestyle by creating parallel weight loss and lifestyle programs. For more information about APOP and Dr. Ernie Ward, please visit www.PetObesityPrevention.com.

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2009 Top Pet Fitness and Weight Loss Products - The Association for Pet Obesity Prevention

					
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DOOG Walkie Belts	ChuckIt! Ball Launcher	FroliCat BOLT Automatic Laser Toy for Cats	Rumble Bumps	EzyDog Leash	Brake-Fast Dog Bowl

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