

For immediate release

TOP PET FITNESS AND WEIGHT LOSS PRODUCTS OF 2010

Calabash, NC—December 1, 2010. Half of the nearly 171 million dogs and cats in the US are now overweight. The pet industry is helping combat the pet obesity epidemic by developing innovative and effective exercise and weight loss products. Once again the Association for Pet Obesity Prevention (APOP) is proud to announce its annual Top Pet Fitness and Weight Loss Products for 2010. If you're looking to give your pet a healthy gift this holiday season, consider these offerings.



Harnesses and Leashes

“Exercise is critical to keeping your pet fit and healthy,” states Dr. Ernie Ward, Founder and President of the Association for Pet Obesity Prevention and lead product researcher. “A comfortable leash and harness system is a must for exercising with your dog.”

Canicross Belt – Canadog

What is canicross, you ask? Our testers were scratching their heads at first, too. Imagine trail running while being pulled by your dog and you're pretty close. “While canicross has been popular in Europe for the past 20 years, our dog tester's lack of familiarity with the sport didn't deter them from loving this walking belt.” observes Dr. Ward. “The fact that you leash up your dog (or dogs) to the waist belt keeps your hands free for a wide variety of exercises and or sports.” comments Melissa Morrison, trainer with Fur Fitness in Upland, California. The belt comes complete with a snug bottle holder and a pouch perfect for a cell phone, keys, and or sanitary bags. An optional collapsible water bowl is recommended for longer treks. Morrison sums it up, “This is a product that could change someone's life. It makes one want out of their sedentary lifestyle and get outside to be active with your companion.”

Website: <http://www.canadog.ca/product;cat,14;item,22;Belts-Canicross-Belt#>

Tru-Fit Smart Harness - Kurgo

“We're always on the lookout for everyday accessories that have multiple uses. This is a not only a great walking harness for your dog, but also a car restraint device.” notes Dr. Ward. Testers liked that they could easily slip on the harness and attach it to their existing seatbelts for a quick trip to the park.

Website: <http://www.kurgostore.com/products/Tru%252dFit-Smart-Harness.html>

Wacky Walk'R

“The Wacky Walk'r is a bonafide eye-catcher; with its bright colors and unique blend of standard, sturdy leash material that seamlessly connects to the more prominent “wacky” or “stretchy” part of this connector.” says Melissa Morrison. The “wacky” Morrison is referring to is a length of rubber tubing that stretches if/when your dog pulls on the leash. “I'd much rather people teach their dog to

walk without pulling; however, squirrels happen. This leash is great for taking the stress out of those occasional lunges.” responds Ward.

Website: <https://wackywalkr.websitesource.net/#>

Toys

“Play is an important part of keeping pets physically and mentally healthy,” emphasizes Ward. “While there is no substitute for one-on-one interaction, we’ve found some toys that can ramp up the fun for everyone.”

Wood Chuck with Orbee-Tuff RecycleBall – Planet Dog

“This year we were looking for environmentally-conscious products,” reveals tester Joanne Shumbo. “As the proud mama of two active rescues, this is exactly the type of toy we were looking for.” Throw after throw, the all-natural chucker allowed even the most petite dog owner to throw a ball long distances. The wood chuck is made of durable bamboo and reused cork scraps while the ball is made from “regrinded” rubber that normally would be discarded.

Website: <http://www.planetdog.com/ProductInfo.aspx?productid=10980000>

Go get it! – Petmate

“We’ve tested many ball launchers. What makes this product innovative is that it collapses for easy storage.” explains Dr. Ward. The 24” Go get it! uses regular tennis balls and shrinks to less than 10” for easy carrying. “I’ve got one stowed in my glove box for impromptu fetch sessions.” says Ward.

Website: <http://www.petmate.com/go-get-it>

Sway – FroliCat

“Cat owners never tire of watching cats bat things around,” jokes Joanne Shumbo. “This new toy does just that – and only that.” Made by the same folks that brought us Dr. Ward’s favorite cat exercise device of 2009, Sway promises to provide hours of essential play for your cat. “I like the simplicity and the fact that my own cats couldn’t get enough of it.” says Ward. “I don’t think it will replace my Bolt, but it has quickly become one of our family’s favorite cat toys.”

Website: <http://www.frolicat.com/>

Dog Casino – Nina Ottosson

We’ve got to confess: we have a crush on Nina Ottosson products. Maybe it’s the sleek lines, Euro-chic styling or the fact they’re so smart – whatever it is we can’t seem to get enough of it. This year we’re crushing on the Dog Casino. Basically a really cool food puzzle, your dog must dislodge several removable bones and then open hidden doors to hit the treat jackpot. As your dog learns how to beat the house, you can increase the difficulty. “My dog Sandy is still on the easiest setting,” discloses Dr. Ward. “We’re guessing she just isn’t a very good gambler.”

Website: <http://www.companyofanimals.co.uk/products/toys-and-games/nina-ottosson-games/nina-ottosson-interactive-plastic-toy-dog-casino>

My Agility Set (Toy) – Oscar Newman Luxury Pet Couture

This is one toy too cute to ignore. Imagine a real grown-up dog agility set made out of tiny, soft pastel-colored poles and tunnels. If you're the owner of a toy breed that needs to get active, this is just what your stylist ordered. "What I like about this toy breed agility set is that it allows you to exercise them without ever touching, dare I say it, dirt." jokes Dr. Ward. Commence making YouTube videos.

Website: <http://www.oscarnewman.com/apparel/toys/agility.htm#>

Technology Products

"I am a techie-geek-exercise enthusiast." states Dr. Ernie Ward. "Each year I love trying out the cool gadgets and figuring out what helps people and pets get fit together."

Dog-e-Minder

"Wow. That's what everyone said after seeing this product." gushes Dr. Ward. "With our busy schedules, work and dogs, we're always mixing up medications, feeding and no one ever knows if the dogs got walked." shares tester Julie Mullins. Wonder no more; the Dog-e-Minder is a small device that looks like a dog tag but does a whole lot more. When you walk, feed or give your pet's meds simply press the corresponding button and it records it. To see when you last walked your dog, press the button and the device displays it. "Until we have the 'Dog Translator Collar' from the movie 'UP,' this is as close as we're going to get." remarks Ward.

Website: <http://www.dogeminder.com/>

SpotLight GPS Pet Locator

"Every dog owner's greatest fear is losing their pet." observes Mullins. "This is one way to reduce that worry." Weighing less than 3 ounces, the small box attaches to your dog's collar. The GPS uses satellites and a cell-phone connection to help locate your dog. "This device is so smart it texts and emails you when the rechargeable battery is low." Comments Ward. "You can set up safe zones and be alerted if your dog leaves those areas. You can track your dog's location online to retrieve them should they escape." The device also boasts an LED beacon that can be activated to help you see your lost dog in the dark. While not cheap, the peace-of-mind the SpotLight provides is priceless.

Website: <http://www.spotlightgps.com/spotlight-gps-pet-locator.aspx>

Eyanimal

Ever imagine what it looks like to eat kibble from a dish? How clean is the inside of that litter box, anyway? These and other answers to silly questions can be found by using this itchy-bitsy video camera that your pet wears on its collar. "The reason we liked this product was that it is really cool." Muses Ward. "The ability to record and share your dog's run from their point of view is motivation to go do it for many." My Agility Set + Eyanimal = YouTube Sensation.

Website: <http://www.eyanimal.com/>

Other Products

FitPaws Balance Disc – Ball Dynamics

We love exercising with balance balls, disks and all sorts of devices that strengthen our core. Now your dog can love it, too. This hard rubber half-ball is just the right size for dogs and is a great addition to any canine core workout. “I like balance disks because you can exercise your dog indoors and are great for building legs muscles weakened by surgery or arthritis.” says Ward. “Games like ‘high-low’ become much easier to play.” Our testers liked the almost limitless games you can engage your dog in and the fact that even our tiniest testers had a ball (pun intended).

Website: <http://www.ballodynamics.com/fitpaws.php>

HyperKewl Evaporative Cooling Dog Coat – TechNiche International

What do the military, police and high-tech construction workers have in common? Many work in extreme heat conditions. Your dog can now benefit from the same technology that keeps our fighting forces cool in the Middle East. “If you have a giant or long-haired dog, running in the summer months can pose a health hazard for your pet.” remarks Dr. Ward. “To combat potential hyperthermia or heat stroke, we liked the HyperKewl coat.” You soak the vest and it cools your dog for 5 to 10 hours, according to the manufacturer.

Website: <http://www.techniche-intl.com/en/catalog/cooling-apparel/hyperkewl-evaporative-cooling/pet-products/index.html>

CocoTherapy Coconut Chips

Coconuts have become the HOT health food for 2010 – and pets are no exception to this trend. “The coconut chips are a great healthy snack with some noteworthy, healthy side-effects.” states Melissa Morrison of FurFitness. “Coconuts are an excellent source of dietary fiber, protein and many vitamins and minerals.” says Dr. Ward. These dehydrated chips are low in calories and an excellent natural treat for dogs.

Website: http://www.cocotherapy.com/products_cocotherapy.htm

See Me Reflective Leash and Collar Covers – Pat Bay International

Many dog owners walk their dogs when there’s little light out - early in the morning and late at night. We don’t mind. What we want is for others to be able to see you. Enter the See Me. This handy little product slips over your existing collar or leash and – presto – you’ve got a highly visible reflective protector. Testers liked the fact that this inexpensive reflector worked with their designer doggie duds. “I’ve already got a leash and collar combo I really liked, only they weren’t reflective.” says tester Joanne Shumbo. “This solved my winter walking woes.”

Website: <http://www.patbayreflective.com/leash-collar-reflective-sleeves-s/25.htm>

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.

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2010 Top Pet Fitness and Weight Loss Products - The Association for Pet Obesity Prevention

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