

The Debate Every Dog Owner Should Know About This Trend

Many pet parents find this handy device useful for bringing their pets outdoors, but are there disadvantages you should be aware of? Here's what to know before buying one for your animal companion.

STORY AT-A-GLANCE

- Pet strollers can be beneficial for small, elderly or mobility-impaired pets, providing a comfortable way to enjoy the outdoors without physical strain
- While convenient in some situations, pet strollers can be expensive, bulky and could discourage physical exercise for otherwise healthy animals
- Veterinarians recommend pet strollers for specific circumstances, such as for pets recovering from surgery, those in their senior years or if animals need protection from harsh environmental conditions
- When selecting a pet stroller, consider important features like shade protection, breathable mesh, collapsibility and durable tires suitable for your typical terrain
- Pet strollers should not replace socialization, obedience training or essential physical activity, but can serve as a helpful tool for certain pet care needs

Many pet parents today treat their animal companions like their own children, and sometimes, this includes putting them in strollers when taking them outdoors. You've probably seen these nifty devices in different designs, sizes and with unique features. They can accommodate pets of different sizes; most strollers are made for small dog breeds, although some are large enough to fit medium-sized breeds.

However, while some pet parents think that strollers are useful, others feel that using one can be restricting and could even be a safety hazard. This article will discuss the advantages and disadvantages of using a stroller and if it's a good fit for your pet.

Some Pets Can Benefit from Using a Stroller

While some dogs would be perfectly capable of walking on a leash, a stroller can offer added comfort for some pets, as well as their owners. Going on a leisurely stroll around the block in a stroller allows your pet to enjoy the sights, sounds and smells that they would experience when going on a walk. According to Dr. Jerry Klein, chief veterinarian of the American Kennel Club:

"Small dogs may not be able to keep up with their owners over long distances. Tired or older dogs may have underlying mobility issues, arthritis, or other health conditions that make it difficult for them to walk for extended periods of time. A dog stroller can provide a comfortable and safe way for these dogs to enjoy the outdoors without straining themselves."¹

Mobility issues, which can plague both cats and dogs when they reach their senior years, make it difficult and painful for them to move around, so putting them in a stroller will allow them to experience the outdoors without straining their body. Pets who are elderly or recovering from surgery, can also benefit from using a stroller, such as if they need to be brought to the vet or if bringing them along on family activities.

What's more, while many establishments like malls and restaurants are now becoming more pet-friendly, there are still a few places where pet parents are advised to either carry their pet or bring them in a stroller.

Another advantage is it protects your pet from the elements. For example, in summer, stepping on concrete can be excruciating for your pet's bare paws; using a stroller protects their delicate paws from the scorching pavement.

A pet stroller, considering it is spacious enough, can be an advantage if you're bringing one or more pets outdoors — there's no need to deal with tangled leashes and being pulled toward different directions. If you have an aggressive pet, the enclosed chamber of pet strollers can help limit their interactions with humans and other pets.

There Are Some Cons to Using a Pet Stroller

Of course, using a pet stroller also comes with certain drawbacks, so if you're considering using one, you must determine if the pros outweigh the cons. Here are a few reasons why it may not be a good idea to use a pet stroller.²

- **Pet strollers can be costly** — Some strollers could actually cost more than strollers designed for babies, so if budget is a consideration, make sure to shop around to find one that will fit yours but still cater to all your and your pet's needs.
- **They are bulky** — Even foldable strollers can be difficult to store away. Plus, bringing them in crowded areas can be cumbersome, as they take up a lot of space.
- **Your pet may find it stressful** — Not all pets are made to be pushed around in a stroller; some become bored or lonely, and would prefer to walk around and interact with other people.
- **Pet strollers can encourage sedentary behavior in your pet** — Pets, like humans, need plenty of exercise to stay healthy. If your pet is perfectly healthy, a stroller could make them entirely dependent on you pushing them around. They fail to get the much-needed exercise they need.

Another important reminder — strollers cannot be a good substitute for socialization and basic obedience training. Using one shouldn't also replace physical activity, especially in pets that are struggling with mobility.

"Performing some form of motion is needed to keep [your pet's] muscles and joints in good tone. Exercise such as gentle walking is a safe and important way to [maintain] heart and muscle strength as well as managing weight, when possible," Klein said.³

What to Look for When Buying a Pet Stroller

If you've decided that a stroller is a great option for your pet, you must do your research to determine a design that fits your needs. Here are some factors to consider:⁴

- **Does the stroller provide enough shade?** — Some strollers come with extendable shades that protect your pet from the harsh sunlight. Prolonged exposure to direct sunlight can be life-threatening to pets, as it can lead to heatstroke and dehydration.

- **Does it have breathable mesh?** — This allows proper ventilation inside the basket, keeping your pet comfortable while riding it.
- **Is it collapsible?** — It should be for easier transport and storage. Some strollers even have collapsible parts for multipurpose use.
- **Are the tires durable enough?** — Check if the tires are sturdy and suitable for the trips you have in mind.

"If you live in an urban area and intend to do most of your strolling on concrete, get a stroller outfitted with thick, air-filled tires. If you'll be pushing your dog through grass, consider an option with wheels with sealed ball bearings, lined with thick tread to absorb impact from uneven terrain and rocks," The AKC recommends.⁵

Sources and References

^{1,3,4,5} [American Kennel Club, September 17, 2024](#)

² [FursnPaws, January 16, 2023](#)
