

## Dog Training Articles By Beth Bradley

### **EXERCISE AND MENTAL STIMULATION**

All dogs are working animals from the Rat Terrier (hunter) to the Saint Bernard (rescuer). Home alone for 8 hours is just not enough physical or mental stimulation. A big back yard is not going to solve behavioral problems (chewing, jumping, running away, etc.). Dogs are pack animals and if you don't have another dog, you're its pack. Seclusion in the yard is punishment because your dog wants to be near you. Behavioral problems will not be solved but more may rear their ugly heads. Dogs do need exercise (walks, swimming, retrieving) but your dog would much rather exercise with you than by itself in your yard. A pure bred Labrador is going to demand more physical exercise than a Maltese but both need their play time and exercise.

But exercise and no mental stimulation will make your dog crazy. The working instinct in your dog demands for it to use its brain. And if you don't allow your dog to use its brain for good behavior you can believe it will use it for bad behavior. Obedience not only teaches your dog selfcontrol but also allows it to think and respond, i.e. using its mind.

I believe a dog needs a minimum of 40 minutes to 1 hour of exercise (retrieve, running, etc.) a day and a ½ of training a day. All exercise or all work will not control bad behavior. A happy medium of both will make your dog happy and for God's sake - let him be a dog.