

# May is National Water Safety Month

## 6 Water Safety Tips for Your Dog

May is National Water Safety Month and summer is almost upon us. If you have pets, please keep the following water/summer safety tips in mind:

**1. Life Vest:** Do you have a boat, raft, kayak? Do you have your child wear a life vest while boating? Do you have one for your dog? Why not? If you have one for your child, you should also have one for your dog – no exception! Your dog is more likely to jump out of the boat after a duck. With a life vest on your dog, this will help to keep them afloat until you can reach them. And the handle on the life vest will also help you pull them back on board.

**2. Sunburn: dogs with short or light-colored coats can get sunburn:**

- Do not use “people” sunscreen
- What isn’t toxic to humans can be toxic to animals
- The ASPCA lists the poisonous effects of sunscreen on your pet as, “...drooling, vomiting, diarrhea, excessive thirst and lethargy
- As your vet for a recommendation on a safe, pet sunscreen

**3. Keeping our pets safe from the heat (Dehydration & Heatstroke):**

- Make sure your pet has plenty of shade and cool water (no ice)
- Limit exercise to early morning and late evenings
- The pavement absorbs the sun’s rays all day .. so test it ... with the 7 second rule:
- **7 Second Rule:** place the back of your hand onto the pavement: if you can’t leave it there for 7 seconds (1001, 1002, 1003, etc.), then it is too hot for your pet’s paw pads to walk
- Have your pet wear “breathable” booties as they only perspire through their paw pads

**Heat Stroke:** Do you know the warning signs of heat stroke? Some signs that animals are suffering heat exhaustion include:

- |  |                     |
|--|---------------------|
| 🐾 Behaving sluggish                    | 🐾 Muscle tremors    |
| 🐾 Dry nose, or warm feverish nose      | 🐾 Rapid pulse       |
| 🐾 Excessive panting or drooling        | 🐾 Red/purple mouth  |
| 🐾 Fainting                             | 🐾 Staggering        |
| 🐾 Glazed eyes                          | 🐾 Unsteady walking  |
| 🐾 Lack of energy                       | 🐾 Vomiting          |
| 🐾 Lack of response to name or commands | 🐾 Warm pads on paws |
| 🐾 Limited urine output                 |                     |



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- 4. Teach Your Dog to Swim:** Contrary to popular belief, not all dogs swim instinctively or even enjoy it. Each dog is different and each dog responds differently in the water. A dog that has never been swimming before will be nervous and it is best to go slowly. Make sure for first time swimmers, they wear a life vest.

Some dogs may take to swimming after their first lessons (as in the picture of U-mi, 5 year old French Bull Dog, and others, like Elvis, 12 year old pit, took longer. However, with love and patience, as you can see, now we can't keep Elvis out of the water! He loves it!

For more info and videos on U-mi, Elvis and other dogs swimming, or for info on swim classes for your dog, please visit my website: [www.tranquiltpet.com/rates/canineaquatics](http://www.tranquiltpet.com/rates/canineaquatics) and [www.tranquiltpet.com/gallery/videos](http://www.tranquiltpet.com/gallery/videos)



Swimming is also an excellent non-weight bearing exercise for our elderly, arthritic, overweight, pre/post surgical dogs. Call Jean at 310.370.9241 or visit [www.tranquiltpet.com](http://www.tranquiltpet.com) for more information.



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**5. Teach Your Dog to Get Out of the Water.** Do you own a pool? Does your dog know where the steps are? How to get out? If a dog falls into your pool, they will instinctively swim towards the nearest side. Unfortunately, if this “side” is not the steps, they will continue to try and pull themselves out. Sadly, most times, this is an unsuccessful attempt, they soon tire, fall back into the water and may drown.

Teaching your dog where the steps are is the first step in saving their life. You might even put something just beyond the pool steps (example: a flag or something they can associate with the “exit”). Put them into the pool (with a life vest) a number of times, in different areas of the pool and lead them to “follow the perimeter of the pool.” Eventually, they will reach the steps.

I know of a 9 month old female Labrador was found clinging to the side of the family’s pool. They do not know how long she was hanging there and she was only 2 feet from the pool stair exit, but they never taught her where those stairs were. From that point forward, that poor little Labrador was terrified of the water!

**6. After swims:**

- Use an “ear dryer” you can purchase over the counter. I recommend putting the ear dryer (cream) in their ears before swimming to help “block” water from getting into their ear canal
- Keep fresh water available: lakes, rivers can host parasites and algae; pool water may be chlorinated; ocean water is salty; none are good for your dog
- Rinse your dog after swims to shed their coats of chlorine and salt water which can dry their skin

**Question: Will dogs "know" when to stop and take a rest if they are too hot?**

**Answer: No.**

Dogs cannot sweat to cool down like people. They can sweat a little through their paw pads, but the main way dogs cool down (rather inefficiently) is by panting. Given cool shade and water to drink.

If you have any questions, please contact Jean at 310.370.9241 or [info@tranquilpet.com](mailto:info@tranquilpet.com)

Have a safe and happy summer!



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