



Airs Tuesday's at
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Tips for adjusting to a new autumn routine

Imagine you are a dog or cat. One day a big yellow bus pulls up to the driveway and suddenly there are no children to play with anymore. What's up with that?

This scenario is typical in many households this time of year. Because his "pack" has been dispersed, you may notice your dog or cat following you around begging for attention. Now is a good time for some extra affection and a few additional belly rubs.

Here are some other ways to make autumn a happy, healthy time for you and your pet:

- If you have school-age children, pay special attention to pets in the morning so they don't attempt to follow children or buses.
- Realize that the nights are getting colder and make sure your outdoor pet has a warm, dry shelter that is elevated off the ground, insulated for warmth, and draft free. Add some soft, thick bedding for comfort.
- Outdoor pets require extra calories to keep warm, so ask your veterinarian whether you should increase the rations slightly. With winter weather coming, now is prime time to get your pet into healthy body condition before he faces the stresses of inclement weather, so make sure you're feeding a good quality diet.
- A frost or freeze isn't out of the question this time of year. Should temperatures plummet, remember to check your pet's water bowl to make sure he has water and not a solid block of ice. A pet with no access to fresh water will drink from gutters and puddles that may be contaminated with antifreeze and other chemicals.
- Speaking of antifreeze, it smells good and tastes sweet. It doesn't take much to destroy a pet's kidneys. Don't allow leaky antifreeze to accumulate inside your garage or on your driveway.
- At this time of year, most dogs and cats shed their summer coats in preparation for putting on their winter fur. Tangled, matted hair cannot provide insulation as nature intended. Daily or weekly brushing can help keep fur tangle-free and healthy.
- Many pets are not naturally equipped to live in cold temperatures. If temperatures drop below 32°F, bring your pet indoors into a heated environment.
- Halloween can be confusing for pets, with strangers coming and going. For the benefit of pets and humans alike, consider keeping your pet in a separate room during prime trick-or-treat hours.
- Caution your children to keep Halloween treats out of reach—chocolate and certain sweeteners (often found in gum) can be toxic to pets.
- If your pet doesn't enjoy dressing up for Halloween, please don't force the issue. If your pet enjoys dressing up, make sure his costume allows unobstructed vision, panting and freedom of movement (including for bathroom breaks). For safety's sake, apply reflective tape to his costume and be sure to keep him on a short leash and away from other animals or children he doesn't know.
- Cats and kittens love to nap in warm places, so a warm vehicle engine can seem especially inviting on a chilly day. Make it a habit to knock on the hood of your vehicle, honk the horn, or even look under the hood before you turn the key.
- If you notice your cat "straining" to go to the bathroom, it may not be constipation. Instead it could be a sign of a life-threatening urinary tract blockage common in male cats. Consult your veterinarian immediately.
- Beware of holiday decorations. Electrical cords, tinsel and glass ornaments can be enticing, but dangerous.
- Keep your pet's paws clear of salt and snow-removal chemicals. Pets tend to lick their paws. To avoid poisoning or a skin reaction, wipe the paws thoroughly, especially between the pads.
- Just say no to turkey bones. They can splinter causing internal injury. Avoid the temptation to feed table scraps during the holidays and keep your pets on a familiar, consistent, good quality pet food.

With those hot summer days behind us, fall can be a great time to enjoy your pet to the fullest. Be safe and have fun.