

Traumhof German Shepherd Dogs  
Article Series



POOL & WATER SAFETY

By Karen Priest

When the weather is nice, most dogs simply can not resist the opportunity to cool off and get wet. Swimming can provide your pet with exercise without putting stress and strain on joints. Often, hydro therapy is used (in a doggie rehab facility) as a way to build up muscle in dogs post surgery or as they are elderly.

Learning to Swim

Some puppies will take the very first chance they get to wade into the water at a pond or lake. Others will hover shoreside, uncertain. They might stick a foot in and paw or dig, as if testing the depth. You should never plunk a puppy in the water, which can cause panic. Instead, let puppy decide if & when he wants to attempt to submerge himself. For a hesitant puppy, having an older dog with him, who is an established swimmer, might motivate puppy to try the new game, too. Throwing a water toy to the older dog might just encourage puppy to try it. Always be nearby, and in the water with your puppy as he learns. Try to avoid the older dog jostling into the puppy as he swims for a toy - I have seen puppies get rolled completely in water, come up sputtering, and then very hesitant to swim after this experience.

- The best place to start water sport is a "beach" with a gradual incline.
- Life vests for dogs are available and should be used on all boats and in the ocean.
- Beware of tides/undercurrent and stay with your dog in the ocean so he won't get too far out.
- Salt water will dehydrate your dog and give your dog terrible diarrhea. Limit allowing your pet to drink salt water and always bring plenty of fresh water, offering it frequently.
- Salt water, sand, sea lice are very irritating to puppy's skin. Be sure to rinse him off in fresh water after a day at the ocean!

- Remember swimming tires a puppy out quickly, so don't do too much without a break.

If you are beginning in a POOL, you must **MUST** always begin by teaching your puppy where the stairs are. If there is only a ladder, no stairs, do not allow puppy in the pool.

Even when a puppy learns the stairs, accidents happen. Many puppies have fallen in a pool and drown because they panicked and swam til they succumbed to exhaustion & could not escape.

- If you have a pool, it is best if the dog is **NOT** allowed unsupervised in the fenced area.
- You should 100% certainly invest in a Skamper Ramp; a doggie escape route that goes on the side of your pool. If you teach the puppy to use this and the stairs, the puppy has a better chance of being able to get out of the pool.



- If there is no way you can be sure your dog will **NEVER** be unattended in the fenced pool area, you should consider investing in a "Safety Turtle" pool alarm, that lets you know when the dog is in the pool.

**SafetyTurtle** for DOGS too!



Use Safety Turtle just as you would for a child, only easier. Just attach the Turtle Wristband to your pet's collar and you can have peace of mind, knowing that you will be alerted the instant that your dog goes in the water.

Great for dogs that cannot see the pool's edge or have little swimming ability. Also used in pools without an easy point of egress for the dog. New this year are dog collar velcro collar attachments

- [http://www.poolcenter.com/alarms\\_safetyturtle\\_poolstor.htm](http://www.poolcenter.com/alarms_safetyturtle_poolstor.htm)  
(Many other stores offer this product, this is just one place to look.)
- **NEVER, NEVER** leave your puppy or adult dog all day alone in a fenced area with a pool. **NEVER.** No excuses.

- Do not allow your puppy to drink chlorinate pool water - it will make him very sick.
- Chlorine is also not so great for your pup's skin and coat. You should rinse him off in fresh water after a day at the pool!

Water, while fun, poses a threat to a puppy or dog's safety. As a responsible owner there are precautions you should always take if your dog will be present at a pool, lake, pond, or on the ocean.

Other tips for water/beach safety:

- Puppies like to eat sand. A little bit is not harmful, but too much and they will defecate "sand Castles". This is painful for them. Discourage eating sand, & shells. Keeping a ball or toy in their mouth is helpful!
- Algae can make dogs very sick. Don't allow your puppy to eat/drink algae coated areas.
- You can use doggie sunscreen on upright ears.
- Always provide puppy shade at the beach. We always bring a "baby" sunscreen tent or large umbrella. Remember, puppies overheat easily. Burning hot sand can also burn their feet, as it would your own!
- Do not allow puppy to swim strenuously after a meal. Wait one hour before or after exercise to feed.
- Use dog life vests on all boats! ALWAYS.
- Post Swimming: Uses drying solution in your dogs ears. This can usually be applied/wiped with cotton balls. Wet ear canals lead to ear infections.
- Many dogs have allergies to pollens, algae, etc in water. Rinsing your puppy off helps to prevent big reactions.

### LINKS & Interesting Stuff

\*Check this place out! <http://www.caninewatersports.com/faqs.html>

\*For life vests: <http://pooltoy.com/doglifevest.html>



[The Doggy Boat Ladder by Paws Aboard - dog boat ladder](#)