

THE INDUSTRIAL ATHLETE DIGEST

Weekly Wellness & Safety Tips from Work Right NW



TO PET OR NOT TO PET?

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Thinking of getting a pet to brighten your mood? When the workday is tough, there's nothing quite like coming home to a wagging tail or playful energy of a pet. In 2023, **66% of Americans** own a pet of some kind. After all, if you like animals, research studies show interacting with an animal can:



- Temporarily lower cortisol (a stress hormone in your body)
- Improve your reactions to stress
- Lower blood pressure, cholesterol, and allow some owners to survive longer with heart-related diseases
- Increase social support

Pet ownership can have significant *pawsitive* effects on industrial athletes' mental health and job satisfaction, which in turn can lead to increased productivity and improved workplace outcomes.



Jedi

PAWS AND CONSIDER

If you are going to get a pet (iguana, bird, gerbil, cat, goat, dog), be sure to pick one that brings you joy and fits your lifestyle, as research shows **the benefit comes from how YOU feel about the animal and the amount of quality time spent together!**

But before you go shopping for your next best friend: consider [a recent study](#) of 4,000 owners during the Covid surge in pet purchases. While most reported they couldn't imagine having to go through lockdown without their pets, some people were less bonded to their pet, and others were extremely worried about what would happen to their pet if they were sick or lost their income. **And after a time, the happiness of the pet owners evened out to those without pets.** So, if you have other major stressors in your life, or can't make the time investment, it's perfectly fine to hold off - no need for FOMO!

Most studies agree to get the benefits for your mental and physical health, you need:

- the right pet,
- at the right time,
- and to invest your energy/time in the relationship.

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READY TO WOOF RIGHT?

How do you know if you're ready? Also, how do you get the benefit if you aren't ready to own a pet?

Try one or more of these things to see if you're ready and lift your spirits and theirs along the way!

- Borrow a pet! Ask family, a neighbor, or friend if you can pet sit, walk their dog, clean the fish tank with them, or just spend time with a pet you like.
- Volunteer at a shelter, rescue, or farm. Become a "foster" or just help in general.
- Find a group that participates in sports/training related to your chosen pet (yes there's rabbit agility competitions!). Spectators and volunteers are generally welcome and needed.
- Prepare well for your pet if you decide to get one: plan, budget, prepare your home, educate yourself, and perhaps start a savings account for your future pet's care. This helps reduce some stressors of owning a pet.

Pet ownership can be an amazing bonding experience. But if you like animals, there are many ways to benefit from them, beyond just owning one! 

Work Right NW is changing the way that companies view workplace hazards. Our focus is on educating the workforce to prevent injury. We provide access to Injury Prevention Specialists in the workplace to address the early signs of discomfort. We are changing the industry one company at a time by helping one person at a time.

