

Pet Ownership and Exercise Among Midlife and Older Adults: An AARP Bulletin Poll

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Results of this *AARP Bulletin* poll lend some support to the notion of a positive relationship between pet ownership and exercise among pet owners, although the magnitude of relationship is not entirely clear. While about three in ten dog owners report getting more exercise now as compared to before they got their dog and another six in ten report getting about the same amount now as in the past, it is not possible to ascertain the levels of exercise from the survey questions nor is it possible to determine if the levels of exercise are meeting national guidelines.

Companionship was the primary reason for acquiring a pet, noted by more than six in ten pet owners. Far fewer said they got their pet as a playmate for their child (or children), for security or protection, or for breeding or profit-making purposes.

This telephone survey of 1,062 adults ages 50 and older was conducted for AARP by SSRS of Media, Pennsylvania, from February 24 to March 7, 2010. For more information about this research, please contact Teresa A. Keenan, Ph.D., at 202-434-6274. (12 pages)