

## Safety Equipment & Summer Shopping for

# Watersports



by Deborah  
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Thinking about some summer splash time with your water loving dog? Good! Swimming is one of the best activities for all around conditioning & pleasure. It's the perfect game for even the hottest days as it builds strength, stamina, flexibility, and aerobic capacity in a buoyantly fun environment. If you like splashing and teaching your dog useful, competitive behaviors then Canine Water Sports has it all for you. Start planning for your watersports training adventures by shopping now for equipment and supplies, including these items:

### Life Jackets for humans and dogs.

Wearing a life jacket, an anti-drowning device, seems like a no brainer when it comes to activity around water, but some folks still doubt the

importance of a canine life jacket. He CAN swim, they say, pointing at their Labrador. However:

- Safety does not diminish or disqualify ability.
- All great athletes wear safety equipment for self preservation. Accidents happen - injuries don't have to.
- Dogs wearing jackets increase their work out intensity due to the jacket's drag in the water.
- Dogs wearing jackets tend to swim (exercise) longer. Buoyancy may increase the ease and attractiveness of water play.
- Dogs who feel safe are able to relax and focus on LEARNING.





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Canine Life Jackets vary in quality and performance and in this case you do get what you pay for. Learn more about sizing and pricing at: [www.ruffwear.com](http://www.ruffwear.com), and [www.d-fa.com/products-dfd](http://www.d-fa.com/products-dfd). For humans, CWS requires a government approved PFD like a USCG Type III, but the most popular style, due to comfort and quality, are those designed for kayaking. Learn more at: [www.uscgboating.org](http://www.uscgboating.org) and [www.boatsafe.com/nauticalknowhow/pfdbasics](http://www.boatsafe.com/nauticalknowhow/pfdbasics)

**Swimwear**

Swimwear for handlers may include anything that covers shoulders and thighs to protect against canine paws and environmental irritants. A tee shirt and shorts over a swimsuit is acceptable and the most common wear during

warm weather. Many handlers enjoy the warmth and protection of a shortie wetsuit ([www.ehow.com/how\\_2209136\\_select-wetsuit](http://www.ehow.com/how_2209136_select-wetsuit) or [www.wisegEEK.com/what-are-the-different-kinds-of-wetsuits](http://www.wisegEEK.com/what-are-the-different-kinds-of-wetsuits)) especially in the Spring and Fall. Another popular product is HydroSkin, a thin, stretchy, material that insulates against cold and water. HydroSkin water-wear is sold by retailers who carry paddle, diving or sporting goods equipment.

**Footwear**

Footwear for human swimmers is mandatory. The two most popular footwear styles are the ankle high kayak or wetsuit boot and the water sandal. Paddle boots, which are fully enclosed, keep out sand, pebbles and other irritants. Some





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offer firm soles for comfort and greater protection. Keen Waterfront Sandals ([www.keen-footwear.com](http://www.keen-footwear.com)) are closed toed and offer firm soles, foot support and traction for rough ground and long hours on your feet. Most watersports judges wear Keen because the design offers support, protection and style on and off the beach, but wading over small pebbles and sand may create the need to remove this shoe for a shake out.

#### Whistles

Whistles are one of the best safety devices you can own. When you have an emergency on the water this device will carry your alarm over a long distance. Trainers are wise to attach a sports whistle to their life jacket or a wristband. Take care, if you swim with a whistle neck lanyard, to avoid paddling paw entanglements.

#### Connective Leads

Connective leads, used to manage canine behavior during water training, must be buoyant, handle and knot free (snag-proof) and less than five feet in length. Since dogs do not wear collars in watersports, the watersports lead may be attached to the dog's life jacket. Leads are generally prohibited in Tests; however, the lead does qualify as a tow line in some tasks. Make your own lead or shop at: [www.caninewater-sports.com/5.\\_Nautical\\_Dog\\_Store](http://www.caninewater-sports.com/5._Nautical_Dog_Store)

#### Ear Care

Ear care includes flushing canine ears with an ear wash before and after swimming to help prevent ear infections. This is especially important for dogs with hairy ear openings, pendant ear flaps or prior ear infections. A favorite is Veterinarian's Best Herbal Ear Relief wash. It leaves ears smelling great. ([www.vetsbest.com](http://www.vetsbest.com)) A new product, the Aquabandit ([www.aquabandit.com](http://www.aquabandit.com)), a neoprene band worn over the dog's ears, claims it can prevent water from entering the ear.

#### Pain Care Products

Pain care products may be needed for minor strains, muscle aches or canine swimmer's tail. Swimmer's tail symptoms include varying degrees of pain and a limp looking tail that may last a few days or more. Cold temps, an unconditioned dog and over use of the tail during swimming is the best guess on the cause. Dogs should not swim with this condition. Available at health food stores, homeopathic remedies Arnica Montana and Traumeel work a fast miracle on swimmer's tail. Dog Gone Pain, [www.doggone-pain.com](http://www.doggone-pain.com), developed by Australian vets & herbalists, is an herbal pain relief formula that works especially well for dogs with arthritis.

#### Motivational Toys

Toys for water games and training should include toys that float and ones that sink. While some tasks specify what a dog must retrieve, tow or deliver most Canine Water Sports tasks define an article as either buoyant or sinking. Tasks require the handler to produce as many as three distinctly different articles, one or more of which the judge may select for the teams task. So stock up on a variety of toys and vary them by contrasting colors, sizes, shapes, textures, weights, and flapping parts to excite. Check out Katie's Bumpers



(www.KatiesBumpers.com ) was created by a Newfie owner who knows how to design durable, colorful and fun toys for water dogs.

#### Motivational Treats

Treats for watersports need to be water durable. Most commercial treats get soggy fast. Nuggets of cooked meat contained in a mesh treat pouch is the recommended way to go. It avoids the mess of dumping water and stewed treats from traditional type treat holders.

#### Sundries (think day at the beach)

Lots of towels, Sun protection - topical & shade, Aloe Vera gel, an antihistamine, large mesh gear bags, beach chair, dog pen or crate, flotation for lounging, first aid kits: k9 & Human, cooler, drinking water, mobile phone, and of course a camera! **DS**

**Deborah Lee Miller Riley** is the founder and director of Canine Water Sports, a sports organization dedicated to providing swim challenges for all kinds of dogs. She is also a watersports competitor, instructor and judge for Canine Water Sports and the Portuguese Water Dog Club of America. [www.caninewatersports.com](http://www.caninewatersports.com)

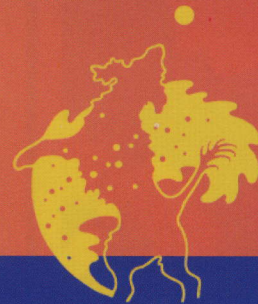
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## Splash Safety Tips by Canine Water Sports



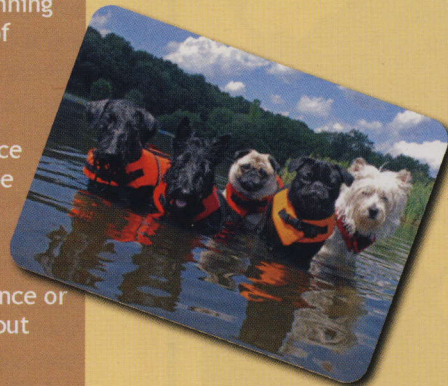
Five minutes of swimming is equivalent to twenty minutes of running - be observant for signs of fatigues. Fatigue is a leading cause of sports injuries. Help prevent injuries by setting gradual and reasonable goals for distance, intensity and duration.



Life jackets keep you and your dog safe and help build confidence and endurance. Wear life jackets because you care enough to be careful with someone you love.



Buoy up confidence and trust by gifting your dog the choice to participate in water adventures or not. The real power to influence or direct a dog shall not be gained through a device or a demand, but through seeking the dog's choice to cooperate and benefit from human leadership.



Deborah Lee Miller-Riley, Founder & Director  
[www.CanineWaterSports.com](http://www.CanineWaterSports.com)  
A leash and collar free team sport.