

BICYCLING WITH YOUR DALMATION

Having your Dalmatian running alongside your bike is a wonderful way to burn off all that excess Dal energy! **If your Dal is less than 1 year old, however, we advise you NOT to bike with him/her because of the potential for damaging his/her leg joints.** It's best to let your Dal finish growing first.

Safety should be at the top of your list and priority. We do NOT recommend your Dal's regular leash and collar held in your hand or tied to your bike. We emphasize the use specialized equipment to attach your Dal's collar or harness to your bike. There are many products on the market, however the one we like the best is a "Springer". These can be purchased anywhere (Amazon, and even Group has a deal for under \$20!)



Once you have a safe method to bike with your Dal, we recommend that first few times you take your Dal out with the bike, you walk the bike with the dog, to teach your Dal to stay alongside the bike, and for you to be able to gently correct any lunging or darting that might occur. Keep in mind that even the best equipment can't completely prevent falls caused by a sudden lunge or jerk. **A Dal who has successfully completed a basic obedience course makes the best bicycling companion because he/she is more focused and more willing to listen to your commands.**

When you feel your Dal has the idea of walking nicely beside your bike, this is when you should attempt to ride the bike. We recommend you start your runs on a grass or dirt surface, in case of mishaps, **and because your Dal's feet and sensitive pads will not be toughened to withstand hard running on pavement.** You should gradually build up the distance you bike with your Dal **and check his/her paws after each run** to ensure your Dal has not sustained any scrapes, tears, or blisters.

Your bike speed should be such that your Dal will trot to keep up with you (you may go a little faster for short distances to give your Dal a chance to gallop, but don't try to maintain this pace for long). **Keep an eye on your Dal and make sure he/she isn't panting too hard or showing any signs of distress.** Your Dal is NOT the energizer bunny – he/she cannot keep going, going and going! Like humans, your beloved pet also experiences sore feet and muscles, hard breathing, etc., Also, keep in mind that **heat and humidity can be dangerous for both you and your Dal if you exercise too hard and too much.**

Remember: always bring along water for you and your Dal! Hydration is important!!

Exercising your Dal with your bike is a wonderful, healthy activity for both of you. A tired Dalmatian is a happy, relaxed, and non-destructive Dalmatian!

Author: Terri Haase (Founder & President Emeritus)