



## Dogs Of Winter

By Diane Schickerowsky, B. Sc.

When I think of dogs and winter, a few things come to mind. I picture my parent's Scottie, sitting still as a statue in the dark of night, pretending he has no idea why you are calling — and a very still black dog on a dark night is as near to invisible as a dog can get!

I picture my little Shih-Poo doing a very strange dance as he tries to lift all four paws off the ground simultaneously because of the cold and salt and that look he gives me that seems to say, a little help here please.

Winter also brings the opportunity to confirm that however cute you think your dog is in the summer, it can't hold a candle to how they look dressed up in a snow suit or walking for the first time with a new pair of boots!



While there are many pleasures that come with having a dog in winter, there are some added responsibilities as well, namely:

### 1. Visibility

With the change in season comes the early onset of darkness. To protect you and your dog in the dark streets, use collars, leashes and coats with reflective strips and to help drivers see you. Flashing lights for collars can also be used and are really handy in the dog parks in the evenings, and can also be used by kids and cyclists for added safety.

The beach is a great place to use not only lights for the dogs, but also their toys. Frisbees and balls are both available in glowing and flashing versions.



### 2. Warmth

Cold and snow bring chilly dogs. Coats aren't just for fashion — they are an important way to protect your pet from chills. There are many types available for all kind of outdoor activities, including rain slickers, rainsuits, snow parkas and snowsuits. These will help keep them warm, dry, and prevent the mess that a wet dog can bring into your house!

### 3. Protection

With the snow comes salt. The salt that many people use to keep the ground from getting slippery can literally cut up and crack your dog's feet and leave them howling in pain.

Boots come in many sizes and styles, from biodegradable rubber to fleecy ones used by sledding dogs. As dogs seem to be able to find salt in the strangest places, there are also products like paw balm that protects from both the cold and salt and aids in healing cracked paws.

With your dog taken care of, a final consideration this winter should be yourself. Walking in winter can be treacherous even if you have your full attention on it, but when your dog is attached to you by a leash, your two legs can seem like not enough any more!

When your clearly lit up, warm and protected dog spots a squirrel or an equally exciting distraction, that tug on the leash can be all it takes to have you slipping on ice or snow.

For winter walks, protect yourself with an anti-pulling device. These come in many formats to suit all owners and dogs, including martingale collars, head collars, and anti-pulling harnesses. Some people find they have more control with a leash that goes around their waist or over the shoulder, so explore what works best for you and your dog.

Winter is a great time for enjoying our parks and beaches with your dog. Make sure it's both fun and safe, and we can all enjoy a happy and healthy winter!

Visit us at 2211 Queen Street East in the Beach area of Toronto to pick up your winter dog supplies! Feel free to call us at the store at (647) 436-2529 with questions!

