



## **SOCIETY GUIDANCE FOR WORKING YOUNG DALMATIANS**

*The BCDS wishes to encourage owners of Dalmatians to provide appropriate levels of exercise for puppies and young dogs, especially where dogs are likely to be trained to work with the horse or horse and carriage. While it is true the Dalmatian is a working breed capable of great endurance this is true of a fully matured dog of 18 months or older and is not relevant for puppies.*

Under the age of 6 months, exercise should be provided in short bursts and should be natural to the puppy rather than enforced by the owner.

A couple of walks of 20 minutes each, a day, is reasonable at six months of age.

Couple this with some mental stimulation in the form of training or nose work and this will help to tire the puppy.

Care must be taken that the puppy's skeletal or muscular development is not damaged during the critical growth period of two to six months. Puppies should not be allowed to run up and down stairs, jump in or out of cars, off chairs, beds etc.

Early experiences with horses should be short and controlled. It is not until approximately 5-6 months of age that a dog begins to have the awareness of its environment and the danger horses may represent.

Training for working with a carriage, horse or bike should not begin until dogs are at least one year old, although a short distance of 50 yards or so can be conducted in order to stimulate the instinct.

In the early days of training, the mental concentration of working with horses can be as tiring as the physical activity for dogs and owners should watch for signs of stress.

Dogs should not be expected to run long distances until they reach full maturity at 18 months and then work must be built up gradually. For the trials a dog is not eligible for entry at 10km bronze level until they have reached one year and not eligible for silver 20km and gold 40km until they are 18 months.

### *Notes:*

- Exercise covers very different kinds of activity: going for a walk; training classes; training at home; playing with toys; chewing bones and playing with other dogs, for example.
- A ten-minute training session with mental stimulation is equivalent to a thirty minute run.

- Puppies that are hyperactive and lack concentration may need less exercise and stimulation, not more. Puppies probably need in the region of 20 hours sleep a day.

Don't confuse enthusiasm for fitness or ability to work.

*This policy is informed by extensive experience of breeding and training and recognises the problems that can be caused by over-exercising young dogs. Members are expected to abide by this policy.*