

Summer is arguably the best time of the year. When the warmer temperatures and perfect weather finally come around, you can be sure to find plenty of fun activities for both you and your Frenchie to indulge in. Summer is a great time of the year to go rock out at concerts, try new food, explore local parks and more. And who wouldn't want a little French bulldog to bring along for all this fun?

But while summer can be a ton of fun, Frenchie owners may experience one major problem when the temps begin to rise. French bulldogs are brachycephalic, which means that they have short snouts and airways. French bulldogs also often have fleshy palates and narrow nostrils and tracheas. As a result, Frenchies can suffer from breathing problems and may have difficulty breathing in hot and humid weather. In addition, they are often prone to overeating and heat exhaustion.

French bulldogs naturally perform better in cooler climates, but when the summer months roll around, it can be difficult, if not impossible to keep your dog cool and comfortable all the time. Being a responsible French bulldog owner means that you are aware of your dog's limitations and unique needs.

So, what can Frenchie owners do to make their dogs summer ready?

Check out these tips below!

Keep an eye on your Frenchie's panting.

Because French bulldogs are brachycephalic they are vulnerable to experiencing brachycephalic airway syndrome or BAS for short. BAS results when your dog pants too much. Excessive panting can cause the palate, tongue, and throat of your Frenchie to swell and close off, leading to a potentially deadly situation. If it's warm out, be sure to keep a close eye on your dog anytime he begins to play, run around, or gets excited. If you notice your dog panting heavily for more than five minutes, take him somewhere cool, provide him with plenty of water, and put him in a cool bath. If this does not stop the panting, take him to the vet immediately.

Never, ever keep your dog in the car.

One of the easiest ways you can protect your Frenchie this summer is by making sure that you never keep your dog in a car. During the sunny, summer months your car can heat up exponentially in just a few minutes. For example, on 70 degree days, your car can heat up to 104 degrees in only thirty minutes. With his short snout, your Frenchie will be unable to cope with the summer heat.

Limit your dog's time outside.

Protect your French bulldog by limiting their time playing and walking outside in the first place.

On extremely hot and humid days, particularly those over eighty degrees Fahrenheit, avoid taking your dog outside as much as possible.

If you absolutely must go out for walks or potty breaks limit your time outside to 20-30 minutes at a time. You can also choose to walk your dog later in the day after the sun begins to set or early in the morning before the sun rises.

Absolutely avoid walking your dog during the hottest, sunniest parts of the day between 10am and 2pm.

Additionally, when you are walking your Frenchie, be sure to check the temperature of the pavement. Hold the back of your palm to the asphalt and wait thirty seconds. If it is too hot for you and your skin begins to burn, it is too hot for them. Remember that your Frenchie is not only vulnerable to overheating and dehydration during the summer months. The hot summer pavement can also burn the skin of their sensitive paw pads. If you can, walk your dog in the grass or on other cool surfaces such as a dirt path or mulched paths.

However, be cautious. Make sure that your Frenchie does not ingest any cocoa bean mulch, which can poison them.

Watch what your dog is eating.

If you've owned dogs before than you already know just how much they love to chew on grass and other plants. Most of the time these plants are harmless. Sometimes they can even be beneficial for your dog. Educate yourself so that you are aware of the dangers that may be lurking in your backyard. Tomato, onion, Lily of the Valley, and azaleas are some common household and backyard plants that be can dangerous if your dog ingests them.

Provide plenty of cool water.

If you and your French bulldog plan to spend time outside in the hot, humid weather, make sure you provide your pup with plenty of cool water. If you plan on going for a walk, carry a bottle of ice water with you as well as a portable bowl for your dog.

If you plan to spend time hanging around outside fill a kiddie pool with water for your dog to splash around in and cool off. You can also carry a spray bottle full of cold water to spritz your French Bulldog's belly with when they begin to get too warm. Lastly, if your dog loves to play in the water hook up a sprinkle for them to romp around in.

Keep surfaces cool.

In the high heat, your Frenchie will naturally prefer the cool tile or vinyl surfaces in your home. When they are outside, bring along a cooling gel mat for them to lay on. You can also purchase a cooling, gel bandana. You can put the bandana and the mat in the fridge over night for extra cooling power.

Other ways to keep your dog cool involve soaking a bandana with water and tying it around his neck or by purchasing a cool coat. A cool coat is made of chamois cloth and work to keep your dog cool by evaporation. You will soak the cool coat in water and put it on your French bulldog, as the water evaporates it works to keep him cool, much like sweat does for us.

Make delicious frozen treats.

Another way to help your Frenchie cool off this summer is by making plenty of frozen treats for them to chew on. Consider freezing pumpkin, fermented goat's milk, yogurt, or other dog safe treats in fun, silicone molds. Some dogs will also enjoy sucking on ice cubes. Alternatively, you can also stuff and freeze a Kong for a long lasting frozen treat that will keep them happy and cool.

Protect your dog on the water.

If your dog loves to swim and you spend plenty of time near pools, lakes, or the ocean be sure that they are fitted with an appropriate sized life vest to keep them safe as they go for a swim.

Remember that French bulldogs are not natural swimmers. In addition, be mindful of how much chlorinated water and salt water your dog has ingested as this can cause your dog to fall ill.

Protect your dog from fleas, ticks, and heartworms.

There are plenty of insects and parasites lurking in your backyard that can be potentially dangerous for your dog. Be sure that you protect your Frenchie with an appropriate flea and tick product. There are plenty of safe and effective topical, collars, and chews to choose from such as Seresto, Advantix, or NexGard.

Be sure to keep your dog away from tall grass and always check them for signs of ticks after they have been outside. Your dog is also more likely to contract heartworm from mosquitoes during the hot summer months. Be diligent and sure that your dog is protected by providing them with an ingestible heartworm medication such as Heartgard.

Protect your dog's skin.

Just like humans, your French bulldog can also experience sunburn. Protect your dog by slathering on a coat of dog friendly sunscreen whenever you plan to be outside. Reapply every few hours or after they have been in the water.

Know the signs of overheating in your dog.

If you must take your dog out in the heat, know the signs that your dog may be getting too hot or is dehydrated. Signs that your dog may be dehydrated include: panting, sunken eyes, dry nose and gums, loss of skin elasticity, loss of appetite, drooling, weakness, vomiting, or lethargy. You can also test your Frenchie for dehydration by pinching his skin between your thumb and forefinger. If the skin springs back your dog is hydrated. Dehydrated skin will take longer to spring back.

Signs of overheating include: panting, drooling, pale gums, unusual breathing, difficulty breathing, weakness, vomiting and disorientation. If you notice your Frenchie exhibiting any of these symptoms, immediately take him to a cooler shady area or to an air-conditioned room. Provide your dog with plenty of cool water. You can also help your dog cool off by giving them a cool bath or showering them down with a hose. If you notice that they are not improving, take them to the vet immediately.

After following these tips, you and your French bulldog will be ready for a summer of fun!