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More than Four in Ten Say that They Wish They Could Spend More Time with Their Dogs



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95% of Dog Owners Agree that Spending Time with Their Dog Lifts Their Spirits

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New York, NY – Nearly all U.S. dog owners (95%) agree that spending time with their dog lifts their spirits, including 58% who *strongly* agree, according to a new survey conducted by Ipsos Public Affairs on behalf of Beneful. Over nine in ten of nearly 800 dog owners surveyed also say that they take comfort in coming home to their dog during these uncertain times (93% overall, including 55% who *strongly* agree), that their dog helps them enjoy the simple pleasures in life (92%), and that their dog makes their life more fulfilling (91%).

Dog owners tend to see a multitude of traits in their dog that makes life better when they are together. Fully 80% enjoy that their dog is always happy to see them and 75% appreciate their unconditional love. Other beneficial attributes of having a canine companion include the dogs':

- Being reliable and always there for their owners (63%)
- Being playful and carefree (61%)
- Positive attitude (46%)
- Being always up for an adventure (38%)
- Living in the moment (35%)

Perhaps it is due to these positive qualities that nearly half of dog owners (48%) say that they could not live without their dog on a daily basis, more than say so of their morning cup of coffee (35%), television (35%), driving their car (26%), their cell or smart phone (23%), or their best friend (15%). They are only more likely to say that they could not live without their significant other (54%) or their computer (50%).

- Women are more likely than are men to say that they could not live without their dog on a daily basis (55% vs. 42%).
- Dog owners 55 and older also appear to be more attached to their dogs, with 55% saying that they can't live without their furry friend, whereas 48% of younger adults say the same.

These are some of the findings of an Ipsos poll conducted June 1-3, 2009. For the survey, national samples of 797 dog owners aged 25 and older from Ipsos' U.S. online panel were interviewed online. Weighting was then employed to balance demographics and ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the U.S. adult population according to Census data and to provide results intended to approximate the sample universe. A survey with an unweighted probability sample of 797 and a 100% response rate would have an estimated margin of error of +/- 3.5 percentage points 19 times out of 20 of what the results would have been had the entire adult population of dog owners aged 25 and older in the United States had been polled. All

sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error, and measurement error.

Nearly a third of dog owners (31%) spend at least eight waking hours a day with their dog. A similar proportion (34%) says that they typically spend four to eight hours per day with their dog. However, many owners admit to spending far less time with their dogs: one in five (20%) spend only 2 to 4 hours a day with their dog, and one in seven (14%) spend less than two hours per day with their dog.

- Younger dog owners tend to spend less time with their dog than do those who are older. More than four in ten adults 55 and older (41%) say that they typically spend at least 8 waking hours a day with their dog, compared to just 24% of adults under 35.
- Women are also nearly twice as likely as men to say that they spend the majority of their day with their dog (41% women spend at least 8 hours per day vs. just 21% of men).

Four in ten dog owners (42%) wish that they could spend more time with their dog, including 13% who say that they would prefer to spend *a lot more*. However, a majority (54%) are content with how much quality time they spend with their dog. Just 4% confess that they would like to spend *less* time with their dog than they typically do.

- Adults under age 55 are much more likely than those 55 and older to say that they *would like* to spend more time with their dogs (47% vs. 29%), likely because they tend to spend less time with their dog during the day.
- At the same time, even though women tend to spend more time with their dogs than men do, they are equally likely to say that they wish they could spend more time with their pooches (41% of women, 42% of men).

In fact, many dog owners would rather spend time with their dog than with the people in their life. More than four in ten say that they would prefer to spend more time with their dog than with their neighbors (48%) or co-workers (44%).

Nearly a quarter (24%) of dog owners say that they would like to spend more time with their dog than with family members or relatives, 15% that they would rather spend more time with their dog than with their friends and 9% that they would rather spend more time with their dog than with their spouse or significant other.

Dog owners enjoy doing a variety of activities with their dogs, most notable jogging, running or walking (59%) and driving (44%). Roughly a quarter also say that they also like to have their dog along when they are running errands (27%) and on vacation (22%).

Fewer say that they like to eat at dog-friendly restaurants (6%) or bring their dog to work (4%).

- Younger dog owners (under 35) are more likely to enjoy doing a variety of activities with their dog than are those aged 55 and older, particularly jogging running or walking (72% vs. 49%), running errands (29% vs. 19%), and eating at dog-friendly restaurants (11% vs. 3%).
- Owners of small dogs (up to 22 pounds) are more likely than those with larger breeds to delight in vacationing with their dog (28% vs. 20%).

Though just 22% say that they enjoy going on vacation with their dog, nearly two thirds (65%) say that their dog would be an ideal travel companion, falling behind only their best friend (81%), spouse or significant other (81%) and children (69%). In fact, dog owners are more likely to say



that their dog is an ideal travel companion than are their siblings (58%), parents (50%), co-workers (28%), in-laws (27%) or grandparents (22%).

- At least six in ten dog owners say that their dog would be an ideal travel buddy, regardless of the size of their dog.

Dog owners are fairly split when it comes to where they would bring their dog on vacation. Three in ten (30%) say that their dream vacation with their dog would be camping in the mountains, though roughly a quarter say that they would opt to go to the beach on a tropical island (24%) or drive through the countryside (23%). Few would prefer hiking with their dog in the rainforest (5%), tasting exotic cuisine (2%), or sightseeing in a new city (2%).

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