

My dog loves the snow and will play in it for hours. This winter however he will go for a normal walk and then will hold up his feet for a few steps, alternating the feet. He still wants to keep going but there is a lot of snow on the ground. Is this from the cold snow or something else?

This winter we have had repeated snow showers and cold temperatures that are causing snow to hang around much longer than normal. We have also had a lot of ice as a result of the cold nights. Considering your safety and your pet's safety is very important.

What you are describing may very well be from the extreme cold temperatures. The paw pads can become sensitive to the snow and ice while on a long walk or even after a short period of time outside. Dogs with hair between the pads can form ice balls that are painful each time they step dog. If your dog is alternating the legs that seem to be uncomfortable, it is likely a result of the cold weather on their feet.

When you get home from a walk, check your dog's paw pads very carefully. If you see clumps of ice between the digits, do not attempt to cut it out of the fun. Instead, wet a hand towel with warm water and gently run the ice balls out. Another option is to fill a shallow pan with warm, not hot, water and allow your pet to soak their foot in the water until the ice melts.

To prevent the problem, there are many great options. Be prepared with a pet-safe ice melter. These products will keep your sidewalks and driveways ice-free and the are not harmful to your pet's paw pads. For going on walks, consider a paw booties. Most booties are available with a durable bottom that will be able to withstand long walks. They will help insulate the paws and keep them dry.

If your pet is still favoring one or more of his legs, I would recommend having him seen by a veterinarian. We want to rule out other cause of pain including a broken nail, nail bed tumors, torn ligaments or soft tissue injuries.

These tips should help you and your dog enjoy long walks this winter, without or without anymore snow.

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