

No Doggin' It

THE IDEA FOR THE RESEARCH PROJECT FIRST CAME TO PROF. RYAN Rhodes, a behavioural medicine specialist, on one of those regular early morning walks, coffee in hand, Sydney his golden retriever on a leash in the other hand. They were never alone, always joined by other dog-walkers in the neighbourhood.

Coincidentally, Shane Brown, a master's student and the owner of a dog named Charlie, got to thinking the same thing: with all of these people and their canine companions, there must be a difference in the amount of physical exercise they receive compared to non-dog owners.

Thus their research project was born, a directed studies project for Brown. Now, with results published in the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, the dog-walking scholars have generated widespread attention for their findings, namely that most people who own a dog get twice the physical activity of people who don't have a dog. The survey of 1,000 Greater Victoria residents is the first to focus exclusively on city-dwellers.



Shane Brown and Ryan Rhodes: directed studies project measures health benefits of dog ownership.

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