



PHOTO COURTESY OREGON RUFF RUNNERS

BEST PROFESSIONAL DOG RUNNERS

In the doldrums of winter, we stare bleakly out the window, watching rain drip down the windowpane for the 30th day in a row. Our dogs, on the other hand, stare fixedly at us, eyes wide and hopeful that any second, we'll jump up and go for that coveted walk. Or, even better, the all-exalted *run*.

While we mere mortals aren't always up to the challenge, we know who can help us: the Oregon Ruff Runners.

Josh and Samara Kramer, a husband-and-wife team, took the concept of dog walking and amped it up a few notches to provide a service that dogs crave.

"Running gives a higher level of exercise for the dogs, and with most dogs we're getting through two and a half to three miles per 30-minute outing," Josh Kramer explains. In other words, when your dog gets more mileage, she's burning more energy at a faster rate. And as we all know, a tired dog is a good dog.

Why hire a dog runner? Josh Kramer ticks off a few reasons. Some dog owners are elderly or have medical conditions that prevent them from running with their dog. Others have busy schedules and want to give their dog a special treat in the form of a romp.

Since the Kramers run with two to three dogs at a time, the dogs also benefit from socialization. Josh Kramer says when they pair dogs up with canine running buddies, they fall into pack mentality and gallop together.

On a typical running day, Josh Kramer can log 10 miles of running. The Kramers pick the dogs up at their houses and run in their neighborhoods, and they volunteer their time to run adoptable dogs at Greenhill Humane Society and Northwest Dog Project.

When your clients are dogs who love to run, work becomes a joy.

"Over and over again, we hear how excited the dogs get on the day they know they're getting a run," Josh Kramer says. "It's just immediate feedback, and I think it's very rare to find a supervisor or a boss who gets as excited as these dogs do to see us. It's a great motivator."

Check out the Ruff Runners at oregonruffrunners.com. They're also encouraging dog runners on Instagram to post pics of their dogs out on a run: Use #irunmydog.



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