



# DOG·ON·IT PARKS

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## How to Choose Dog Park Equipment

In order to help you make the most of your investment, we've put together some important considerations when choosing equipment for your dog park:

**Safety First:** Safety for both pets and park users should be your *highest* priority. Avoid extremely steep or tall equipment over 3'H that could injure an inexperienced dog or unattended child. Equipment with perforations can easily catch and tear a dog's nail; opt for the much safer option of agility components with entirely flat surfaces. All walking surfaces also need to be extremely slip resistant, so steer clear of components made with plastic or wood ramps which do not provide traction. It's also important to note that repurposed children's playground equipment such as tubes or slides are *not* safe for use in dog parks. Make sure the tunnel interiors are highly textured to provide slip resistance.

**Durable Materials:** Between environmental factors such as rain, salt air, and snow, and other issues such as dog urine (because dogs will be dogs, right?), the equipment in your park should be durable enough to withstand just about anything. How do you find the right products? Easy! Select components that are made with *heavy gauge, reinforced aluminum*. Unlike steel, aluminum cannot rust, so you can be sure your equipment won't degrade or corrode. Also, avoid products made with wood and/or PVC pipe; both can become brittle over time and easily broken in a public setting.

**One Size Doesn't Fit All:** Because dogs have such a wide range of sizes and abilities, look for components that can be adjusted to accommodate size and skill level, in addition to products made specifically for small dog areas and smaller parks. Are the components easy to adjust? Keep in mind that products made with steel will be heavy and difficult to modify. Lastly, look for a wide range of components to choose from to allow use for small dogs, large dogs and all sizes in between.

**Park Furnishings:** Dog parks provide great opportunities for both people and dogs to socialize. Seating should be comfortable, shaded, and arranged to encourage conversations between park users. Accessories such as signage at the park entrance, fire hydrants, and pick-up bag dispensers to help keep the park clean are also must haves. Pet fountains should be mandatory and constructed from stainless steel to prevent rusting and corrosion; consider providing an ADA accessible human fountain with a hose bibb for easy park maintenance as well. Spray features such as misting fire hydrants can help keep dogs cool on hot days, but choose products with a timed, low flow valve to discourage unwanted bathing and water waste.

**Supplier's focus:** Unfortunately, some equipment suppliers are really in the playground or campground business and only make a few dog park products on the side. Were their products developed with the help of veterinarians, structural engineers, agility experts and dog people? Are they a very new company with little experience and/or knowledge? Choose a company who manufactures the equipment themselves and who specializes *exclusively* in dog parks.

**Lifetime Warranty:** Reputable manufacturers (like us!) will offer comprehensive warranties that stand behind the quality of the products for 5 years and also offer a lifetime warranty against rust.

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