

MEDIA RELEASE

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**Promoting
Responsible
Dog
Ownership**



Canine Massage aids a dog's wellbeing

Dogs of all ages can benefit from regular light massages performed by their owners at home. Massages can relieve arthritis and tight muscles in older dogs, help puppies and adopted dogs adjust to their new surroundings, and allow owners to stay in touch with their dog's physical health. **Dogs NSW** recommends owners massage dogs to form close bonds with their pets, improving their behaviour and mental wellbeing.

"Humans receive massages to unwind, loosen tight muscles, and improve circulation, but dogs can also reap the rewards that massage provides. Canine massage helps dogs with emotional problems such as separation anxiety and thunderstorm phobia. It can also help prolong a happy life for dogs with painful conditions such as arthritis, or soothing the muscles of tired working dogs.", says veterinarian and **Dogs NSW** spokesman **Dr Peter Higgins**.

Most dogs will experience arthritis at some stage of their lives. By gently massaging around the affected area with the three middle fingers, circulation in the area is stimulated and will relieve a certain amount of pain, dependant on the physical condition of the dog.

"Taking the natural approach can be advantageous in certain situations. Relief through massage gives owners the security of knowing that your dog won't suffer further negative reactions and side effects to conventional medicines.", suggests **Dr Higgins**.

Younger or adopted dogs benefit emotionally from massage. Puppies who are regularly massaged are better socialised to home life and behave better later in life, barking less and responding better to its owner's commands. For newly adopted dogs that have trouble adjusting to new surroundings, massage can reassure and sooth anxieties to help them fully adjust.

"Canine massage is a great way to get close to your pet and it is a form of socialisation that is also fun; for the owner and the dog.", explains **Dr Higgins**.

"The best aspect of massage is allowing owners to stay in touch with the physical health of their dogs. Through touching, they may notice certain areas are painful when touched, or find lumps and scratches that they didn't know were there before," believes **Dr Higgins**.

"It is important that owners first consult their vet to make sure massage is appropriate for your dog. In some instances, massage can make a situation much worse. People have often asked me for natural alternatives to harsh conventional treatments, and I think vets should be encouraging people to explore all options for their pets," recommends **Dr Higgins**.

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