



COMPANION ANIMAL NEWSLETTER— MARCH 2022

EXERCISING THE GERIATRIC PATIENT

Is your companion slowing down, sprouting a few grey hairs? It happens to us all eventually! We all need to take extra care of ourselves as the years advance, and there are things we can do to help make it easier for our pets as well.

Exercise can play a huge part in this, little and often exercise is recommended for older animals, with frequent light exercise being encouraged to improve their circulation.



Elderly cats often sleep for long periods of time, they should however be encouraged to move around to assist their circulation and benefit joint health. There are lots of different toys, lasers and treat related exercises you can use indoors and outdoors. Keep things playful, the introduction of different games into the home also simulates their brain and is fun for you too!

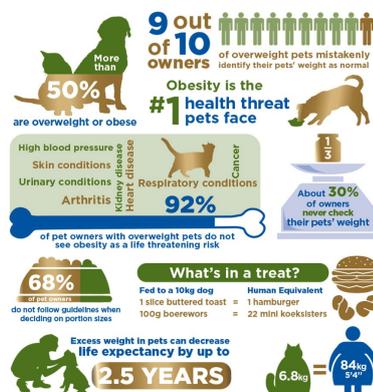
Some senior canines enjoy pottering and should be given chance to take short walks. Frequent exercise will help to prevent stiffness and give plenty of opportunity to urinate.

However, care must be taken when exercising an arthritic animal. The ever changing nature of this condition has its own challenges; too much exercise can cause pain, yet too little and the condition could worsen, causing the joints to stiffen and ache more. Exercise should be gentle, try going on different routes around your area to see which best suits your dog's needs. Massage can also be used to improve circulation to the extremities and hydrotherapy is another useful therapy which has many beneficial factors.

Arthritis will become a chronic illness. Joint supplements can help reduce further damage if used in the early stages of the disease, we can also use pain relief as advised by the vet. Pain can be quite difficult to spot in our pets as they can be stoic and good at hiding it from us. Nurse clinics are available, and we can discuss signs of what to look for and pain score your pet.

Obesity is common in geriatric patients and weight management is vital. It must be emphasised that excess weight is potentially dangerous because of the extra strain placed on the heart, kidneys, liver and musculoskeletal system. We have a fantastic nursing team who hold complimentary geriatric and weight clinics to assess your pet's status and help guide you both in the right direction.

Veterinary medicine, just like human medicine, has advanced so we can do more for our pets which means that the older section of our pet population is growing and the geriatric phase of pet's lives can be longer. Prevention is always better than cure so those regular health checks are not only vital in the latter years but all through our pet's lives to keep them as fit, healthy and happy as possible, and hopefully limit problems as they grow older.



AFFORDABLE PET CARE

Well we are certainly living in times where every penny counts! The cost of living continues to rise with no signs of slowing for the foreseeable future so being savvy with our finances is essential, not only in cutting down on our spending overall but also being mindful of what we spend our hard earned cash on. Investment in the right things will lead to savings in the future. Many people took the opportunity whilst working from home during the pandemic to add a pet to their family, but pet ownership comes with associated costs and now some people are feeling the pinch. The health of our pets needs to be one of our mindful investments, one that we plan and budget for, not only to keep our beloved companions happy and healthy, but also to help keep their care affordable.

PET HEALTH CARE IS AN INVESTMENT. The old adage “prevention is better than cure” is very true, it is also cheaper than cure! When times are hard it can be tempting to skip preventative treatments, missing out on vaccinations or health and dental checks. You might think you can make a saving by not worming or giving your pet their parasite control treatments, opting to wait until they have an issue but.... STOP! Not only would you be exposing your pet to the preventable risk of illness and disease, you are also opening yourself up to the risk of needing to spend a lot more on your pet’s healthcare! **Health checks** can pick up on any potential health problems **early**, which can often be treated conservatively avoiding extensive treatment. The last couple of years have given us all first hand insight into the importance **vaccinations** and **booster vaccines** have in preventing illness and death. **The diseases we vaccinate against can be highly infectious, and are often fatal**, but they **are** preventable through vaccination! In unvaccinated animals, the illness can be severe which is heartbreaking to see, and if treatment is an option it is often prolonged and costly. Our pets’ teeth need regular care just like our own, neglect at your peril! Regular **dental checks** and if necessary, a scale and polish are essential to avoiding the added expense of major dental work such as extractions being needed if tooth or gum disease is left untreated. **Parasite control** is the responsibility of all pet owners, not only to protect our pets against preventable parasites and the multitude of problems they bring (such as flea bite allergies), but to protect vulnerable members of the human population, the very old and the very young against transmissible parasites and associated disease. It is also in the interest of your finances to keep up to date with parasite control. Anyone who has experienced a flea infestation (which can happen at any time of year) will know just how much it can cost both financially but also in terms of time to get under control.

WE CAN HELP WITH THE COST OF YOUR PET’S PREVENTABLE HEALTH CARE! The Dalehead Healthy Pet Club is an in-house plan created by our own vets and run by our practice to offer your dogs and cats a full year’s preventative parasite control and annual vaccination as well as offering free health checks with our qualified nurses, nail trims and various discounts on preventative health care such as dentals and neutering. The plans offer significant discounts on the normal price of the products and services included and payments are spread over the course of the year, paying monthly by direct debit. There is no joining fee and no upper age limit, from puppies and kittens up to OAP’s, all are welcome. The plans cover your pet’s **preventative healthcare**—they are **not** insurance policies. With this in mind...

CHOOSE YOUR PET INSURANCE CAREFULLY! Even when we do the best for our pets and provide them with preventative care there are still going to be times when the unexpected happens, whether this be accident or illness. Having the financial provision in place for any eventuality means that we can give our pets the best care without having to worry about the cost. For the majority of us, this means taking out some form of insurance cover. Insurance policies can vary enormously and it is important to do the homework and enter a contract of insurance that is right for you and your pet. This topic was covered in more detail in last month’s newsletter which can be viewed on our website: www.daleheadvetgroup.co.uk



Healthy Pet Club

Relax... Knowing everything is taken care of.



Check out our website www.daleheadvetgroup.co.uk for more information about caring for your pet, special offers, vet and staff profiles and much more!

