

Cape Cod Kennel Club General Meeting  
September 3, 2008 at 7:00pm  
Osterville Community Center

Presentation by: Julie Robitaille, CAMT

Topic: What is Massage Therapy & How Can It Help My Pet?

Massage Therapy is a non-invasive way to enhance your animal's overall health and well being. Massage is the manipulation of soft tissues to achieve a therapeutic response in the body such as increasing circulation, reducing muscle pain and spasms, enhancing muscle tone, relieving tension, promotes healing and increases range of motion. Massage increases circulation bringing vital oxygen and nutrients to the tissues and cells of the body. Massage provides relief from many common ailments as well as enhances performance. Just as less invasive approaches to health care in humans has gained popularity, so too have these therapeutic methods gained acceptance in the care and treatment of our animal companions. Whether your dog is a competitive athlete, law enforcement canine, aiding the handicapped, or your beloved family pet, we want and need our animals to be free of muscle pain and ailments that inhibit movement and performance. All animals use and can abuse muscles. Massage relaxes these muscles, reduces strain and helps avoid injuries. Because of the numerous health benefits of massage, knowledgeable owners and trainers are incorporating this vital therapy as an integral part of their animals' complete and continuous health care program.

We begin by taking a medical history and evaluating the animal's overall condition, posture, gait, and demeanor to determine the animal's needs and choose a type of massage that is best suited for your pet and their conditions. The average session last about 45 minutes but this can vary with each animal's comfort level. Each session includes instruction in follow-up techniques for the pet owner to use at home in between your scheduled sessions. As the massage session proceeds, records of positive and negative reactions help determine and modify the massage program as needed by your pet. Massage therapy is never a replacement for veterinarian care. Pet owners should consult with their veterinarian before undergoing and throughout their massage therapy sessions.

Benefits of Massage Therapy  
On all systems in the body

Muscles: Relieves muscular tension, soreness, & fatigue, increases flexibility motor skills, muscular nutrition & range of motion, improves performance, balance & posture, & tones weak muscles

Fascia: Elongates & softens connective tissues

Bone: Increases mineral retention of vital nutrients & promotes fracture healing

Cardiovascular: Improves circulation, decreases blood pressure & heart rate, increased white & red blood cells contributing to a strong immune system

Lymphatic: Promotes lymph circulation which helps remove waste from the body more effectively

Integumentary: Increased circulation brings added nutrients to the skin, improving skin condition

Nervous: Reduces stress & anxiety, stimulates the release of endorphins that decrease pain, promotes relaxation, aids in bonding and trust for traumatized or anxious animals

Digestive: Stimulates digestion, relieves colic, constipation, & intestinal gas

Endocrine: Increase serotonin & dopamine levels which are linked to decreasing stress & depression

Respiratory: Strengthens respiratory muscles, improves pulmonary function

Urinary: Promotes excretion of metabolic wastes, aids in kidney fluid filtration

Puppies for positive reinforcement & building trust

Athletes for enhanced movement & performance

Geriatrics for increased comfort levels

Aiding the healing process after an injury or surgery

Early detection of abnormalities

Help in preventing injuries

And for all animals enhanced health for all body systems

About the Presenter  
Julie Robitaille, CAMT ~ Certified Animal Massage Therapist

Graduate of the Bancroft School of Massage Therapy

She has received training in the following areas

Anatomy & Physiology Behavior, Handling, & Management

Health & Biosecurity Species & Breeds

Structural Assessment & Biomechanics Animal CPR & First Aid

Passive Movements Advance Massage Techniques

Shiatsu & Acupressure Techniques