

Issue 22 | Winter 2022

# Pet Life

**Celebrate Your Pet**

**Understanding  
guinea pigs**

**FIVE DOMAINS OF  
ANIMAL WELFARE**

**NATURAL  
REMEDIES**

**FREE**

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**Moving  
HOUSE WITH YOUR CAT**

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# OPTIMUM NUTRITION FOR SENIOR SUPPORT



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CHONDROITIN &  
OMEGA FATTY ACIDS  
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## EDITOR'S LETTER

Winter is well and truly upon us. We have the fire going pretty regularly and Dusty the cat has been enjoying laying up next to it. Keeping your senior pet comfortable in the cooler months is important, so check out our great article for some tips and tricks.

If you are thinking about getting a pet rabbit then read up about the ins and outs of rabbit ownership and whether one rabbit can truly be happy by themselves. Those new to guinea pigs, will understand how hard it is to understand what they might be trying to tell us so we give you some of their verbal cues to help strengthen your relationship with your piggie.

Moving house can be stressful for not only us but for our pets, too. Learn how to move house with your cat in a stress-free manner — your feline will love you for it. If you have thought about incorporating natural remedies into your pet's healthcare, then be sure to check out our article on easy natural remedies for flea and skin irritations.

And, finally, we have such a heartwarming story from Salena Hodgson who established PussnBoots Charitable Rescue. It's always so lovely to hear from the amazing people doing outstanding work for animals in their community.

Grab a warm cuppa and snuggly pet, sit back and enjoy our latest issue.

*amy*

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## The Grace Programme

The Grace Programme was set up by MicroMed to provide complimentary products to pet rescues and animal shelters across New Zealand. MicroMed believes it is important to support pets and other animals in need in our community, and gives thanks to those who donate their time and love to care and support this cause, too.

If you think MicroMed could help pets in your care at your rescue then get in touch with the team to discuss this amazing programme. Email MicroMed at sales@micromed.org.nz.



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## PUSSNBOOTS KITTY RESCUE

*Salena Hodgson established PussnBoots Kitty Rescue purely by accident. It all started in January 2020, after she saw disheartening posts on social media about a litter of three-week old kittens being dumped individually around Temuka, South Canterbury. This is her story.*

**T**emuka is a small country town with a population of approximately 4580 and a whole lot of unwanted kittens and cats. Some kittens were dumped in town, fortunately, these kittens were found and taken into a rescue, but it had me going through a range of emotions: angry, upset, mostly frustrated and why? Why would someone do this to any tiny defenceless animal?

With that, I popped a post on a community page stating I would put a crate at my gate, gave my address, and said if someone felt they had no choice but to dump animals then they could stick them in the crate. Little did I know that was the beginning of something way bigger than I could ever imagine.

Within an hour, we had our first kittens and, from there, I guess PussnBoots was formed. The calls from all around the district and further afield left days with little time to stop and think about where we were heading as a family or a business.

The kittens kept coming and so too did the mother cats, the wild cats, the dumped and the strays, along with the odd one who had gone walkabout and found themselves lost and needing a helping hand to find their way home.

Day after day we got busier and busier; initially we didn't realise how far the word had spread about PussnBoots, but it seems our friendly approach was talked about often.

Generally, funding has been one of our biggest issues. I was funding the rescue mainly by myself, with a small handful of supporters, and we still struggle getting enough money to care for the large amount of kittens that keep coming in; not to mention supporting families in the community with items like flea and worm products.

Finding enough foster carers to deal with the influx of fur babies who desperately need care has also been a major struggle, and at times it feels like we are all on our own. It was extremely important to me that

we adopted a zero kill policy very early on as the aim is first and foremost to care, nurture, rehabilitate and rehome.

To date, we have had 178 cats and kittens come into our care. About 40 are currently waiting to find their forever home. At the moment, we have just eight foster carers on board who are always at capacity and we are always on the look out for more.

Over recent months, between the hustle and bustle of litter trays and vet visits, I reached out to like-minded people and together we successfully took PussnBoots a step further and formed a non profit charity. Our trustees are all animal lovers and believe fully in what we are doing, and we anticipate going from strength to strength.

With phone conferencing as our main source of communications due to previous COVID-19 restrictions, we get together once a month to discuss fundraising, our accounts and progress reports, as we constantly try to improve our services.

We support a neuter/spay, vaccinate, microchip and rehome policy; all our animal visitors have the best of care with full access to veterinary care as and when required.

**PussnBoots is just one of many rescues around New Zealand that strives to support its communities to ensure cats are loved and cared for without harm and neglect. We applaud their hard work and dedication because we know just how trying it can sometimes be.**





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# NATURAL REMEDIES

*Natural remedies are becoming pet owners' number one choice for pet care.*

When it comes to flea control, many pet owners are looking for less toxic and more natural remedies. Here are some natural options for flea control for your pets and home.

## DOGS

Try mixing some garlic and Brewer's yeast into your dog's food, this tends to repel fleas.

Essential oils such as citronella, eucalyptus and rosemary, diluted appropriately and used correctly, can naturally repel fleas. Place a couple of drops into 400ml of water and spray directly onto your dog's coat. Be sure to use high quality essential oils from a reputable source.

Apple cider vinegar not only treats fleas but helps to balance a dog's pH levels. To make the spray, dilute six cups of high quality apple cider vinegar with four cups of water and just a dash of salt. Mix well and then spray directly onto your pup's coat.

Try a rosemary bath! Steep two cups of fresh rosemary leaves in boiling water. Once cooled, strain the mixture and collect. Wash your dog with the rosemary steep being sure to completely cover their coat. Do not wash off, apparently it is the smell that repels fleas.

## CATS

Citric acid is a natural flea killer so whip up some lemon spray for your cat. Simply cut one large lemon into quarters, squeeze the lemon

juice into 500ml water then add the remaining lemon and steep for three hours. This solution is best worked into your cat's coat with a comb that is dipped into the solution. Be sure to monitor your cat's skin for any irritation from the acidic solution. You can also add a cup of lemon juice into the laundry while washing your cat's bedding.

We recommend a rosemary rub for cats rather than a bath. Pick fresh rosemary leaves and grind them to a powder. Sprinkle in areas your cat likes to sleep or hang out.

Lavender is not only good at repelling flies it can also repel fleas. Pick a bunch of lavender and steep in hot water for 12 hours, strain and pop the liquid into either a spray bottle or a jar. Then either spray onto your cat's coat or dip your cat's comb into the jar and work through your cat's fur.

## RABBITS

Yes, rabbits get fleas, too, so why not add some apple cider vinegar into their drinking water. Simply add one tablespoon of apple cider vinegar into four litres of water and fill their water bowls or bottles. Otherwise you can mix one part vinegar to one part water and spritz on your rabbit's fur. Rub into the fur, paying special attention to the areas where fleas gather.

You can also try using bayleaf, rosemary or sage as natural flea repellents by hanging them around your rabbit's enclosure.

## OTHER AILMENTS

*So what about natural remedies for other ailments?*

If you notice mites on your bird, try a baking soda soak. Fill the sink

with warm water and add baking soda until you see it fizz. Try to keep your bird in the water for about 15-20 minutes and repeat daily until the mites are gone. Be sure to dry your bird thoroughly so they don't get pneumonia.

If your pet is stung by a bee, remove the stinger and apply ice. If you want to offer further relief to your pet, make a paste of baking soda and water, apply liberally over the sting. If you see further swelling, get to your nearest vet as soon as possible.

For irritated skin, try one of the many treatments below.

- Dab milk of magnesia on insect bites or hot spots.
- Apply aloe vera gel on the affected area.
- Dog hot spots can be soothed in a green or chamomile tea bath.
- Apply apple cider vinegar onto the irritated skin.
- Mix two cups of warm water with one teaspoon of Epsom salt and apply to the affected area, or for sore paws bathe directly in the solution.
- Solidified coconut oil can help soothe canine eczema, skin infections and insect bites.

There are many natural remedies you can use to keep your pet happy and healthy. If you are unsure whether to use a specific natural treatment then have a chat with your vet or vet nurse about it before trying.

Disclaimer: This article is not to be taken as a replacement for veterinary advice or prescription medicine. If in doubt, seek veterinary advice.





# Rabbits for Life

Rabbits have become very popular pets in recent years but rabbit ownership can very quickly get out of control if you don't do your research.

Rabbits are very social animals and while one rabbit might suit the family, if you are not willing to give this rabbit a lot of time, love, attention and enrichment then they can become lonely and depressed. Taking on two rabbits is ideal if you have the space, money and time, but just make sure they are either the same sex or desexed because, as the old saying goes, they breed like rabbits! Rabbits can get pregnant once they are three months old so if you are unsure on the sex of your rabbits, ask your vet.

Often when you see rabbits being rehomed it might state "bonded pair", but what does that mean? A bonded pair are two rabbits who are emotionally connected, and once formed these bonds are for life. If you have a bonded pair of rabbits you will get to see them grooming each other, laying up next to one another and generally doing all things together. Housing a bonded pair means your rabbits are happily fulfilled, and you as the owner may have less issues with your rabbits such as anxiety or depression. As a general rule, you can tell you have a bonded pair if the rabbits spend 48 hours together without showing any aggressive behaviour or chasing each other.

## Don't forget

**Two rabbits are better than one. Bonded rabbits bond for life and peacefully coexist together.**

**Male rabbits can remain fertile for up to six weeks after being castrated. Do not return a male back into the run with a female immediately after desexing.**

OK, so if two rabbits are good, how about three or more? In the wild, rabbits live in large groups so it makes sense they would enjoy group living in your backyard.

But ask yourself:

- Can I provide the time, energy and money to look after this many animals?
- Do I have enough space for their enclosure?

If you decide to go with a larger group of rabbits then you may need to look at temperament. Some rabbits are highly territorial and their personalities may not be best suited for large group living but rather with just one other rabbit. In this case, think about setting up an enclosure where you can allow different groups or pairs to enjoy different areas by inserting sliding doors or plastic pipes/tunnels.

Rabbits can make the best pets but they are not "beginner's" pets as sometimes described. Rabbits, like cats and dogs, can live long lives and need attentive owners. So, before jumping into rabbit ownership, be sure to do your homework and honestly ask yourself: Can I commit my time for the next 6-8 years?





# MOVING HOUSE WITH YOUR CAT

*Cats are territorial species who are influenced by their environment, so moving homes can be potentially stressful for your individual cat. Planning ahead will ensure the transition from one home to another goes smoothly with as little distress as possible for you and your kitty.*

## CARRIER TRAINING

Carrier training is the first step in the planning phase.

Choosing an appropriate carrier and making sure your feline loves spending time in it will make all the difference between a pleasant or aversive experience for you and your cat during travel or when visiting the vet or groomer. Carriers that contain both a top and a front opening for access are best!

Once your cat is comfortable in the carrier, take your cat for brief car test drives. Ensure these drives are positive experiences, starting with a short distance and gradually increasing the distance as your cat's anxiety decreases. Reward your cat verbally during travel with praise and a treat upon arrival.

## USE OF PHEROMONE THERAPY

Synthetic analogues of feline pheromones can be applied preventatively or therapeutically and help in the management of distress, home relocations, travel and habituation to new environments by reducing anxiety while promoting the feeling of happiness.

Pheromones should be sprayed on towels, blankets, your carrier and bedding to make your cat more comfortable during travel and as he acclimatises to the new place. Spray a synthetic feline pheromone into the carrier 15 minutes before using it to encourage your cat to enter. Consider the use of the spray in the car at least 30 minutes prior to help calm your cat. Always cover the carrier completely with a towel, which can also be pre-treated with a pheromone spray.

## USE OF CALMING SUPPLEMENTS

There are several supplements available from veterinary clinics and over the counter that hold precursors of neurotransmitters which may have anti-anxiety effects.

There's some evidence that L-tryptophan, Alpha-casozepine and L-theanine are more than effective in reducing anxiety in a number of species, including the domestic cat. Zylkene is a great supplement which can be taken three days prior to the move and three days after the move to aid with any signs of distress.

Always consult your veterinarian before introducing any supplements.

## A FEW DAYS PRIOR TO THE MOVE

If you're lucky enough to receive the keys to your new place prior to the move, designate a sanctuary space in the new home for your cat. Plug in a diffuser in the sanctuary space and add a few of your cat's items with their familiar scent, for example, bedding, scratchers, blankets and food/water bowls.

Spreading the cat's scent around prominent areas of the home will help incorporate it into the household odour. Cats usually rub and deposit chemical messages which hold their scent on areas such as on door frames, table legs and the corners of sofas and other furniture. This can be replicated manually by the owner by 'collecting' their cat's scent on a cotton cloth or glove by stroking them with the cloth in the facial gland regions (under the chin, cheeks and areas in front of the ears) and rubbing this cloth or glove on the prominent areas.

## TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL DAY OF THE MOVE

Before the removal truck or trailer arrives, place your cat in one or separate rooms, ideally a bedroom with familiar furniture.

Place all your cat's items, like his carrier, bed, food and water bowls and litter tray, in this room. Shut all the windows and doors to prevent escape in case of distress from the noise.

Keep the same routine as much as possible, with plenty of marking opportunities like scratchers, boxes and blankets which can be easily transitioned to the new home.

In the morning, place a notice on the door of the room to ensure the removalist or family members know to keep the door shut to prevent your cat from fleeing.

Once all the rooms have been emptied, except where the cat is, place your cat in their carrier and secure them safely in your car, ready to transition to the new place. Proceed with removing the content of this room.

*Continued on page 10*



# Natural Pet Supplements

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*Continued from page 8*

Please don't transport your cats in the removal van and, if it's a long journey to your new home, stop and offer water and a chance to use the litter tray.

First set up a room or designated safe place for your cat. Place your cat in that room. Once the new room is ready, place your cat's bedding, scratchers, food and water bowls and litter box in it to ensure the new space smells like their old home.

Place the cat(s) in the room, shut the door, and let him get out of the carrier on his own terms. If possible, arrange a family member to sit in the room with your kitty while they explore it. You can offer your cat a little to eat or scatter some dry food on the floor to encourage exploration.

Once the removalists have left the new place, ensure all the doors and windows are closed. You can allow your cat(s) to investigate the rest of the house, one room at a time as gradually as possible.

Remain calm and watch for signs of anxiety. Beware of any gaps in kitchens, behind appliances or cracked pipes in laundry rooms where a kitten and nervous cat may choose to hide. If your cat is especially skittish, it may be better to board your cat in a cattery prior to the move and collect them once you set up the sanctuary room in the new house.

### **How to help a cat feel comfortable in a new home**

Certain cats require about a week to be comfortable in an unfamiliar environment, but some require longer. Wait until your cat is confidently exploring their new room and comfortable with social interaction and play before leaving the door open for further exploration.

Keep your cat indoors for at least two weeks to get them used to the new home, and feed small quantity meals.

Provide the same routine as in your previous house to maintain relaxation and continuity.

Importantly, prevent getting new furniture until your cat is fully settled in the new environment since that may exacerbate stress levels.

### **Signs that your cat is stressed after a move**

It's nearly impossible to make a move completely stress-free, however, you can look out for signs of stress-like excessive vocalisation, scratching or grooming, lack of appetite, hiding or withdrawing from social interactions, toileting outside the litter tray and/or panting/drooling. If you notice one or two of these



signs, or anything unusual for your individual cat, please contact your vet.

### **Letting your cat outside**

If your cat is used to going outside in their old home, you'll need to let them adjust to the new place first by keeping him inside for few weeks.

Ensure your cat has some form of ID like a collar and tag with his name, address and your phone number on it, and ensure your cat's vaccination is up to date. Consider installing a microchip cat flap for ease of entry and access to your new home if feasible.

Introduce your cat to the garden and outdoors gradually while helping them establish their new territory. Don't carry or force your cat outside – let them decide if they want to explore on their own terms. Initially, keep the door open so they can run back indoors if they feel unsafe.

### **Preventing your cat from returning to his old house**

If your new place is nearby, it's possible your cat may start exploring and find familiar routes to return to his old home. It's worth notifying the new occupiers that your cat may return and ask them to call you if they see him.

Moving house is one of life's most stressful experiences for both humans and cats. By planning ahead you can help your cat settle calmly with minimal disruption.



# ANIMAL WELFARE

## Five Domains of animal welfare

*The Five Domains model provides a basis for identifying opportunities to improve animal welfare.*

By minimising negative experiences and providing animals with an opportunity to engage in species-specific behaviours that are rewarding, we can help shift them into an overall positive welfare state.

This way of assessing animal welfare, the Five Domains model, was developed in 1994. The Five Domains model has been updated throughout the years to incorporate developments in animal welfare science thinking. Over the past years, this model has been used to assess the welfare impacts of pest animal control methods, research procedures and other interventions to make sure animals have minimal negative experiences.

This model explores not only physical health but also the mental status of an animal. It recognises there may be an emotional experience for every physical event, meaning emotional and physical needs are equally important for an animal to provide positive experiences.

The five domains are:

1. Nutrition — assessing water deprivation, food deprivation and malnutrition
2. Physical environment — assessing physical and atmospheric challenge
3. Health — assessing disease, injury and functional impairment
4. Behavioural interaction — assessing behavioural and/or interactive movement restrictions
5. Mental health — assessing thirst, hunger, anxiety, fear, pain or distress

The Five Domain structure can help encourage animal welfare by looking for:

- evidence of a variety of positive experiences
- a way to provide opportunities that result in positive experiences
- possible negative experiences
- negative mental experiences from their physical health.

behavioural  
interaction



nutrition



mental



health

health



physical  
environment



*The Five Domains model for animal welfare assessment and monitoring.  
Adapted by Pet Life Ltd.*

# inspires a kinder generation

*Aotearoa New Zealand is a nation of animal lovers. We have more than 4.35 million companion animals (pets) that call New Zealand home, and over 72 per cent of households with children have at least one companion animal\*. However, sadly, every year thousands of abandoned, abused, neglected and injured animals arrive into SPCA's care.*

In order to prevent intentional and unintentional animal cruelty in New Zealand, SPCA has developed a free online education programme to improve animal welfare by nurturing the young hearts and minds of Aotearoa New Zealand.

## **What is animal welfare education?**

Animal welfare education is about fostering respect, understanding, compassion and responsibility towards all animals. It's an exploration of the relationships we have with animals and the responsibilities we have in ensuring their physical and mental needs are met to ensure their overall wellbeing.

## **The importance of animal welfare education**

New Zealand still has a long way to go in preventing cruelty and improving the lives that our animals live. We continue to see chained dogs, fish living in glass bowls, solo rabbits confined to small hutches, abandoned animals and cases of deliberate neglect and abuse. However, on a positive note, we know that through education, behavioural change can occur and the most powerful and formative years for this learning is before the age of 12. This is why SPCA's education programme has been developed to support children's knowledge and understanding of animal welfare and nurture their personal sense of responsibility and empathy towards animals.

## **SPCA's education programme**

SPCA's education programme is full of fun, curriculum-aligned, engaging educational resources for teachers, children, parents, whānau and the wider community to teach and learn about animals

and animal welfare. Consisting of three interlinked components, SPCA's education programme is comprised of an online Kids' Portal and Teachers' Portal, as well as four series of Instructional Readers. The programme aims to teach young Kiwis about animal welfare, responsible animal guardianship (ownership) and kind conservation through curriculum aligned collections of interactive, engaging, real-world learning experiences.

## **Why online?**

Having online resources, and sets of SPCA Instructional Readers in every New Zealand primary school, means regardless of postcode, all children, teachers, parents, whānau and community members can access and enjoy the same quality animal welfare education. For example, classes of students from anywhere in Aotearoa can join the same live educational webinars, enter any of the Kind Matters competitions, and even reach out directly to the SPCA Education Team for support and answers to their animal related questions.

Not only does being online mean greater accessibility, it allows for ongoing learning experiences that scaffold children's learning, building on their existing interests and knowledge. This allows for real, deeper learning to occur and increases the likelihood of children putting that learning into action.

## **SPCA Instructional Readers**

Instructional readers are the reading books that children learn to read with at school and then take home overnight to share and practise reading with their whānau. Over the past six years, SPCA has worked with

*\*Companion Animals NZ, 2020*



Sunshine Books, a New Zealand educational publisher, to produce four series of their own animal welfare themed instructional readers. And, to ensure every Kiwi kid has access to these valuable resources, SPCA has gifted every primary school in New Zealand with six copies of each of the 24 titles.

Not only do these engaging stories support children's reading skills and development, they also share important messages of animal welfare, animal guardianship and kind conservation. Having children read stories about characters they can identify with and relate to, can inspire and empower them to take action and make a positive difference to the lives of animals.

Free teaching notes and post-reading activities are also available on the SPCA Teachers' Portal. The teaching notes suggest ways teachers can use the texts in the classroom, and post-reading activities help to extend and consolidate children's knowledge of animal welfare and nurture their empathy and compassion for the living world.

### **SPCA Teachers' Portal**

Many children have a natural curiosity and affinity for animals, making them an excellent authentic context for learning. Ranging from early learning to intermediate, the Teachers' Portal is bursting with free resources that use animal welfare and responsible animal guardianship as contexts for teaching and learning across all areas of Te Whāriki (New Zealand's early childhood curriculum) and the New Zealand Curriculum for Schools.

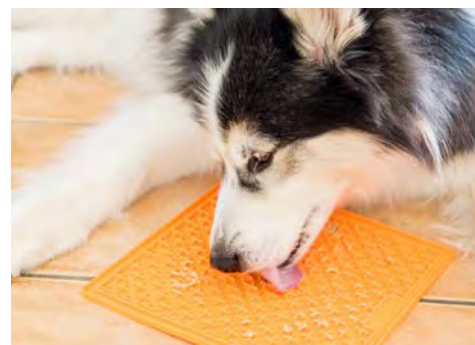
SPCA's teaching resources align to and provide clear links to the curriculum, allowing them to be easily integrated into the classroom or ECE centre. Not only do these resources teach core curriculum areas, but they are designed to encourage learners to inquire and develop the knowledge and skills they need to make informed choices and empower them to think and act for the wellbeing of humans, animals and our natural environment.

### **SPCA Kids' Portal**

This interactive and engaging learning tool is what children can use to find out all about SPCA, basic animal husbandry, animal welfare, and what it means to be a responsible animal guardian. Here children can watch educational videos, read Kind Matters newsletters and enter the latest competition. They can keep busy during school holidays with fun Learning at Home Booklets and by making enrichment toys for their own animals or those at their local SPCA centre. There are even games, crafts and an 'Ask an Expert' function where children can submit their animal care and welfare questions.

### **Where to next for SPCA Education?**

Just as technology continues to evolve, so too does SPCA's education programme. The programme is evaluated on a regular basis to ensure it remains fit for purpose, relevant and reflects the current needs of teachers, children and whānau. An example of this continued growth is the programme's brand new teaching resource, SPCA Care and Create.



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SPCA Care and Create is an immersive 3D world created in Minecraft Education Edition. Minecraft Education is a game-based learning platform, described by some as similar to 'online Lego'. Children can use Minecraft as a tool to design, engineer and model solutions, create products and solve problems.

Care and Create has been added to some of the existing SPCA resources and includes learning experiences such as designing a catio that would keep a cat safe and happy at home, inventing animal puzzle feeders, or enriching an aquarium to meet the welfare needs of fish. What makes Care and Create even more amazing is that it was designed and created by year 5 and 6 students at Elmwood Normal School in Christchurch!

By using our SPCA educational resources, the Kids' Portal, Teachers' Portal or instructional readers, you will be supporting the children in your life with their learning and understanding of animal welfare and help prevent cruelty towards animals, advance animal welfare and inspire a kinder generation.

**To learn more about SPCA's education programme visit [spca.nz/education](https://spca.nz/education).**





# Winter checklist

*As the cooler months set in, it is time to make sure your pets are kept safe, warm and healthy this winter. Here are a few tips to help you care for your pet this winter.*

- Offer a kitty tray for your cat if they become more reluctant to head outside and get their paws wet.
- If you have a fire, use a fire guard. Be sure to avoid leaving open flames in an area where your pet can get to it.
- Don't leave the oven warming drawer open in the kitchen – cats have a good tendency to seek out the warmth.
- Make sure your pet's bed is in a warm spot away from any drafts.
- Check paws regularly and dry off after outside time.
- Don't leave your dog in the car. Just as heat in summer can kill, cold cars in winter can pose a threat too.
- Check wheel arches and under the hood of your car because animals will seek out a warm place to snooze.
- If you use antifreeze, be sure to put it away and clean up any spills. Ingestion of antifreeze can cause kidney failure.
- Make sure kennels and runs are free from drafts and not facing into the prevailing wind.
- Ensure your pets have bedding, whether that is dry blankets or hay.
- Offer coats and jackets on the really bitter days or make sure shelter is available.
- Provide extra feed to your pets to help them maintain their healthy weight into spring.
- In the cooler areas of New Zealand, be sure to check water bowls and troughs for ice. Break ice so your pets can drink.
- Keep an eye on hooves and watch for rain scald or mud fever in horses and ponies.



## Brrrr... it's cold outside

### TREAT YOUR CAT TO AN INDOOR LOO!

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## DEEPENING OUR LOVE CONNECTION

# Natural therapies for animals

*Once thought to be only for humans, natural therapies are becoming increasingly popular for our companion animals.*

A holistic health practitioner for more than 20 years, certified reflexologist, Reiki and craniosacral therapy practitioner Jackie Segers has spread her wings to provide health and spiritual support for animals as well.

Jackie's beloved Burmese cats, Matisse and Morandi, were her first motivation for moving into the realm of animal wellbeing.

"I know how much natural therapies help my human clients and I knew I could support Matisse and Morandi through their life journeys in this way as well."

This interest sparked a passion that resulted in her writing two books and holding numerous workshops on healing for animals.

With the successful publication of *Reflexology for Cats* in 2007, she followed it up with *Reflexology for Dogs* in 2020.

"I published *Reflexology for Cats* as a practical guide on paw, face and ear reflexology for cats. *Reflexology for Dogs* is similar but it focuses on the specific issues that dog owners face in the care and love of their companion animals."

In both books, there are also chapters on acupressure and moxibustion, Bach flower remedies, craniosacral therapy, holistic pulsing and Reiki.

Jackie believes many people who use holistic therapies for their own wellbeing want the same for their pets.

"Pet lovers want the very best for their furry companions and massage, acupuncture and naturopathy are now being extensively used for our animal friends because they are safe, cost effective and beneficial."

Just like with natural therapies for humans, the use of natural animal therapies and veterinary care are not mutually exclusive and, Jackie says, they work well together to encourage recovery and overall wellness.



Jackie Segers is a certified reflexologist, Reiki and craniosacral therapy practitioner.

"Natural therapies for animals provide an amazingly beneficial complement to a visit to the vet. As humans, we visit our doctor for our ailments but we also recognise the sense of wellbeing we get from a visit to the masseuse or to the reflexologist."

Jackie often gets asked why animals need natural therapies and she points to an experiment in Dr Mehmet Oz's book, *Healing from the Heart*, that showed massaging a dog's foot pads increased lymphatic drainage in the whole body.

"Acupuncture, massage and reflexology can improve blood and lymph circulation. Pets have a low tolerance for chemicals and toxins in their environment, yet they can inhale, ingest or absorb them on a daily basis. Toxins can also form in the body as a result of a pet's diet. Eating commercially-processed pet food can lead to chronic health conditions such as allergies and diabetes. When circulation is improved, nutrients can easily reach cells and waste products can be removed more efficiently," she says.

Just like us, pets experience stress which natural therapies can help alleviate.

"Stress contributes to around 85 per cent of all major illnesses and plays a crucial part in nearly every condition that a veterinarian treats. Touch therapies like massage and reflexology can facilitate a deep relaxation response. When stress is released, our self-correction mechanism takes over and restores the body back to a normal state of balance."

With the use of natural therapies, Jackie says, animals and humans have an innate ability to heal if they are nudged in the right direction.





ABOVE: Workshop participants learn about natural therapies for their animal companions.  
BELOW: Leg circles.



“Often, the best way to help animals relax is if we, as their guardians, practise regular selfcare ourselves.”

Jackie believes one of the best ways to aid global planetary healing is to start with the animals we share our daily lives with.



ABOVE: Morandi reaps the benefits of a loving massage.

“Nurturing touch communicates at the most basic level unconditional love, trust and respect. This unique language of connection creates the stillness to recognise and embrace our collective divinity.”

Quoting one of her inspirations, craniosacral therapist Sally Morgan:

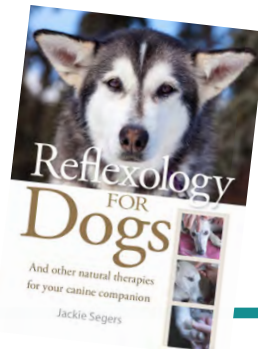
“If people are better able to understand animals, they gain a better understanding of themselves. Animals are our connection to nature. Connecting spiritually with animals is one way to help heal the planet as well. Animals teach us self-acceptance and self love and, in that way, bring us closer to the divine.”

**WIN**



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(RRP \$20-\$44 each)



**Reflexology for Dogs**, by Jackie Segers, is a comprehensive guide to connecting to and healing your canine companion. It focuses on reflexology, but also deals with several other holistic therapies. The book contains many illustrations and photographs and case studies from experts in holistic animal healing.

We have **one** copy to give away.  
(RRP \$50)



We have **four MicroMed** natural health prize packs, consisting of a 500ml twin pack of MicroMed for Livestock internal Everyday Care probiotic and topical Acute Care probiotic, to give away. These products improve the health of your pet by enhancing skin health, digestive health and immunity, to stop pesky infections taking hold over winter.  
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# Understanding guinea pigs

Many of us wish that we could understand what our pets are trying to tell us, and it can be particularly daunting when we get a new species for the first time. The best way to get to know our furry friends is to spend time with them, observe their reactions and make a note of new behaviours to research later. Understanding their vocabulary not only strengthens our relationship with them, it also better equips us to work with our pet's needs.

There are lots of good books about animal behaviour, but small pets, like guinea pigs, are sometimes overlooked. Looking after any pet is a learning experience, and hopefully this *Pet Life* guide to guinea pig and rabbit communication will come in handy, wherever you and your pets are along the journey.

Anyone who has ever rustled a bag of treats near their guinea pigs will know they are vocal creatures. Some piggies seem to sense that fresh vegetables are on the way before their owners have even had the idea to feed them, and their expectant 'wheeking' noises are hard to resist.

## Sounds

### Wheeking

This high-pitched squeaking noise is usually heard when food is on its way. A sign of anticipation and excitement, once one guinea pig starts, their companions usually follow in hopes of a delicious meal. Some guinea pigs' ears twitch as they wheek and some also popcorn (happy jump) and zoom around at high speed.

### Rumbling

Guinea pigs tend to rumble when they're in the mood for love, especially males who are interested in a

female, but females who are in season also do it. The low-pitched rumble is normally deeper than a purr and is often accompanied by walking around, low to the ground, with a wiggling bottom, which is known as 'rumble strutting'.

### Purring

Just like cats, guinea pigs purr in contentment, but it is slightly more complicated to decipher. Depending on the pitch and other concurrent behaviours, a guinea pig's purring can mean different things. A happy purr happens when the guinea pig is comfortable and feels safe. Their muscles will be relaxed; perhaps they are lying on their tummies with a leg poking out, with a human they trust and know well, or have just found something delicious in their favourite hiding place.

However, guinea pigs also purr when they are nervous, for example when they hear an unexpected or loud noise. This purr is shorter and higher pitched, and signals that they are uncertain and seeking reassurance. Along with this nervous purr, they might have wide saucer eyes and a tense pose, poised to run if they receive confirmation that something terrifying is nearby.

### Teeth-chattering

One way that guinea pigs express their annoyance is by chattering their teeth. It sounds a bit like frantic chewing, and they often stare at the source of irritation while they do it.

### Hissing

This noise comes from a very upset guinea pig. You might hear this if two guinea pigs are squaring up for a fight, where they may also bare their teeth and puff up their fur.





## **Squealing**

A sudden shriek or squeal can indicate that a guinea pig is in pain or very frightened. They can be very loud. Any unexpected loud squeals need investigating in case one of your guinea pigs is injured or in trouble.

## **Whining**

Whining or whingeing tends to happen when a guinea pig wants to complain about a situation they are not happy with. When introducing new guinea pigs to each other you might hear this moaning noise as they express how unimpressed they are with their new neighbour.

## **Clucking**

Sometimes guinea pigs walk around muttering or clucking as they explore their area. This is roughly translated as “all seems well with the world today”.

## **Audible or squeaky breathing**

If your guinea pig develops audible breathing, or any strange respiratory noises, it's important to get them seen by a vet. It can be a sign of a medical problem, such as a respiratory infection that needs prompt treatment.

## **Behaviours**

### **Sniffing**

Guinea pigs have a better sense of smell than we do and can gain useful information from the scents around them. Sniffing is an exploratory behaviour. They're checking out who has been there before them, and any potential threats or food that might be in the area.

### **Popcorning**

Jumping and bouncing are signs of a joyful guinea pig, and often coincide with happy wheeking noises, a freshly cleaned enclosure, favourite foods, or new toys.

### **Rumble strutting**

If your guinea pig is walking slowly around the enclosure, swaying and rumbling, then they are either trying to impress a member of the opposite sex, or assert their dominance over another guinea pig. Rumble strutting can escalate into mounting

each other, and it will become clear if the recipient is impressed with this or not!

## **Attack poses**

Although guinea pigs are generally friendly, when they want to fight they can be vicious. If two guinea pigs rear up at each other on their hind legs, expose their teeth, or teeth-chatter with their fur all puffed up, they may be about to attack each other. Although this is more common between males, it can happen between females too, especially if they are newly introduced. If you need to separate them, use a towel to protect your hands as guinea pigs can cause nasty injuries when in fighting mode.

## **Head 'boffing'**

Sometimes guinea pigs will 'boff' your hand upwards when you're stroking their heads. This is roughly translated as a friendly “get off”!

## **Fidgeting or nibbling when being held**

If you can get 10–15 minutes of guinea pig cuddles without a 'little accident' then you're doing well! However, they would rather go to the toilet in their hutch or run than on you, so when things start getting desperate, they nibble, fidget or whine, which is their way of asking politely if they can return home to use the 'bathroom'.

## **Freezing**

Lots of things are scary to guinea pigs. After all, their non-domesticated ancestors were prey animals, so they are constantly vigilant for danger. When they're worried about something, they either freeze or run for cover.

## **Yawning**

Guinea pigs yawn for two reasons. The first is when they're tucked up in their bedding and ready for a nap. The second reason is to warn off another guinea pig. In this instance, they'll look the opposite of sleepy: alert, front legs spread to make themselves look bigger, and possibly chattering their teeth as well.

These lists aren't exhaustive, but hopefully help to explain some of our small pet's more puzzling noises and behaviours. The more time we spend watching our guinea pigs, the more they can teach us about what they're experiencing and how we can help to make the most of their time with us.



# KEEP YOUR SENIOR PET HAPPY

*Watching your beloved cat or dog age can be hard for any pet owner. Most pet parents struggle with the realisation that their pet is ageing, but it is a natural process of life. When you spot the signs, it's important to start adjusting to the lifestyle needs of your senior pet.*

Make sure you give your senior pet a high-quality diet. As pets age and become less active, their caloric requirement drops, so it's important to choose a diet that's appropriate for your canine's age and lifestyle. Feeding a high-quality diet that's appropriate for senior dogs or cats can help prevent weight gain as well as reduce the chances of chewing and digestive issues. Consider adding more fibre to aid digestion while making sure your dog's food is low in fat and has fewer calories. Supplements such as fish oil or glucosamine can also be added to alleviate joint pain.

Your dog may be slowing down, but that doesn't mean he should spend his days curled up on the couch. Regular exercise will help your furry friend maintain his ideal weight and general health. It's important to be reasonable in your expectations for the intensity and duration of an activity. Too much of it can negatively affect your bestie's health while too little won't support muscle development. Because dogs have lower energy levels as they age, he may not be able to go on long hikes, but shorter, less strenuous walks will keep him in good shape.

Much like it is with people, regular health checkups are one of the most important things when it comes to caring for senior pets. Their immune system gets weaker as they age, making them prone to a number of illnesses. A good number of these health issues can be treated if they're caught early enough. That's why most vets recommend that senior pets should undergo health screening every six months. In addition to this, a trip to the vet gives you an opportunity to talk about your pet's diet, exercise routine and overall health.

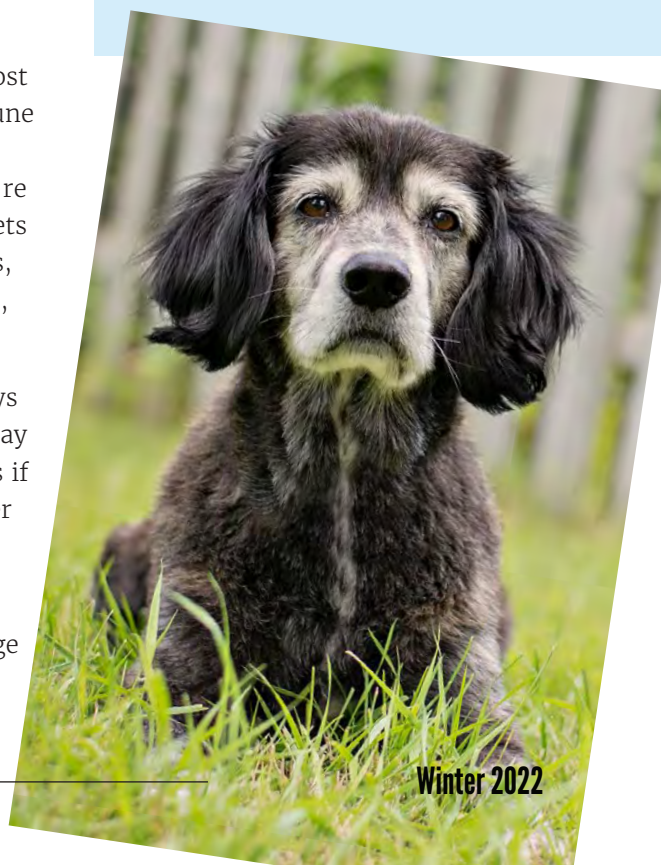
Dental hygiene is particularly crucial as your pet ages. If you've always thought brushing your pet's teeth was a silly idea, you may want to pay attention to it as he gets older because teeth are a time ticking bombs if neglected. If your pet doesn't enjoy having his teeth brushed, consider opting for dental treats and toys instead.

Regular grooming becomes a very important aspect of care for your senior pet. Older pets typically have special needs as a good percentage of them suffer from dry skin. Flaky and irritated skin can become

**Is your senior pet's health deteriorating? Use this handy weekly checklist to monitor their health.**

- Loss of appetite
- Drinking more water
- Bowel changes (constipation, diarrhoea or goes inside)
- Rapid weight gain or loss
- Bad breath
- Change in coat
- Scratching or has a rash
- Appearance of lumps
- Panting more than usual
- Unwillingness to exercise
- Slow to get up and down
- Deafness (not responding to voice commands anymore)
- Vision loss (bumping into things or change in eye appearance)

*This checklist does not replace veterinary consultation. If you are worried about your ageing pet, speak to your vet who knows your pet!*






worse if not cared for properly. More idle time can predispose seniors to dull-looking and brittle coats as well as long nails. Consider brushing your senior pet regularly to avoid the development of mats and tangles. Also, use only natural shampoos as they can heal irritated skin and coats.

With age comes a variety of health issues your pet may experience. Arthritis is common in ageing pets, so soft bedding in the form of a special dog bed can go a long way to provide a lot of joint support and comfort to an aching body. Also, consider a special ramp if your pet has dysplasia or joint issues. Some senior pets go completely blind, so keep food and water in areas they can easily reach and not bump into. They may also need daily eye drops to keep their eyes moist and reduce possible effects from dry eye. Be sure to monitor your pet for any odd lumps or bumps while grooming them. While these can be benign they can also be signs of something more sinister.

As pets age, they need our care and attention even more, so try to spend as much time as you can with them. Since age-related changes start small, pay attention to their health so you can pick any change in your furry friend that could be an indication of significant issues.



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## LickiMat tips for winter

**With the colder months now here, it is not always easy to spend time outside with our pets and some of you may have pets that don't like the rain! Here are our top tips to keep your pets and you happy over winter!**

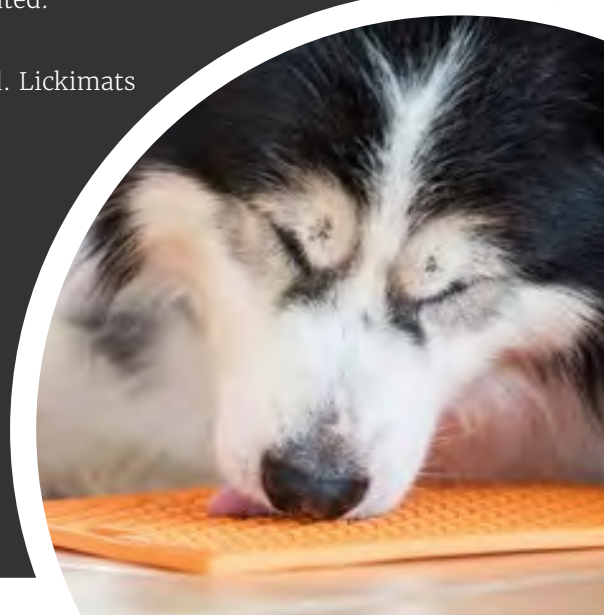
**Bath time.** Why not try the LickiMat Splash in the bath tub or shower! Mix mashed banana and yogurt and spread it around the Splash, put in the freezer and then, when it's bath time, stick it to the side of the bath or shower. They can relax with a treat while getting pampered in a warm bath.

**Slow feeder.** Over winter, pets can burn extra calories to stay warm. If you are feeding them a little extra, use a slow feeder to avoid overeating and bloating, and to keep your pet stimulated.

**Warm food.** Another great option for winter is to warm up your pet's food. Lickimats are microwave friendly and dishwasher safe.

**Boredom buster.** Use enrichment feeders to entertain your pet and reduce boredom. They challenge your pet to lick the treat and be rewarded with food. Try using a Wobble which slows the process dramatically and prolongs their enjoyment, with fewer calories. The "wobbling" action promotes extra FUN!

**Stormy weather.** Distraction LickiMat can be used to calm pets while home alone or during stressful times like winter storms and fireworks. Please note that LickiMat is not a substitute for medication for some pets.





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### Soothing support for stressed out pets

PetCalm features a range of non-narcotic herbs to help calm your pet and has been used successfully by kennel proprietors and endorsed by many dog clubs. PetCalm contains hops, skullcap, valerian, St John's wort and passiflora extracts plus capsicum powder as the transport herb.

This product can be taken when a specific situation occurs, or on an ongoing basis for a pet with behavioral problems or stress issues.

**Recommended dosage:** 1-2 capsules daily whole or sprinkled over food.

Product should take some effect within approximately one hour, full effect may take a few days when some ingredients have time to accumulate.

*Not recommended for pregnant or nursing pets, or animals due to be bred.*

Calms stressed pets

PetCalm  
\$25.50



testimonial

Hi Silberhorn. My dog is about 33-36kgs we give her two capsules of PetCalm when she starts to get stressed ie: fireworks time. It calms her down and she rests which is very good and less distressing for us all, but especially her, she is just so relaxed and it does work well. The Pet Calm is awesome for my dog I wish I had found it earlier hopefully a peaceful Guy Fawkes. Regards Sue.



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Post  
operative  
care



## PetRecovery

Assists in recovery from operations and provides support for healthy joints and mobility

PetRecovery capsules contain a combination of deer velvet, glucosamine and chondroitin. These are nutritional precursors for normal cartilage which aids in the retention of normal mobility, whilst assisting in the health and general well-being of older cats and dogs. Clinical trials have proven that glucosamine has been effective in supporting joint health by providing essential nutrients and minerals for your pet. PetRecovery may help to provide your pet's body with the raw materials it needs for healthy joint and muscle function, working naturally without side-effects.

Recommended dosage: 2-4 capsules daily, whole or sprinkled over food.

PetRecovery  
\$29.50

testimonial

*Dear Silberhorn. I want to thank you for making such a wonderful product as 'PetRecovery'. It has worked really quickly for my dogs 'Millie and 'Maia' and my cat 'Tinkerbelle'. My dogs lick it up off a butter dish like a lolly, I sprinkle it out of the capsules. Millie especially, is moving more freely and is much brighter and eating more because your product has been so effective on her arthritis. The price is so good too! My vet recommends it to her clients, above the other expensive products which I am unable to afford as are other pet lovers. So... thank you so very much. Yours faithfully, Julie.*

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## PetOmega3

Support for overall good health

PetOmega-3 fatty acids EPA (Eicosapentaenoic acid) and DHA (Docosahexaenoic acid) are not only important for people, but also for your pets. These fatty acids will help support healthy growth, development and a healthy immune system. If you notice any of the following signs, then your pet may benefit from this supplement:

- Dry, scaly, flaky skin
- Lacklustre coat or hair
- Spots or blemishes.

PetOmega-3 is great for skin, coat and eye health, as well as healthy joints, heart health, renal function and healthy cell growth. This product can be used in conjunction with our other pet supplements.

Recommended dosage:  
1-2 capsules per day whole or drizzled over food.

Healthy  
heart &  
kidneys



PetOmega  
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# PetVel

## For mobility and activity

PetVel  
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Great  
for aging  
animals

Silberhorn perfected a deer velvet capsule suitable for both domestic and working animals, rich in trace elements and minerals which may assist in supporting joint health and normal muscle tone and activity. Deer velvet is a totally natural substance containing many essential minerals and nutrients, calcium among them. PetVel is easily assimilated into the body. Trial work carried out through a vet, showed it appeared to increase the activity levels of animals, with some of them exhibiting behaviour of their youth. Deer Velvet may provide nutritional support for healthy cartilage and may be beneficial for aging cats and dogs.

Recommended dosage: 1-4 capsules daily, whole or sprinkled over food.

testimonial

*Dear Silberhorn. Our 12 ½ year old Lassie Collie had been slowing down for some time and recently his back legs failed him and I found him lying on the ground crying in pain unable to get up so I carried him inside and the diagnose was he was going to the happy hunting ground. I rang Silberhorn, PetVel was delivered in 24hrs, I started him on it. We were amazed in 3 days he got back on wobbly feet in a week he walked around the block, yes he's slow but he's got a second life. Thanks Glenn.*



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Silberhorn produces a range of totally natural dietary supplements for people and pets.

Our other natural dietary supplements include deer velvet products, collagen products, a range of products from the sea, herbal formulas, vitamins & minerals and bee products all in convenient capsule form.

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# PetShark

## Healthy cartilage & joints

PetShark capsules contain pure New Zealand shark cartilage powder. Did you know that sharks are one of the healthiest creatures on earth! PetShark is an excellent source of calcium, phosphorous and proteins with high concentrations of mucopolysaccharides, chondroitin sulphate and vitamins A and C. All these ingredients help support your pet's joints and may assist with flexibility and suppleness. Many of our customers have reported improved health in their pets once they started supplementing with PetShark

Recommended dosage:  
1-2 capsules daily, whole  
or sprinkled over food.

Not recommended for  
pregnant or nursing pets,  
or within 6 weeks of surgery.

Cartilage  
& joints

PetShark  
\$25.50



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# PetMussel

## General good health

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Rich in  
vitamins &  
minerals

PetMussel capsules contain New Zealand Green-Lipped Mussel powder, which is rich in many vitamins, (especially the B-complex group, including: thiamine, riboflavin, niacin, pantoic acid, pyridoxine, biotin, folic acid and the cobalamins) a broad range of minerals and also trace elements. These all contribute to the health and vitality of your pet. PetMussel is also very high in proteins, omega-3 and mucopolysaccharides, which can assist in supporting joints, resulting in improved mobility (great for older animals with hip or leg issues). This product can be used in conjunction with our other pet supplements.

Recommended dosage: 1-3 capsules daily, whole or sprinkled over food.



testimonial

*Dear Silberhorn, I have a 7 year old American Cocker Spaniel who has a slipping patella. We have been giving her one PetMussel capsule per day sprinkled on her food. Since she has been on the PetMussel she has made a remarkable improvement. Her eyes are brighter, her coat is shinier and she is moving better. Her general demeanor is so much better as well. She is one happy little girl! I have been recommending this product to other pet owners as well. Robert*

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# READERS PETS



Levi — Argentinian dogo, 11 years old. Loves tennis balls, cuddles with his mum and slow walks down the beach. Nicknamed Old Fart!



Skittles — Shepherd cross, 3.5 years old. Miss Widdles likes to think of herself as a sniffer dog. She loves scent work, obedience practise, adventure walks and coming to work at Pet Refuge with her mum to sleep in the office. Adopted from the Henderson shelter.

Piggy — DSH cat foster fail from the Henderson shelter, 6 years old. She loves sleeping, catching crickets and bird watching. But she loves nothing more than to play hide and seek with mum, and her main job is keeping stray cats away from the house.

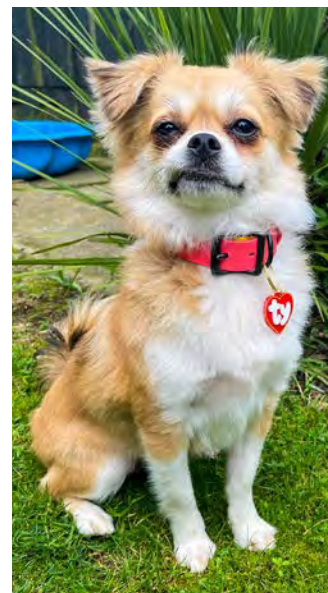
All three love reading Pet Life magazine.  
Louise Morley



The Birds will see your cat before they have a chance to pounce.

little lions [littlionsnz.co.nz](http://littlionsnz.co.nz)

Freya is an energetic, water-loving, fluffy princess. She loves to be an adventure dog and get as dirty and wet as possible! Her best friend is Ammo! She is a month younger than Ammo and they grew up together! Freya loves runs in the dog park and turning into a mud monster. She loves fetching sticks and aspires to be a submarine one day.



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When Ammo's not busy being a pet first aid demo dog, he can definitely be found frolicking in the nearest mud pool. At 40 kilograms, Ammo has surpassed both his parents, a German shepherd and a Labrador, in size. A gentle giant, his best friend is a tiny chihuahua-cross named Freya. This spoiled pooch has all the toys in the world, but in his eyes: #sticksarelife. Follow Ammo's pawsome adventures on insta @go\_ammo\_go!



Homer (aka resident boss and the fur baby) was the winner of our *Pet First Aid and Training* first aid kit.



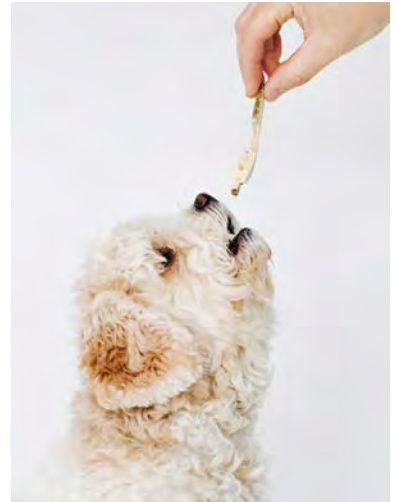
# WHAT'S NEW

## Topflite Hound

Topflite has released hound treats, a treat to provide dogs with the nutritional benefits and taste of raw meat without owners having to worry about the mess associated with its original form. Owners wanting to provide the original texture of meat can also rehydrate the treat.

Freeze-drying fresh meat ensures 97 per cent of its original nutritional value is retained from its raw state. With 99 per cent of moisture removed, the treat is lightweight, blood-free and minimally processed. There are no additives, preservatives, or fillers. This natural approach was vital to the Oamaru-based business.

For additional information please visit [topflitehound.co.nz](http://topflitehound.co.nz).



## Furmigos

Furmigos is sharing culture, by providing quality handmade dog products from Mexico. Stephanie started Furmigos when she couldn't find a collar and leash that suited her pup Wilco's personality. So she reached out to local artisans from Chiapas, Mexico, to work with them and bring a bit of her culture to New Zealand.

All items are handmade, crafted with love and care, each one as unique as every fur baby, with a variety of vibrant collars, leads and keychains with harnesses arriving soon.

Order your Furmigos apparel at [furmigos.co.nz](http://furmigos.co.nz).



# ARE YOU OUR NEXT COVER PET?



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