

# Handling Exercises

Handling exercises are training lessons designed to help pets relax and cooperate when being touched and handled. Your pet will need to be handled for basic grooming and medical care; handling exercises help ensure that they will be comfortable when receiving this necessary care.

Handling sessions can be designed to acclimate your pet to a wide range of anticipated manipulations, including being brushed, bathed, and examined by a veterinarian. During these sessions, pets develop a positive association with being handled as these manipulations are paired with tasty treats. Find your pet's favorite treat and use this only when doing the handling exercises.

## General Handling Exercise

- Sit down on the floor with your pet, be sure to have treats in a pouch. Move slowly.
- As you handle your pet, you will treat them. This will ensure that you are making this a pleasant experience.
- They should be in several different positions while you handle them, hold them with their back on your lap so you can handle their underbelly, legs, paws and head area in this position.
- Handle them while they are standing upright on the floor beside you, placed on a surface that simulates a vet table, have them walk on different textures
- Handle them gently and for short periods of time, gradually increase the amount of time.
- Introduce a brush, comb & towel to wipe feet.
- Introduce cotton balls for wiping ears & eyes.



Consider the types of situations that your pet might encounter. For example, they may need their ears cleaned, teeth brush, face and nails trimmed- they should allow handling of the face for oral medications and/or eye ointments.

**It is important that anyone can do any kind of gentle handling of the pet safely and easily. If we do not get them comfortable with this kind of handling early on, it is very likely that they will be anxious when they are older. This can make it very difficult or even dangerous for anyone attempting to handle the pet.**

**All of the handling exercises mentioned on page one, can be done at home.**

**Everyone in the family should be involved,**

**but be sure that children are supervised 100% of the time.**

**It is also a good idea to have a friend or others**

**who your pet may not be that familiar with do**

**some of these exercises, this gives us the**

**opportunity to build positive handling experiences**

**with a variety of people.**



**What to do about signs of discomfort?**

**If they are uncomfortable with any of these positions or with any particular body part, pay close attention to these trouble spots and make it a priority to get them comfortable. Go in baby steps. The paws (front and back), toenails, mouth, ears, backs of the rear legs and tails are usually the most sensitive areas.**

## **Checklist of Body Parts to Handle**

- **The paws- Each individual paw, toe, toe nail and in between the paw pads**
- **The Head : around the eyes, around the ears and gently inside the ears, face, inside the mouth , the teeth, roof of the mouth, tongue, the cheeks, gums and the back of the head and down the neck.**
- **The body: the underbelly, sides and back, down each individual leg, hind end, chest and gently down the tail.**

### **Objectives:**

**You want to be able to clip your pets nails easily, to be able to get your hand inside their mouths or in the ears without struggle. Additionally, you should be able to safely and, without a struggle handle any body part, as they remain calm and comfortable with it.**

## **🐾 🐾 🐾 🐾 🐾 Simulated Vet Exam 🐾 🐾 🐾 🐾 🐾**

**These are handling exercises that will simulate the way a vet handles your pet during a routine visit.**

**Often pets will be stressed by going to the vet and being examined. We need to make sure that this is something they can be comfortable with.**

**Do this exercise with your pet a couple of times a week while they are small and easy to lift up, continue to do these as they grow.**

**It is a good idea to have a friend or someone who your pet is not familiar with to do stimulated exams as well.**

### **Exercise**

- **Place pet on a table that simulates an exam table**
- **Examine their body the way a vet would, by going over their neck, back, legs, and the eyes, mouth and ears.**
- **As you examine your pet, give tiny pieces of treats**
- **If they seem uncomfortable with the exercise be sure to keep it short and end on a positive note.**

**Repeat often, gradually extending the time or adding body areas as your pet becomes more relaxed with this exercise. Reward calm behavior - punishment is NOT an effective training method.**