

Top 10 Reasons to Get Your Horse or Dog Massaged

10. Reward

Many look at massage as a luxury, reward or something to do for fun. While this is true, no matter what the reason, there are health benefits. So, if you want to reward your dog or horse for a job well done, completing a season, hitting a milestone or just for being your awesome partner, they will get the benefit of you sharing your love and healing from the massage.



9. Injury

One of the most common reasons for massage is to help in recovery from an injury. It could be a pulled back muscle, stifle injury, ACL surgery or any other lameness that is evident. Regularly scheduled massage will help your dog or horse recover from the injury faster. Think about it – when you get injured or have surgery, what does the doctor prescribe to help you get better? Answer: Physical therapy. These sessions help you increase your range of motion, build strength, soften tissue and prevent the onset of scar tissue. This works the same in animals. Massage supplies nutrients to and removes toxins from the body's cells through increase in circulation. Manipulating the soft tissue helps bring back the elasticity to increase the range of motion from specific areas being restrained during acute recovery. Also, it helps bring relief to areas where the animal was compensating. These muscles work overtime and get sore and stressed during times where other muscles cannot or are not being used.

8. Degenerative disease

Once our animal companions are diagnosed with arthritis, spondylosis, or another degenerative disease, it often creates a sense of urgency to help ease the pain. Massage can help deter the progression of these diseases because it boosts their immune system, flushes out toxins, supplies nutrients to cells by stimulating blood flow, and increases the production of synovial fluid (this is what lubricates our joints).



7. Geriatric

As our dogs and horses age, we start to see the wear on their bodies physically through slowed movements, stiff joints, loss of muscle mass among other things, including degenerative diseases. Massage can be a great comfort to these animals, especially to soothe tired, sore muscles and stimulate the circulation. While massage won't turn back the clock, it surely can help them feel better in their senior years.

6. Pain

When our animal companions are hurting, we often seek out additional help to make them feel better. Depending on the cause of the issue, massage can reduce pain, swelling and help expedite healing. This can be enhanced by use of aromatherapy as well. Whether acute or chronic pain, there are many massage therapy techniques to relieve pressure, pain and encourage the body to heal itself.

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5. Undetermined Lameness

When vets are stumped, yet it is evident there is lameness either through gate, behavior, physical reactions, it may be appropriate to massage the animal, given they have no contraindications. Massage is therapeutic; it stimulates the digestive system, increases mental alertness, boosts the immune system and helps heal the animal's body inside and out.



4. Decline in Performance

Something in your dog or horse is "off", but there are no physical symptoms of anything being wrong. They could be stressed, bored, need a change of pace, having internal issues (i.e. ulcer) or need help relaxing. This is a great time to have your dog or horse massaged because it will cause endorphins to be secreted, therefore allowing them to relax. Providing a way for the animal to release stress is critical to achieving optimal performance.

3. Behavioral Issues

When an animal does not have an outlet, feels overwhelmed, over-worked or frustrated with their life situation, we see the symptoms in their behavior. Most dogs and horses are not intentionally mean, disrespectful or disobedient – they are really just trying to communicate with you. Sometimes they just need a means to release the pressure they are feeling or give their brain a break so they can come back to the task at hand refreshed. We ask a lot of them at times. Also, massage can help rebalance the nervous system,

allowing the animal to better respond to stress and everyday things brought about by life as a dog or horse.

2. Trauma

Some animals that have been through a trauma, emotionally and/or physically may have built up a lot of fear and lost trust in humans. By creating a loving, healing environment and positive touch, these dogs and horses can learn to trust again and heal on the inside as well as the outside. It takes time and patience, but the *energy* shared between touch is powerful.

1. Maintenance

Preventative maintenance massages are one important thing we can do to keep our animal companions healthy. Our society as a whole tends to wait until there is a problem to fix it. We are all guilty, though when it comes to the health of our animals, by shifting our thought patterns we can train ourselves to do what we can to do to keep our animals healthy. Sports massage, an un-invasive and therapeutic modality helps prevent injuries and maintains their health:

- Improves circulation and promotes healing of injuries
- Relieves muscle spasms
- Removes toxins
- Lubricates joints and can help ease arthritis
- Reduces stress and tension
- Increases range of motion
- Enhances muscle tone



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- Promotes positive disposition
- Increases mental clarity required for training/performance

If you ever have questions about when or how your animal companions can benefit from massage, contact a professional therapist, such as [Animal Intuition](#), to answer any concerns and guide you in the right direction. Massage is not a substitute for veterinary care; it is a wonderful complement to the overall wellness care of your dogs and horses.



Animal Intuition

Healing and bodywork for animals: animal communication, canine/equine massage, Reiki, acupressure, Raindrop Technique®, aromatherapy using Young Living therapeutic-grade essential oils. For more information contact Jenny Gott, CMTA, Animal Wellness Practitioner (952) 484-4396, Info@animal-intuition.com or visit www.animal-intuition.com. Young Living # 925420.