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The Better Pet Gazette

The Key to Keeping Arthritis at Bay

As winter weather makes itself felt, it is tempting to sleep in a little longer and linger indoors where it is cosy and warm. For an arthritic pet, the cold weather makes their joints ache, and as they slow down life becomes more challenging.

But giving in and doing no exercise is almost as bad as doing too much. Your pet needs to keep active to maintain its flexibility. Not all exercise is good, however. Your dog may try to jump and chase to please you, but your cat will get darn right grumpy. Pain is not fun.

So in winter, change the exercise to several short walks rather than one long trudge. Your arthritic cat may not be able to jump and twist while chasing a feather on a flick pole, but some gentle walking, or quietly exploring a box or two will help keep them active.

If your pet reduces its activity due to rough weather, remember to change the diet to reflect the lower energy used. A gain in weight only increases the pain of arthritis in your pet.

Please see inside for more details ...

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The friendly road to pet Wellness
HIGHlands VETERINARY HOSPITAL

The Better Pet Gazette is a monthly newsletter full of informative articles and tips on pet health as well as updates on what's happening at the practice. We hope you enjoy the read!

we have a WINNER!

This has been a fun competition with over 500 guesses, from Bernese Mountain Dog to a Kelpie x Huntaway. Someone guessed a Chihuahua X Japanese Spitz. But what is cute Nelly's breed (our *Guess the Breed* model)?

See inside to find out who the lucky winner was of this competition ...

interested in pet FIRST AID?

Animals and birds are curious by nature, and this sometimes gets them into some sticky situations which can result in injury. Knowing how to handle a situation where an animal is injured can help to save their life.

An injured animal may be in great pain and can react to your presence by attacking if you try to help them, even if they are your pet. Knowing what to do, how to approach an animal, or calling for an experienced veterinarians advice and help is vital information that all pet owners should know. Getting injured yourself is not an option.

Highlands Veterinary Hospital will be running a webinar series about pet First Aid in the near future. In the meantime, check out our blog about recognising veterinary emergencies:

highlandsveterinaryhospital.com.au/how-to-tell-if-your-pet-needs-urgent-care

With the finish line (June 12th) now in sight, how is it going for you and your pet? You can use that looming finish line as the motivation to make a concentrated push to the end! The sense of achievement when you achieve the goal you set for yourself and your dog or cat is an amazing feeling.

We encourage you to continue with your efforts even when the competition is over. Health is a lifetime commitment for all creatures, ourselves and our pets included. A healthier diet and regular exercise make you look better, but even more important, it makes you feel better.

So, keep up the good work. We applaud all our contestants and look forward to hearing your success stories at the end!

To enter our "Paws The Pavement" Challenge, just go to our website: highlandsveterinaryhospital.com.au/paws-the-pavement

Just fill out the registration form. You can log your distance walked on the website as well. Join the fun and have a great time getting fit!

A Recap of Our May Facebook LiveTalk

This informative talk brought home the fact that obesity plays a large part in the longevity of your pet's life. Studies have shown that diet and exercise play such an important role in the quality of life that your pet enjoys.

If you tailor your pet's diet to their size and age your pet will enjoy a better life. Excess weight attracts disease from arthritis to diabetes.

The interesting part of what Dr Diederik said was that exercise isn't the solution. Yes, exercise is important, but keeping your pet at a healthy weight is **20% exercise** and **80% diet!** It is what you put in their food bowl that makes a difference.

The talk is still on Facebook, so go in and have a listen, you will learn some very valuable information:
facebook.com/highlandsveterinaryhospital/videos/895889671203203
Dr Diederik gives so many tips that you can use to get your pet active. And his diet tips are worth listening to and covers topics such as reducing the amount of food available, and/ort reducing the calories in the food.

Don't Miss Our June Facebook LiveTalk ...

This month, Veterinarian Dr Diederik Gelderman will cover an often difficult and highly emotional subject in his next talk. In "When is the Right Time to Say Goodbye?" Dick will present some helpful suggestions in making these tough decisions when it comes to our pets.

He will cover how to know when it's the right time to say farewell to your pet, what the process is and coping with grief/loss.

These topics and more will be answered when you tune into Dr Diederik Gelderman on 5 June Facebook LIVE at 7pm:
facebook.com/highlandsveterinaryhospital

f LIVE
Highlands Veterinary Hospital

Join us for our Facebook LIVE talks the first Wed of every month @ 7:00pm:
facebook.com/highlandsveterinaryhospital
Get all of your questions answered about some of the most common pet topics. We'll also be featuring some guests to the show as well!

we have a WINNER!

This has been a fun competition with over 500 guesses, from Bernese Mountain Dog to a Kelpie x Huntaway. Someone guessed a Chihuahua X Japanese Spitz.
But what is cute little Nelly's breed (our *Guess the Breed* model)?

Well, we are here to put you out of your misery, and someone will be delighted to win a holiday voucher valued at $1250. So here we go.

Nelly's Breed is Chihuahua x Maltese. Sounds unlikely, but if you saw her littermate, who is all white, you'd believe it!

Congratulations to the winner, Wendy Holt!

Awesome - well done!! We hope you enjoy your holiday voucher!

Thanks to everyone who entered, we have enjoyed reading the entries that rolled in. Stay tuned for the next competition...

TIPS

to assist your arthritic pet

Something as simple as a heat pack in your pet's bed can help to relieve soreness and stiffness in their joints.

•

Learn some practical 'hands-on' techniques including massage, acupressure, and gentle stretching movements.

•

Use a well-fitted no-pull harness with a clip-on leash for your cat or dog when they go out for a walk. The harness reduces the tension on the neck when they pull as well as making it easier to breathe.

•

Modify exercise as pets get older; more stretching and gentle exercises as opposed to bouncing and retrieving.

•

Get a ramp to help your pet in and out of your vehicle and up the steep steps or inclines into the house.

•

Make sure their bed is deep, soft and comfortable, almost bouncy, rather than hard.

•

Raise their eating and drinking bowl so they do not have to lower their head too far.

•

Make sure that the toilet box for your cat isn't too high.

•

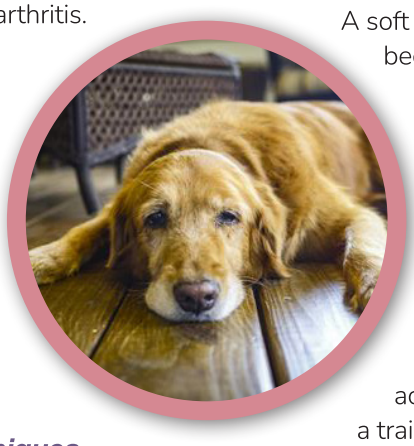
Teach your dog (and short-haired cat) to wear pet vests or warm tops to retain body warmth during winter walks.

arthritis *in pets*

This condition is a degenerative joint disease that causes the cartilage lining of the joint to wear away which results in pain, inflammation, and swelling. The cartilage can be affected due to disease, unusual gait, excessive weight gain, or poor body structure due to growth development issues such as hip dysplasia.

Clues our pet has arthritis

Pets often hide their pain or illness, but if you notice that they are slowing down, have trouble getting up or down, are unwilling to jump or go up or down steps, then your pet may have developed arthritis. Another clue is a reluctance to exercise or play and dragging their back legs. Cold weather makes the pain worse, as does vigorous exercise or even resting too long. While there is no cure, it can be managed effectively.



Management techniques

Weight control is very important for an animal with arthritis. More weight equals more pain! Regular short bouts of mild exercise are better than a hard, hectic marathon. Walking and swimming are the ideal exercises for dogs as it supports their weight and takes the pressure off the joints.

A diet that is rich in Omega-3 will assist by blocking the inflammation around the joints that cause pain. It has been said that it slows the progression of arthritis.

Dry your pet off after an outing especially if they damp or wet. Get them warm and dry quickly so the dampness won't affect their bones.

A soft snuggle rug will become your pet's best friend, especially if you cuddle up with them.

Get a check up

Other coping strategies include anti-inflammatory medications and acupuncture by a trained veterinary specialist. If your cat or dog is suffering as the months get colder, bring them in for a checkup as we can help them cope with the pain and can recommend many things such as a heating pad for their bed, and the type of diet and exercise that is best for them. We can also determine the extent of their disability and suggest some health supplements for their diet.

Congrats Puppy Preschool Grads!

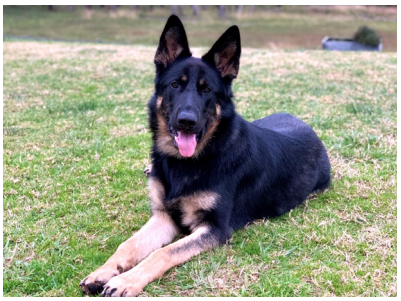
Some of the cutest puppies graduated from HIGHlands Veterinary Hospital Puppy Preschool after a few intense weeks of fun and training with For Paw's Sake Puppy & Dog Training in April/May. The variety of breeds were adorable, from Lady the English Cocker Spaniel, Wolf the German Shepherd, Alfie the Miniature Dachshund and Mabel the Border Collie.

These pups will grow up to be well-rounded dogs with exceptional manners! Getting your puppy used to being in public and mixing well with other animals is vital. The first few months of their life is a critical development stage and will have a lasting impact on their lives. The more they interact with other people and dogs is essential for their social development.

Check out our Facebook site for more super cute pics of our graduates: *facebook.com/highlandsveterinaryhospital*

HERO OF THE MONTH

MAY 2021



Leo is quite protective of his owner and has usually had a muzzle on when going to vets in the past. However, Dr Diederik and the caring staff at HVH won this lovely dog over. To their credit, Leo is now calm and happy, and doesn't require the muzzle.

Leo's owner is extremely happy about the treatment received at HVH. He said that the professional, yet friendly HIGHlands team fostered not only his trust, but that of his dog.

Leo's owner is over the moon about the caring team at HIGHlands. He commented that they were honest and transparent; and their warm, supportive assistance were greatly appreciated.

If you are ever in doubt about the health of your furbaby, please make an appointment for a consult. Even if it is a minor issue, the peace of mind you get and the warm welcome you receive is well worth the visit!