



PAWSOME TAILS

The Bimonthly Newsletter of the Furever Home Project

September/October

The Incredible Power of Pet Ownership

Here at the Furever Home Project, we know that nothing compares to the joy of coming home to a loyal companion. But did you know that having a furry friend waiting for you at home is also scientifically proven to improve your mental and physical health?

The unconditional love of a pet can do more than keep you company. Pets may also decrease stress, improve heart health, and even help children with their emotional and social skills.

Scientists are looking at what the potential physical and mental health benefits are for different animals—from fish to guinea pigs to dogs and cats. Research on human-animal interactions is still relatively new, but some studies suggest a range of positive effects.

Be Healthy

Interacting with animals has been shown to decrease levels of cortisol (a stress-related hormone) and lower blood pressure. Other studies have found that animals can reduce loneliness, increase feelings of social support, and boost your mood.

"There's not one answer about how a pet can help somebody with a specific condition," explains Dr. Layla Esposito, who oversees the NIH Human-Animal Interaction Research Program. "Is your goal to increase physical activity? The you might benefit from owning a dog. If your goal is reducing stress, sometimes watching fish swim can result in a feeling of calmness. So there's no one type fits all."

NIH is funding surveys to find out the range of pets people live with and how their relationships with their pets relate to health. "We're trying to tap into the subjective quality of the relationship with the animal—that part of the bond that people feel with animals—and how that translates into some of the

health benefits," explains Dr. James Griffin, a child development expert at NIH.

Be Comfortable

Animals can serve as a source of comfort and support. Therapy dogs are especially good at this. They're sometimes brought into hospitals or nursing homes to help reduce patients' stress and anxiety.

"Dogs are very present. If someone is struggling ... they know how to sit there and be loving," says Dr. Ann Berger, a physician and researcher at the NIH Clinical Center in Bethesda, Maryland. "Their attention is focused on the person all the time."

Berger works with people who have cancer and terminal illnesses. She teaches them about mindfulness to help decrease stress and manage pain. "The foundations of mindfulness include attention, intention, compassion, and awareness," Berger says. "All of those things are things that animals bring to the table."

Dogs may also aid in the classroom. One study found that dogs can help children with ADHD focus better. Another study found that children with autism spectrum disorder were calmer while playing with guinea pigs in the classroom. The children also had better social interactions and were more engaged with peers. Researchers suggest that the animals offered unconditional acceptance, making them a calm comfort to the children.

Animals may help you in other unexpected ways. Recent studies suggest that early exposure to pets may help protect young children from developing allergies and asthma.

ma. (Of course, for people who are allergic, having pets in the home can do more harm than good.)

Be Social

Pets can also lead to more human connections. How many times have you been walking your dog (or cat!) and then encounter strangers who strike up conversations simply because your good boy or girl is so cute?

"Animals are part of the family," says Molly Gross, a certified child life specialist and facility dog handler. "But animals can help you be social, and feel less alone or isolated when you're at home."

Indeed, a furry companion can help even if you're just hanging at home. A recent survey of adults aged 65 or older with pets found that their pets might benefit them by providing companionship, giving a sense of purpose and meaning, reducing loneliness, and increasing socialization.

(Text for this article from <https://newsin-health.nih.gov/2018/02/power-pets>.)

Six Great Reasons to Adopt!

1. Taking care of a pet is proven to encourage a sense of purpose and responsibility.
2. Having a pet is proven to help reduce stress and anxiety.
3. Adults who own pets often report a reduction in loneliness and depression.
4. Pet owners typically have a lower resting blood pressure than people who don't own pets.
5. Regular exercise, such as walking your dog, lowers your risk of heart disease.
6. Many pet owners report an increase in activity and overall quality of life.

OCTOBER IS ADOPT A SHELTER DOG MONTH!



Find your perfect match at one of our upcoming adoption events

Dates and locations on back

Top Reasons to Adopt an Older Dog

Everyone knows that puppies are adorable, but adopting an older dog has many advantages. Shelters are filled with dogs that have outgrown those early puppy fuzzies. But according to the ASPCA, there are tons of good reasons to consider welcoming an older dog into your home.

Older dogs are open books! From the start, you'll know important things like their full-grown size, personality and grooming requirements. This information makes it easier to pick the right dog and forge that instant love connection that will last a lifetime. If you're not so into surprises, an older dog is for you!

Think you can't teach an old dog new tricks? Hogwash! Older dogs are great at focusing on you, and on the task at hand, because they're calmer than youngsters. Plus, all those years of experience reading humans can help them quickly figure out how to do what you're asking.

Older dogs have been around the block and already learned what it takes to get along with others and become part of a pack. They'll be part of the family in no time!

Your floors, shoes and furniture will thank you for adopting a senior pooch! Older dogs are likely to already be house trained. And even if they're not, they have the physical and mental abilities to pick it up really fast (unlike puppies). With their teething years far behind them, seniors also are much less likely to be destructive chewers.

Finally, at shelters, older dogs are often the last to be adopted and the first to be euthanized. Saving an animal's life offers an unparalleled emotional return on your investment, and you'll feel the rewards every day you spend together.

So, if you are thinking about bringing a new fur baby into your home, remember these benefits of adopting an older dog:

- * Older dogs can be easier to train.
- * Dogs past the puppy stage settle in quickly.
- * Older dogs often result in fewer messes.
- * Senior dogs are super-loving and enjoy easy living.
- * You can save a life!

Upcoming Adoption Events

October 1	8-11 a.m.	Rolling Water Mills Gazebo
	1-4 p.m.	Pet Mart North Central
October 8	8-11 a.m.	Cascade Park Carousel Building
	1-4 p.m.	The Meet at Airport Way
October 15	8-11 a.m.	WAC Memorial Park South Gate
	1-4 p.m.	Town Center Art Festival
October 22	8-11 a.m.	Falls View Shopping Center East
	1-4 p.m.	Pet Mart South Haven

The journey of life is sweeter when traveled with a dog!

The Furever Home Project is dedicated to providing a safe and caring environment for dogs who are waiting to be adopted.

All of our furry friends are given required veterinary care, including vaccinations, and they will all be spayed or neutered prior to being made available for adoption.

Furever Home pets are also carefully evaluated by behavioral specialists to help make sure we find just the right family to adopt.

Furever Home Project operates entirely on grants and generous donations from people like you. 100% of funds go to care for these fur babies. No member of our staff takes any type of salary.

Our organization is entirely non-profit, so adoption fees and donations are tax-deductible.



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