

# Simple Massage Routine

- ***Never force your dog to have a massage –This includes restraining with a leash while administering a massage***
- ***Never massage an open wound, skin irritation/infection, or lumps***
- ***Never massage your pet if you suspect an overall serious injury or disease or if your dog is in shock***
- ***A massage is not as a substitute to veterinary care***

## ***Let's get started!***

1. Find a space that is quiet and free of distraction (turn off TV, cell phone)
2. Set the intent for the session (relaxation, pain relief)
  - Use relaxation signals – Blinking, turning your head to the side and slightly nodding
3. Ask for permission
  - This can be asked aloud or in silence
  - It is important for your pet to feel in charge of the massage session
- ★ 4. Begin by lightly stroking from their head down the length of the spine to the base of the tail
  - Pressure should be very light
  - 3 'one thousands' per stroke
  - Hand over hand or placing one hand on your pets chest while the other hand is stroking
  - Watch for any communication signs from your dog of sensitive areas
5. Begin making small circular motions on the top of the head and side of the jaw
  - One side at a time
  - Very light pressure
  - Slow motions

- 6. Lightly stroke from their head down the length of the spine to the base of the tail  
(Repeat of Step #4)
  
- 7. Front Leg
  - Lightly stroke the outside of the leg from shoulder to paw
  - Return by lightly stroking the inside of the leg from paw to arm pit
  - Repeat 3 times (this promotes the natural circulation path)
  
- 8. Light pulsing on the shoulder muscle
  - Larger dogs use palm, smaller dogs use index and middle finger
  - Move around the shoulder muscle with light pulsing motions
  
- 9. Repeat step #6 – Front Leg
  - Repeating this stage helps remove the toxins that were displaced by massaging the shoulder muscle
  
- 10. Lightly stroke from their head down the length of the spine to the base of the tail  
(Repeat of Step #4)
  
- 11. Side Body (Rib Cage)
  - With light pressure move fingers down from spine to belly
  - With light pressure move palm up from belly to spine
  - Repeat 6- 8 times
  
- 12. Lightly stroke from their head down the length of the spine to the base of the tail  
(Repeat of Step #4)
  
- 13. Back Leg
  - Lightly stroke the outside of the leg from hip to paw
  - Return by lightly stroking the inside of the leg from paw to inner thigh
  - Repeat 3 times

14. Light pulsing on the hip muscle

- Larger dogs use palm, smaller dogs use index and middle finger
- Move around the hip muscle with light pulsing motions

15. Repeat step #10 – Back Leg

- Repeating this stage helps remove the toxins that were displaced by massaging the hip muscle

16. Repeat on the other side

- Note if your dog is sleeping, let them rest (You can always start the next massage on the side you were unable to complete today)



17. To finish begin lightly stroking from their head down the length of the spine to the base of the tail (repeat of step #4)

18. Thank your dog for allowing you to perform the massage

**Calming a nervous pet**

- Lightly rest your hand on top of your pets head or neck.
- Lightly stroke from their head down the length of the spine to the base of the tail. Repeat this several times slowly.
- To finish, rest one hand at the base of your pets head and the other hand to rest over the area of the pelvis (the high point over your pets hips). These two areas correspond to the part of the spinal cord that controls the rest and relaxation responses of the body.
  
- Rest your hand on their chest, take slow deep breaths