

## Dog therapy

Written by Tomasz Kliś

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When we consider animals that have a beneficial effect on humans we can not ignore human best friend - the dog. Pet therapy uses the unconditional love of the animal for a human being. Interacting with animals is good for our physical state of health as our happy minds release good hormones to help boost our immune system. Pets can bring joy to our lives. Interacting with animals is good for our physical state of health as our happy minds release good hormones to help boost our immune system.

This aids self-recovery. Pet therapy uses the unconditional love of the animal for a human being. Animals do not have reservations about making friends. They reach out to humans of all races, ages, sex and language. A pet is a universal adapter. Animals are simple minded in giving their love and expecting almost nothing in return. Pets are being used in homes for the elderly, rehabilitation hospitals, hospice care and other homes / patient care to provide a source of positive interaction for recovering patients. Before such pets are used for pet therapy, they need to be trained. Possible scenarios are enacted out with the trainer to expose the dog to different situations. Appropriate responses are taught to the dog. This is to prevent the animal from panicking when it faces a real situation.

Animals who don't know how to react will show either a fight or flight response. Unfavorable responses from the animals will depress or upset the patients. Pets used in convalescence therapy need strict health checks to be certified disease free. This safeguards against transmission of diseases from dog to patient. As the sick and aged have weak immunity systems, the possibility of transmission of diseases across species exist. The dogs used in pet therapy must possess basic obedience skills which will help it handle unexpected or stressful situations. It must be able to sit down, walk calmly and behave coolly in the face of strangers and other disturbances. Dog socialization involves meeting different people so the dog must be trained to accept different types of petting and handling. The dog also needs to grow accustomed to people in wheelchairs, crutches or hospital beds. The animal that is trained will behave normally when it meets its patients. It will not bark noisily as it has been trained to

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accept these circumstances as normality for it. The special training for pet therapy during convalescence is also available at most dog obedience schools. If you need temporary pet friend, you can also try to request for a visiting pet and handler from your community's Kennel Club or other affiliated clubs which have the pet therapy programs.