

- Controlling Common Aging
- Nix Noise Phobias in Pets
- Controlled Comforting...Balancing Behavior for Best Effects
- The Power of PetAlive on Rescued Pets



Answers for Aging, Anxiety & More in our Pets



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Hand in Paw

It goes without saying that our **pets become a part of the family** pretty quickly. Given the way they become intertwined in our lives, also it's natural to grow quite attached... and often hard to see them begin to **show signs of aging**.



However, there are many ways you can **slow your pet's deterioration of health** and even prevent some conditions from becoming full-blown ailments.

While age-related health troubles are just a part of nature that we must deal with, there are also **behavioral issues that can be stressful** for owners to endure throughout a pet's life, as well. Often owners aren't sure how to address certain phobias that can greatly affect a pet's well-being, especially **noise phobias**.

Whether your pet is going through common changes associated with aging or just has a sensitive nature, any pet owner can benefit from the knowledge of the best way to **handle and comfort unsettled nerves**. However, like all behavioral techniques, moderation and balance are key.

Controlling Common Aging

Caring for common pet health ailments

While we'd all love to turn back the clock and have our pets puppies and kittens again (fully potty-trained, of course!), unfortunately, they too must deal with the same **aging process** that we experience. However, there are common conditions that you can help control by implementing **preventative health care measures**.



In addition, **addressing slight problems right away can lead to**

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reduced costs in long-term care, as many diseases are potentially preventable. As diseases advance, the cost of treatment also increases. Therefore, **early detection and regular maintenance** can go a long way to building a strong foundation for your pet's health.

Arthritis

Signs to watch for: A decline in energy levels, stiffness, and/or difficulty rising.

Why it's important: Pain can decrease your pet's mobility as well as cause changes in conduct—leading to potentially uncharacteristic "snappy" behavior. Thus, managing your pet's pain levels is very important not only for his or her comfort, but your safety (and those around you).

What you can do: Regular exercise is essential for **keeping joints flexible and muscles and ligaments strong**, and also helps prevent weight problems (which can further aggravate arthritis). **Regular moderate exercise** rather than sudden bouts of activity will also help to keep joints in good shape.

Feed your pet a diet high in essential nutrients and low in processed foods, additives and sugar. Nutrition is a key element in the promotion of healthy joints and muscles – as well as for **promoting the integrity of the entire skeletal system**.

As part of a holistic approach to treating your pet, **natural remedies** can help to support a healthy immune system, encourage systemic cleansing (important for healthy joints and muscles), support strength in the skeletal system and generally support the overall health of your pet. Natural remedies have been used for hundreds of years in traditional medicine to **support joint and muscle health and to keep joints moving** as they should.

Other components of a holistic approach, especially in relation to the joints and skeletal system, include aromatherapy, acupuncture and chiropractic – all of which lend themselves well to maintaining pet health.

Oral Health Problems

Signs to watch for: Persistent bad breath, bleeding gums, and a dark yellow or brown substance build-up on teeth.

Why it's important: Conditions such as liver, kidney, heart inflammation and infection are many times triggered by **poor dental hygiene and periodontal disease**. That being said, dental disease is one of the most common forms of disease in pets.

Maintaining your pet's **dental health is a very important part** of caring for your pet. Calculus is the brown build-up of plaque found extending downwards on the tooth from the gum line. Calculus is a haven for bacteria which can have **serious consequences** for your pet's general health. These bacteria can not only cause abscesses and tooth loss but can have further effects - even resulting in organ damage as the bacteria

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are carried from the mouth through the bloodstream.

Dogs and cats make much fuller use of their teeth than humans do - using them in ways we usually use our hands. It stands to reason, therefore, that **maintaining canine and feline dental health is essential to their well-being.**

More than half of all pets suffer from gum disease, calculus and dental problems. The numbers are slightly higher in dogs, where it is estimated that by age three, 80% of dogs develop symptoms of oral disease. In cats, 70% develop dental problems by their third year of life.



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body and is also frequently prescribed for **gum health**, Calc. fluoride is found in the enamel of teeth and bone surfaces and is excellent for **maintaining the health and integrity of teeth.**

Cataracts or glaucoma

Signs to watch for: Cloudy eyes, lack of interest in toys or other stimuli, and/or disorientation- such as bumping into furniture- are all signs that your pet's vision needs attention.

What you can do: Like humans, vision declines with age, but you can help by keeping items your pet uses frequently (water and food bowls, toys, litterbox) and furniture in the same place.

Regular exercise, a healthy diet and lots of fresh water will help to **support your pet's immune system** and therefore also **maintain eye health.** Keep your pet's eyes and surrounding areas clean and free of debris and provide shady areas to prevent harsh sun damaging the eyes.

Natural remedies can also provide great support for **general eye and visual health** in dogs and cats.

What you can do: The best thing you can do for your dog or cat's dental health is to **embark on a prevention** program and look out for your pet's teeth and gums before it's too late.

Regular inspection of the teeth is also a good idea to establish your pet's level of dental health. Normal teeth in pets are shiny white all the way to the line of the gum. Any deposits or build up of a **dark yellow or brown substance on the teeth**, especially near the gum line, indicates a problem with calculus.

Chewing on hard food generally cleanses the teeth of calculus, especially the tips of the teeth. However, be aware that the gum line is slightly indented and can **harbor the calculus-causing bacteria** for months on end without being affected by your pet's eating. The **gums should appear a healthy pink color** and there should be a clear delineation between gums and teeth.

In addition, **natural and herbal ingredients** can be very beneficial in promoting general dental health in pets, including Silica and Calc. fluoride. While Silica is naturally occurring in the



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Hypothyroidism

Signs to watch for: Fluctuations in weight and/or decreased appetite.

Why it's important: Since the **thyroid gland** produces thyroid hormones (T3 and T4) which have a number of functions in the body-- including maintaining your pet's **metabolic rate**-- improper functioning of the thyroid gland may have an impact on a range of other body functions such as digestion, body weight, heart rate, reproductive functioning, energy levels and even **skin and coat health**.

Maintaining balance of thyroid hormones and of the pituitary gland which regulates them is therefore important for the overall systemic health of your dog or cat.

What you can do: From a holistic approach, it makes sense that regular exercise and a balanced diet are important in maintaining **systemic as well as thyroid health**. Iodine is a mineral that is crucial to the functioning of the thyroid gland and it is therefore important that your pet's diet include iodine or an iodine supplement – also found in kelp extracts. Apart from the beneficial effect on thyroid functioning, kelp is also used as a metabolic tonic to avoid excess weight.

Certain herbs are also known to support the health of the thyroid. As animals react well to supplementation with herbal remedies, these can also play an important role in **supporting your pet's thyroid** functioning. Herbal remedies can be equally effective in maintaining skin and coat health, digestive functioning and maintaining a healthy body weight.

Kidney disease or bladder problems

Signs to watch for: An increase in accidents, weight loss, and/or decreased appetite.

Why it's important: The kidneys have a number of very important life-sustaining functions. These include **excretion, fluid conservation, and endocrine processes**. The kidneys filter waste products from the bloodstream, so that they may be excreted from the body in the urine.

They kidneys act as natural 'filters' of the body, filtering out nutrients from **ingested food and liquids** and leaving waste to be excreted. Animals cannot function properly if their systems are not 'clean' of toxins. The **kidneys also produce hormones, including erythropoietin**, which stimulates the bone marrow to produce new red blood cells.

What you can do: There are a number of things that we can do for our pets to prolong the **healthy functioning of the kidneys**. Make sure that your pet always has access to fresh, clean water. Make sure that dogs have the opportunity to urinate often and cats have access to a clean litter tray, so that they do not have to hold the urine in for unnecessarily long periods of time.

Feed your pet a **natural diet low in salt**, phosphorous and relatively low in protein. As your



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pet gets older, regular check ups at the vet are advised so that progress of the kidneys can be monitored. Our pets are exposed to a variety of **toxins that are particularly harmful to the kidneys.**

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Many herbs contain properties to support kidney health, such as Burdock, which is widely known as a **systemic cleanser and blood purifier**. It also has the ability to maintain balance in body fluid levels and can **help the kidneys to maintain their natural action of flushing out toxins**, and while helping to maintain blood sugar levels within the normal range.

Other Points to Consider

As preventative care is so important, consider additional protection for your pet in the form of pet health insurance. By taking your pet to the vet for **annual check-ups** and giving **at-home exams** for physical and behavioral changes on a regular basis, you can stay on top of all health conditions. Become knowledgeable of **genetic conditions specific to your pet's breed** to help recognize potential problems later on.

And just like humans, following a **general plan for overall wellness**, including good nutrition and exercise, can greatly help your pet lead a long, healthy life!

NOTE: If your pet exhibits the following symptoms, consult a veterinarian: vomiting, diarrhea, abnormal discharge from the nose, eyes or other body openings, uncontrolled accidents, unusual behavior such as aggressiveness or extreme lethargy, or respiration changes. Some symptoms that resemble normal aging may be indicative of a more serious health condition.

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-RC

Nix Noise Phobias in Pets

As a pet owners, we come to expect mishaps now and then—a wetting accident after being left alone too long, changed behavior in a new environment, stomach upset after a new food—but sometimes, unavoidable and seemingly inexplicable triggers can **send even the most composed animal into a frenzy**.



For instance, **many animals experience anxiety** during thunderstorms and fireworks. Animals may cower, hide under the bed, tremble, or exhibit nervous behavior. However, sometimes the **response can be disproportionate to the situation** or **result from an unlikely trigger** such as beeping from an electronic device, a hair dryer, or a vacuum cleaner.

Veterinary behaviorists estimate that up to **20 percent of dog owners (and an imprecise but similar estimation for cats) seek professional help for their pet's severe noise phobias**. Extreme animal behaviors may include self-mutilation, indoor defecation, and/or damage to furniture or surroundings.

Regardless of what noise initiates the fear response, **your behavior can greatly influence the reaction of your pet**. Most owners either do one of two things: they either try and comfort the animal or scold it. Neither is effective and both can actually have detrimental effects. **Overly consoling an animal** actually reinforces the fear response, while **punishment for nervous behavior** has a similar effect, as the animal comes to believe that he does have a reason to fear the noises since he is reprimanded.

Instead, **train your animal to retreat to a place he or she associates with safety and comfort** (such as a bathroom, doggie bed, cat scratching post) during a storm or before you turn on a known trigger. At this point, reward **calm behavior**.

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Other effective approaches are **desensitization therapy or conditioning methods**, where low levels of controlled exposure to the source of fear are introduced and gradually increased in intensity or other calming stimulus are introduced as the sound occurs. However, caution should be used with these behavioral modifying approaches, as poor implementation can actually increase the fear.

Like other health issues, the best way to manage **nervous system health** is holistically. This means a healthy diet, regular

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exercise and a secure home environment – as well as **extra support in times of stressful, foreseeable events.**

Natural remedies can also help when behavioral modifications are not sufficient, or to boost the calming effects. **Scutellaria laterifolia** (Scullcap) is one of the best known herbs for soothing the nervous system and may be used regularly every day or occasionally when needed, providing tonic benefits for the entire nervous system. **Passiflora incarnata** is a tropical herb which has been used since the 19th century to soothe the nerves.

Modern research supports traditional usage and clinical trials have demonstrated the relaxing effects of Passiflora. **Kalium phosphate** (Kali. phos.) (6C) is a biochemic tissue salt with many therapeutic benefits and will help to maintain nervous system equilibrium and harmony. **Argentum nitricum** (Arg. nit.) (30C) is well known for soothing the nerves and providing support for the nervous system. It is also useful to promote digestive health.

The ideology "**prevention is better than cure**" is greatly applied to noise phobias as well, for owners in the position to instill proper behavioral responses at an early age. Exposure to loud or potentially startling sounds **before 14 weeks can help eliminate fears to noises.**

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-LRV

Controlled Comforting... Balancing Behavior for Best Effects

As more and more people become pet owners, sometimes disturbances in behavior, such as anxiety around noise, aren't considered before adopting or buying. However, to provide both emotional and physical support for your pet during times of nervousness, it is important to be ready to care for your pet in the best way possible—without exacerbating an existing problem or creating a new one.



- **Regular exercise is essential.** High energy pets need a natural outlet for their energy and exhaustion can have a dramatically calming effect on an overly active animal! Plus, exercise has been shown to have a mood-stabilizing, calming effect
- **Ensure your pet is eating a balanced, high quality diet** with plenty of raw and unprocessed food (preferably organic). Behavioral issues can often be related to food intolerances and an inadequate diet. A diet that is too high in protein can also be a factor. If in doubt, please consult your vet.
- **Keep natural remedies on hand** to immediately soothe a highly-strung pet by supporting nervous system health safely and effectively.
- **Avoid exposure to toxins and chemicals** as much as possible, including pesticides, herbicides, commercial flea collars, flea powder, insecticides and second-hand cigarette smoke. Also make sure that food and water bowls are made of glass, stainless steel or porcelain. Cook food in stainless-steel pans, not aluminum or copper pans
- **Take note of particular stressors in your pet's environment** that may be causing problems (particularly recent changes), and take whatever steps are feasible to minimize them.
- **Ensure that your home is a secure environment** where your pet feels safe.
- **Be consistent with your reactions to your pet.** The whole family needs to follow the same routine when dealing with your pet's anxieties, otherwise your pet will become confused and even more insecure.
- **Consider consulting an animal behaviorist** if your pet's behavior is affecting quality of life.
- **The sooner a problem is addressed,** the easier it will be to modify the behavior.
- **Start socializing your new pet** at an early age, allowing pets to become accustomed to strange noises, yelling children, noisy rubbish collection trucks, etc.