

## Top 10 Tips to Holistic Dog Care

By Jeff Coltenback

Below is a brief list of things to consider if you want to care for your dog holistically. Holistic Pet Care, in its essence, is the overall care for a pet. The focus of health is to consider all areas of your pet's life that is contributing to their health and well being. Of course this topic is lengthy and gets very granular, as do each item listed below. But, hopefully, the tips below will challenge you to take care of your pet in a holistic, more natural way.

1. Feed a healthy diet. I have written numerous articles and papers on diet. The purpose here to emphasize that all health (physical, mental and emotional) starts with good nutrition. In a nut shell, stay away from processed food. All dry dog food is merely a people product. It's cheap and convenient and targets lazy Americans. Fresh and or raw foods (with lots of meat for our carnivores), along with appropriate supplements are far superior and healthier for your dog.
2. Offer high quality drinking water at all times. The body is made up mostly of water. Water helps dogs rehydrate and detoxify their bodies. Spring water is good but is sold in plastic bottles, which isn't good. Purified water via filtering systems is fine too. Tap water contains chemicals and chlorines that could impact the life and efficacy and internal organs.
3. Use stainless steel bowls only if possible. Plastic bowls contain toxic materials that can seep into food and water. Plastic and ceramic bowls have also been linked to allergies and facial acne. Stainless is the best choice.
4. Use meat-based treats and recreational chews bones only. I realize this may be challenging for many non-meat eaters. I do have the utmost respect for the vegetarian and vegan lifestyle. Our dogs need meat. And, crunchy dog biscuits and green chew treats cause more harm than any good they may be marketed to do. Heavy grains and starches cause periodontal disease as well as vast types of intestinal and digestive upset. Crunchy treats also impact behavior due to their high sugar content!
5. Exercise. Exercise. Exercise your dog. Runs in the yard and walks around the block are great. However, dogs also need to travel. Longer walks are much better mentally, as it stimulates their natural desire to travel. Even our domestic dogs need to travel and set their territory. How do feel when you're cooped up in the house for a while? Stir crazy, right? Well, that's amplified when our dogs don't get to go for walks. If walking is a problem, hire a trainer and fix it!! Both you and your dog will benefit from this activity.
6. Practice good, consistent leadership over your pack animal. Positive reinforcement, shaping, marking...these are all human psychological terms that make us feel better about dog training. The bottom line is that your dog doesn't understand human or English or whatever your native language is. They speak dog. To be a good leader you need to speak dog as well. Use your eyes and your posture to communicate with your dog. Make your dog earn all of its resources by performing commands for you. Food, treats, affection, playtime, toys – all these are resources that you should control by making your dog earn them. If he doesn't do something, he doesn't get anything. Pretty simple!
7. Groom your dog as much as possible!! Long, short or no hair, brush your dog as much as possible. Brushing allows dead skin follicles to be removed and allows the skin to breath. This helps tremendously with detoxification. The skin, also an organ, is crucial in pet health. Grooming, petting and massaging all fall under this category and also do wonders for your relationship. Also, brush the teeth too if need be. Of

course, if you are feeding a fresh diet, you likely won't need to do it all that much. But, if you must, do it! It is challenging, I know. But, it is better than putting your dog under anesthesia just for a teeth cleaning.

8. Avoid chemical flea and tick topical and pesticides. That's right; those little tubes you squeeze on your dogs are filled with harmful pesticides. And, what's worse, they're not 100% effective against anything. The only they do 100% is destroy your pet's immune system. There are many natural alternatives to flea, tick and heartworm protection. Seek them and out.
9. Now the BIGGY!! **DO NOT OVER-VACCINATE** your pet. If your veterinarian tells you your pet need to annual vaccinations, go find another vet, one that actually keeps up on medical journals and bulletins. All the studies being done nowadays prove yearly vaccines are NOT REQUIRED!! Well, not all the studies. Of course, the pharmaceutical industry will scare you into doing otherwise. And they have shareholders to answer to. I only have my pets to keep happy and healthy. One of my pit bulls died in 2004 from Vaccinosis. That's right, there's even a disease named after the collateral damage that vaccines do. Some studies suggest one vaccine booster after a certain age provides protection for the ENTIRE life of your pet. This topic is very lengthy and controversial. But, the fact is simple. Vaccines, especially yearly, do more harm than good. **Beware!!!**
10. Finally, love your pet in a stress-free environment. Stress can contribute to disease. Love and calm energy in the house, along with everything I mentioned above will provide you and your pet with many happy years together. Spending quality time with our pets does as much for their emotional and spiritual balance as it does ours. They are pack animals and really benefit from being with their pack and pack leaders!!

Well, I hope these simple tips were beneficial to you. As I mentioned, the above topics were merely highlights of how to better care for your pet. I hope I was able to at least get you thinking more about the state of your pet's health in all areas; physical, emotional, mental and spiritual). Good luck in your quest for optimizing your pet's life and health!!