

## Arthritis: What You Can Do at Home

**Caring for your arthritic pet involves paying attention to his comfort.**

*Joan Hustace Walker*

Brought to you by The Essential Guide to Natural Pet Care for Cats & Dogs: Arthritis

In addition to receiving regular holistic care from an experienced veterinarian, you can comfort your arthritic pet at home by providing holistic care. Obviously, the treatments that require training such as acupuncture, homeopathy, chiropractic, and herbal medicine should not be attempted by you, a lay person, but there are many things you can do to boost the health of your pet, as well as decrease his pain significantly.

Caring for your arthritic pet involves paying attention to the animals comfort.

For example, one of the first things you should do for your pet is make sure he has a comfortable bed. There are orthopedic beds with special pads that distribute your pets weight better than a regular pet bed. With a heavy pet, this weight distribution can be particularly critical; but an arthritic cat benefits from proper bedding just as much as a heavier animal. If you make your pets bed yourself, make sure the padding isn't too deep because that would make it difficult for an arthritic animal to rise.

Also, take a good look at your home and yard and re-evaluate it for a pet who has trouble moving. Can your pet comfortably reach his food? You might consider elevating food and water bowls. Where do you keep your pets bed? Is it on the ground floor, or does your pet have to jump up or climb stairs to reach a favorite sleeping spot? With an arthritic cat, be sure to consider the litterbox. How well can your cat climb in and out? You may want to consider providing your cat with a flatter pan-style box. Another problem can be slick floors. Your pet may need better traction in his living areas.

Remember to pay attention to your pets mental/ emotional condition, as well. Many diseases are thought to worsen if the patient is suffering from stress. A change in routine is enough to stress your pet or make him increasingly despondent. Many holistic practitioners believe that a pets immune system is heightened if the animal is happy. So try to avoid situations that stress your pet.

Keep a careful eye on your pet and report any significant changes in your pets health to your veterinarian immediately. Also, don't assume that because your pet shows signs of arthritic pain that he has arthritis. Early intervention is key to the success of treating arthritic patients. Unless your veterinarian makes the diagnosis of arthritis, it may not be arthritis. There are many curable diseases that cause arthritis-like symptoms. Make sure you confirm your suspicions and seek professional treatment.