

HOW TO HELP YOUR DOG DE-STRESS.

Just like us, dogs can also get stressed out. Dogs have the ability to pick up on their owner's moods, including their stress and anxiety, therefore when you're feeling slightly edgy, chances are that your dog is too. This also happens the other way around. You know your fur kid and when something seems off – you usually notice it pretty quickly. Therefore, when it seems like your dog is particularly stressed, here are a few things to do to de-stress your furry friend, calm him down and keep him happy and healthy.

Ways to help your dog de-stress:



Exercise

Exercise is a great way for your dog to get some endorphins flowing through his body. During exercise your body releases endorphins, which are feel-good hormones and helps decrease stress levels. Your dog could also be feeling edgy due to pent up energy he hasn't been able to get rid of. Go for a walk, or even better, a jog to get in some much-needed cardio for your pawed pal. Exercise will also allow your dog to redirect his energy to a healthy alternative, rather than focusing on his feelings of stress and anxiety. Exercise also offers a change in scenery which could help destress your dog, and it's a great way to bond and have some fun while you're at it.



A variety of toys

Allow your dog to redirect his energy to other fun things around him. By giving your dog a variety of toys to play with, your dog will focus his energy on the toys rather than brew and overthink due to anxiety and stress. The key is also to keep your dog busy and entertained. If your dog has nothing to stimulate him mentally or physically, he might start becoming involved in destructive behaviour, or develop mood disorders such as stress, anxiety or depression.

**Gentle dog massage:**

Everyone can relate to a gentle massage. Nothing says relax and de-stress like a massage. Next time you cuddle your dog, gently massage your dog's paws, temples and ears. This can help release some tension and stress in your furry friend.

**A steady routine:**

If your dog is prone to anxiety and oversteering, it's important to keep a steady routine. Your dog's blood pressure spikes fairly easily, adding an unpredictability to the rise of stress and high blood pressure. Try having consistent feeding, walking and activities. This way, your dog can get used to a routine that is reliable and that offers him everything he needs to stay healthy and happy. Being able to rely on something and someone also massively decreases stress.

**Ignore him:**

This might seem a little drastic, yet there is a method to the madness. Sometimes when your pooch is stressed or anxious, their behaviour changes and sometimes even becomes destructive. When this happens, it's important not to give your dog extra love or affection as this may be seen as praise. This then only perpetuates the behaviour as well as the stress because your dog gets confused as to what is expected from him. It is OK to comfort your nervous pooch but make sure you are calm too.

**Ask your veterinarian:**

If it seems like your dog's stress is affecting his daily activities and inhibiting him from enjoying a normal happy dog's life, it's important that you ask your vet to do a check up to see if there might not be an underlying cause or illness.