



Tellington TTouch® Southern Africa

Issue 11, December 2016

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Website of the month
Book of the month

TTouch South Africa

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Eugenie's Letter

Dear TTouch Friends,

It is indeed Christmas Day and it's hard to believe another year is almost over. I thought the best way to say Merry Christmas would be with a few of my favourite Christmas pictures and messages... so here they are!

Have a wonderful Holiday Season and a spectacular New Year, including TTouch in your Life is always a positive way to go! Hope to see you with us.

Eugenie



Shadow loving being under the Christmas tree

**"An animal's eyes have the power to speak a great language."
— Martin Buber**

The greatest gift you can ever own is
not found in the shops or under your
Christmas tree.

It is found in the
hearts of your
loving family and
your true friends.
healthythoughts.in

**It's ok, they will just
think Santa ate them.**



**Instructor for
Tellington TTouch
Companion
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Upcoming Tellington TTouch Trainings

For Companion Animals and Horses

You need no previous Experience to join these Trainings

These trainings are for any person who wants to better understand their animals as well as for those who would like to work with animals themselves.



Robyn Hood

TTouch for You

Workshop: 2 Day TTouch for You

Presented by: Robyn Hood

Date: 2017 Mar 18 – 19

Venue: Sandton

Price: Full Price R2200 -Deposit R1200 -Early Bird Discount R1900 expires 2017 Jan 18

Advanced TTouch

Workshop: Advanced TTouch for Companion Animals for Guild Members

Presented by: Robyn Hood

Date: 2017 Mar 21 – 23

Venue: TBA – Sandton or Midrand, JHB Gauteng

Price: Full price R3500 -Deposit R1800 -Early Bird price R3150 expires 2017 Jan 21

Contact: Eugenie Chopin
at: info@ttouch.co.za
on: 011 884-3156

Gauteng Practitioner Training for Companion Animals

Workshop: 5 Day training for Companion animals

Presented by: Robyn Hood

Date: 2017 Mar 25 – 29

Venue: TBA Midrand or Sandton, JHB Gauteng

Price: Full price R5200 -Deposit R2800 -Early Bird price R4680 expires 2017 Jan 25

Workshop: 3 Day training for Companion Animals

Presented by: Robyn Hood

Date: 2017 Mar 25 – 27

Venue: TBA Midrand or Sandton, JHB Gauteng

Price: Full price R3500 -Deposit R1800 -Early Bird price R3150 expires 2017 Jan 25

Gauteng Practitioner Training for Horses

Workshop: 5 Day training for Horses

Presented by: Robyn Hood

Date: 2017 Apr 1 – 5

Venue: Donnybrook Stables, Glenferness Midrand

Price: Full price R5200 -Deposit R2800 -Early Bird price R4680 expires 2017 Feb 1

Contact: Lindy Dekker

at: equibalance@iafrica.com

on: 083 616 0577

Workshop: 3 Day training for Horses

Presented by: Robyn Hood

Date: 2017 April 1 – 3

Venue: Donnybrook Stables, Glenferness Midrand

Price: Full price R3500 -Deposit R1800 -Early Bird price R3150 expires 2017 Feb 1

Cape Town Practitioner Training For Companion Animals

Workshop: 5 Day training for Companion Animals

Presented by: Edie Jane Eaton

Date: 2017 May 25 – 29

Venue: TBA

Price: Full price R5200 -Deposit R2800 -Early Bird price R4680 expires 2017 Mar 25

Workshop: 3 Day training for Companion Animals

Presented by: Edie Jane Eaton

Date: 2017 May 25 – 27

Venue: TBA

Price: Full price R3500 -Deposit R1800 -Early Bird price R3150 expires 2017 Mar 25

Contact: Eugenie Chopin

at: info@ttouch.co.za

on: 011 884-3156



Edie Jane Eaton

For more details, [click here](#)

The Power of Pause

By Robyn Hood - TTEAM/TTouch Instructor

It seems as though most of us are in a constant rush. We want things to happen now and are impatient if this fails to occur.

By slowing down and acknowledging the importance of spaces in time, we may actually achieve what we desire more quickly. The pause allows us a moment to reflect, exhale, become neutral, integrate, be mindful and listen.

It was at least 10 years ago, at an Advanced Training held in New Mexico, that the importance of the pause was really brought to our attention. One of our practitioners, Sally Morgan, who is also an Upledger CranioSacral Instructor, was attending the training and we spent part of a day learning some craniosacral techniques. One of the benefits of craniosacral work is helping a being achieve 'Stillpoint'.

When a Stillpoint is achieved, the craniosacral rhythm comes to a pause, inducing a state of deep relaxation. This in turn causes the sympathetic nervous system to step down which reduces the fight-or-flight responses subsequently allowing access to the healing and restorative powers of the parasympathetic system. During this training we brought dogs in from a local shelter and Sally noted that when Practitioners were using TTouces like the Python Lift or coiled Python on the dogs that 'Stillpoint' was often achieved on the

pause of the lift.

This prompted Linda to name one of the endings of the circle PAWS – Pause Allows Wondrous Stillness. A pause at the end of a circular touch keeps us mindful – can be short or long.

When to pause?

- When we first make contact with an animal
- When we give a signal – such as picking up the hoof of a horse; giving a forward signal when leading; when signalling for a stop.
- When we bring an animal towards an obstacle and you feel the slightest hesitation, pause before going over or onto it



The pause allows us a moment to reflect, exhale, become neutral, integrate, be mindful and listen.

- When we feel any resistance or reluctance to comply

Pausing when we put our hand(s) on a body before starting TTouces allows connection and gives the being a moment, as in a greeting.

A moment of stillness upon approach – when wanting to engage a horse, dog or person, instead of just marching up to them, walk a few steps, stop for a moment, exhale and diffuse your gaze – causes an animal to feel less invaded and it then allows them to meet us in the approach.

When doing groundwork and you give a signal – such as asking a horse to move forward – people often give a signal and immediately pull if the horse does not comply. Remember that when we want to give a signal – the signal goes from our brain (the idea); to our body (to give the signal); to the animal's body (the physical); to their brain (registering the request) and finally back to their body (to respond). When we repeat the signal or become insistent it can 'unbalance' the animal; trigger less functional posture; and the movement becomes less precise.

What we do with our body has a huge influence on the way animals respond to us. If we are tentative the pause gives us a moment to exhale and become more grounded. If we are out of balance, mentally, emotionally or physically, animals can 'feel it' when we interact with them. Peggy Cummings has many exercises in Connected Riding that help people have more awareness and do 'self checks' to see if they are in balance.

If you ask a dog or horse to step onto a strange surface and they don't comply – just give them

a moment; exhale and often the animal will then comply. If they are still unsure, change something. That might mean 'chunking down' the situation to make it easier; do something else or just take a break.

When asking a horse to pick up his hoof I suggest giving the signal on the horse's leg and count 'one thousand one; one thousand two' before giving another signal. You will generally notice the horse starting a weight shift at the end of your count. If you ask again too quickly the horse has to reorganize again. The pause allows the nervous system to integrate the information. This is true for people as well as animals.

**...it is the
space
between
the notes
that
makes
the
music...**

When we are learning something new we need time to process the information.

Use the 'moments not minutes' approach when working with the Tellington TTouces. Doing a few ttouces and then pausing allows the animal to know you are mindful and will give them the chance to give feedback about what you are doing.

A few years ago at a training in England we were discussing the importance of the pause. One of the students, a musician from Denmark, made the comment, 'it is the space between the notes that makes the music'. For me that sums up the power of the pause.

When life is speeding out of control and the harder you try less you seem to accomplish remember to pause and allow yourself a moment to reflect, exhale, become neutral, integrate, be mindful and listen. You may be surprised at your ability to proceed with the issues at hand.

From TTEAM Connections JanMar 2015

"Can't Hurt - May Help"

A TTouch Journey by Claire Atkinson

One of the most rewarding experiences I've had is the journey of learning TTouch and being able to help so many animals and their owners using these skills, limited as they may be.

You get the dog you need. In this case, a bundle of fearfulness from a backyard breeder, now a confident, joyful border collie. Not trained or socialized, we began obedience classes where she did well, but her fearfulness was overwhelming. I didn't know how to help her. I began my training as a behaviourist, but we needed more. Trawling the web one gloomy, wet afternoon, I discovered TTouch. I read what I could find, and realized that this could be the answer I was seeking. And – it was available in South Africa!

Day one was out in a large barn in Gordon's Bay. It's a long commute in the car, so we arrived: me hot and sticky, Muffet trembling with fear. New people, new dogs, milling around. But you couldn't miss the ambience which characterizes every TTouch workshop. There was help at hand, coffee on tap, and a large introductory booklet that I tried to read while trying to keep Muffet safe and calm, and listening to what was happening.

I had hope. Through the confusion of touches with (to me) odd names, harnesses, ground work and everything else that is part of the process, I still felt the spirit, the respect for the dog, mindfulness when working. This resonates with my personal beliefs, so though I wanted to give up at times, something kept me going. When I confessed my doubts about ever being able to do this, Eugenie said something

so important: 'It can't hurt, it may help.'

My confidence started to build and I was prepared to do anything to help Muffet.

Muffet, in turn, responded well from day one. She was given all the help we needed, while I watched, listened and learnt. We fought our way through the traffic, and both collapsed exhausted.

Every workshop, every case study increased my ability to see the potential in my own dogs and the dogs I work with. I found an amazing family, where knowledge and experience were willingly shared. I made many mistakes, I learnt from them. I remain amazed at the results that this modality produces on a daily basis. And I have a deep sense of gratitude for all who have walked with me on this journey. I recently qualified, which I see as a step along the way, for there is much still to learn.

And when I feel uncertain as to how best to help an animal or a person, I remember Eugenie's words: 'It can't hurt, it may help.' And the answer comes to me.



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Chia Chunks: Craveable Superfood Treats for Your Cat and Dog

by Dr. Becker

Chia seeds are becoming the new trendy superfood for humans – and for good reason. Chia, which is the ancient Mayan word for strength, has been valued for its energy-boosting properties for centuries.

When the seeds first began to be grown as a functional food in the US (which occurred just recently in 2014; most other chia seeds are grown in Mexico and Bolivia), they were being promoted as equine food.

However, these tiny seeds make excellent treats for dogs and cats, too, which is why I created the recipe that follows.

Chia Chunks Pet Treats Recipe

Ingredients:

- Chia seeds
- Free range, grass-fed meat, such as chicken and bison

Directions:

- Cut meat into bite-sized pieces
- Roll in chia seeds
- Place on ungreased baking sheet
- Bake at 350 degrees F (180 C) for 10 minutes
- Let cool and store in your refrigerator for up to a week or in your freezer for a month

Story at-a-glance

- » Chia chunks pet treats are made out of chia seeds and pastured chicken or bison
- » Chia seeds are high in protein and contain an impressive amount of plant-based omega-3 fats, or alpha-linolenic acid (ALA)
- » Chia seeds are also rich in valuable amino acids, antioxidants, fiber, and flavonoids, along with nutrients such as calcium, phosphorus, magnesium, manganese, and niacin

What Makes Chia Seeds So Good for Your Pets?

Chia seeds have a nutritional profile that's similar to flaxseeds but with one significant improvement. Because of the high levels of antioxidants they contain, they're far less prone to oxidation and rancidity and, in fact, may last up to two years with no refrigeration.

Chia seeds are high in protein and contain an impressive amount of plant-based omega-3 fats, or alpha-linolenic acid (ALA; chia seeds are up to 40 percent oil, with 60 percent comprised of omega-3). In humans, the ALA omega-3s in chia seeds have been linked to a number of health benefits, many of which may also apply to animals, including:

- Lowering triglycerides and supporting healthy cholesterol levels
- Lowering blood pressure and heart disease risk
- Anti-inflammatory activity
- Liver-protective properties
- Anti-diabetic action
- Protection against arthritis, autoimmune disease, and cancer

<http://healthypets.mercola.com/sites/healthypets/archive/2015/10/01/chia-chunks-pet-treats.aspx>

Chia seeds are also rich in valuable amino acids, antioxidants, fiber, and flavonoids, along with nutrients such as calcium, phosphorus, magnesium, manganese, and niacin. Further, they're a rich source of the phytochemicals myricetin, quercetin, and kaempferol, which are known for their antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, and anti-cancer properties.

A little bit of chia seeds goes a long way, with about 10 grams of fiber in just two tablespoons. So even the sprinkling of seeds found in these Chia Chunks treats will add meaningful nutrition to your pet's diet. One caveat to be aware of... chia seeds take on a gelatinous texture when they're mixed with water.

This isn't an issue for this particular recipe, since the seeds are kept dry and baked. However, if you mix chia seeds with water or a wet pet food, be mindful when feeding it to your pet (an overabundance of the seeds could potentially lead to choking).

Treat Your Pet Right: Pastured Chicken and Bison

The only other ingredient in Chia Chunks is high-quality grass-fed meat or poultry of your choice. Poultry, such as turkey or chicken is an excellent source of protein and it contains all the B vitamins along with minerals like selenium.

Other nutrients in poultry include zinc, copper, phosphorus, magnesium, and iron, along with sulfur-containing amino acids like cysteine, which help thin mucus in the lungs so it's easier to discharge.

Other amino acids in poultry, notably leucine, isoleucine, and valine, are important for cardiac and skeletal muscle health. Ideally, choose free-range, organic chicken (or turkey).

If you (or your pets) prefer, you can also make these with bison. Bison has a similar nutritional profile to beef, although it is leaner and can be used as a novel form of protein for pets with food allergies or intolerances.

Food sensitivities are quite common these days and can pose a challenge when looking for foods to feed your dog or cat. Pets with food allergies should be placed on novel-protein diets, also called elimination diets, to allow their immune systems to stop overreacting to allergens and give their GI tracts time to detoxify, heal, and function normally again. Examples of other novel proteins you could

include in this recipe are ostrich, quail, rabbit, and duck.

Your Pets Deserve Home Cooking, Too!

Commercial pet foods can be a disaster for your pet's health. Many are primarily grain-based, which is not healthy for most dogs or cats. Fillers like feather meal or soy protein concentrate are often added to boost protein content instead of real meat, and preservatives and other synthetic ingredients are also common.

Even if you feed your pet a higher quality, species-appropriate commercial food, he may miss out on the taste of real food that comes from home-cooked meat simply prepared. Preparing a homemade dog food is an alternative option that's growing in popularity, but it does take time and, certainly, some research to be sure it's nutritionally balanced.

A compromise of sorts is to choose a high-quality food that's commercially prepared and species-appropriate – and then prepare homemade treats so your pet can have the best of both worlds. Many options are available that are quick, easy to prepare and call for just a few ingredients. Chia chunks are just one example to get you started.

If you're looking for more homemade pet treat recipes, check out my free e-cookbook, [Homemade Treats for Healthy Pets: Nutritious Recipes for Your Cats and Dogs](#). This e-book is filled with homemade dog and cat food ideas, which are personally formulated by my mom and me, and that I'm sure your pets will love. Over 20 species-appropriate recipes – crunchy morsels, savory treats, and even pet-friendly desserts – are included for your cats and dogs.



Shedding Some (Candle) Light on Resistances in Horses

By Edie Jane Eaton - TTEAM/TTouch Instructor

It's commonly accepted by TTEAM practitioners that when horses show resistance there's always a reason - or several reasons. These reasons can be such things as misunderstanding what the human wants, tension or discomfort, and fear - all of which affect how our horses go, and influence their behaviour. It behooves us, if our horse is resistant, to take the time to investigate what's going on - in his body and relationship to his environment - and to find out what's behind the problem, rather than jump in to try to correct it.

Even if we do acknowledge that there's a reason for our horse's behaviour - accepting that he's not just naturally ornery, or choosing to be resistant - we may well spend a lot of time seeking to identify a particular trigger for a behaviour yet have trouble pinning it down. Or we think we know what the trigger is, and then get upset with the horse when the behaviour shows up without it: If we don't see the reason, then he's got no excuse! Sometimes we adapt what we do - even go to great lengths - to avoid what we believe is the trigger, like taking apart

a bridle to put it on, not carrying a crop, or choosing a 'round-about' hacking route. Life can become very complicated!

This trigger-search may be a wild goose chase.



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www.facebook.com/edie.j.eaton?fref=ts

Have you ever snapped someone's head off and then gone back to apologies, telling whatever your version might be of - waking up with a headache, alarm not going off, the coffee machine not working, terrible traffic, losing your wallet, etc., not to mention ongoing low-grade stress of an adolescent's rebelliousness or an aged parent's care? Any one of these you

When horses show resistance there's always a reason - or several reasons.

could cope with, but all of them at once? No way. Whatever the poor person whose head you snapped off said or did was just the last straw, the climax of an accumulation of stressors. It seems to be like this for horses, too. If only a few provocations are present the horse can cope, but when there are too many the horse loses it.

I think of these provocations - these difficulties the horse has - as candles. They sit underneath and heat up a bowl of water, which represents the horse's level of composure. When there are only a few candles lit the horse manages to keep it together. As more of the candles are lit the temperature goes up past the boiling point, and the horse can no longer cope. More importantly, he can no longer learn! If we are unaware of the cumulative effect of stress it can seem that the behaviour comes out of nowhere, whereas it could be predicted.

Candles can include tension and discomfort in the body, and might be expressed as difficulty with handling, grooming, tacking up, etc.; fears in the stable, of the trailer, or of traffic, perhaps; and lack of trust in the handler/rider which is often the result of misunderstanding.

Small candles may be hard to recognize, and if the horse appears to be doing fine, we may not even be aware that they are lit. Even if we do recognize them, they may seem insignificant or unrelated to the difficulties we are having, so we let them continue burning. So too with those candles we feel helpless about or think we can't change. When candles keep burning - no matter how small they are - the water stays constantly warm, and can come quickly to the boiling point. This is the main point I want to



make: Even the small candles have considerable influence. Taking the time to identify and extinguish as many as possible can make all the difference. If we extinguish them, the extreme behaviour may not even arise!

Consider the following story . . .

I once worked with a horse with the aim of helping the rider find ways to settle the horse when it 'lost it' at shows. I did a bit of everything: Some TTouch body work to identify and relieve tension, and ground work in the Confidence Course to check out and improve his balance and focus. As always I found some small things that could have been better, so I spent a few minutes addressing them. None of them provoked the problem behaviour, but they did evoke minor concern in the horse. I think I only had one session with the horse, and didn't see the owner again until the end of the show season when I asked if what I had shown her had helped. "Well," she said, "I'm not sure - he never lost it.....Ahh! I get it!!!"

I use this candle model as an explanation for why just doing the TTEAM work can bring about dramatic and lasting changes in

behaviour and movement, even when the practitioner is not focused on "fixing" the problem. As we go through the process of the work we blow out a lot of small candles, sometimes without ever identifying them. In the example above I was asked to help the rider cope with her horse when he reacted. I wasn't asked to stop the horse from being reactive, though that was the end result. It may have been that the rider believed he couldn't change, and that his reactivity was "just the way he is."

With the TTEAM work we find that the description "just the way he is" is rarely true. I suspect that in most horses there are many small candles burning that are quite easy to extinguish, and removing their contribution to the temperature allows the horse to stay more calm and in a state in which he can learn more easily. Once he moves beyond instinctive reaction to a thinking state a chain reaction seems to be set in motion, and issues become resolved all on their own. The result is a horse who - as long as there are no negative influences stressing him - keeps getting better and better.

A TTEAM session begins with an in-depth observation of the horse in order to identify what elements (candles) are contributing to his difficulties. In order to identify the candles we have to notice how the horse shows his concern or anxiety.

Understanding the vocabulary of the body, which can be very subtle and include involuntary

effects such as tension, breath-holding, or increased heart rate, etc., will help us to identify what the candles are. The language is very individual: it might also be expressed as evasion, chewing, pawing, barging forward, growing roots - you name it.

You'll recognize many of these as common "vices", although they may be nothing more than your horse's way of saying "I'm not happy about what's going on." Sad, isn't it, to think that we often fail to listen to these communications and sometimes punish our horses for them. This is not too different from saying to the horses "don't tell me you don't like it!" Take note of when these behaviours arise, and you get closer to identifying the candles. Notice the subtle behaviours, and you'll find critical little candles that may be constantly burning in the background.

Candles fall into three main categories, which here are identified as misunderstanding, tension and discomfort, and fear. I think that all horse people would agree that understanding, physical comfort and confidence are all important (and all-important!) to successful training and performance.

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Misunderstanding

Simply being aware of when your horse is concerned is a huge part of understanding him, and equally important is recognizing when he understands - or

misunderstands - you! You will discover that you can acknowledge his concern by changing what you do or giving a moment's break. This will go far to help develop his trust, and your training will become dramatically easier. For both of you the stress levels will drop. You won't be second-guessing each other,

and misunderstandings will be a thing of the past. It sounds very simple, and it can be. It helps to accept that the horse is probably doing his best, just as you are, and giving him the benefit of the doubt is a good thing!

Tension and discomfort

You must always make sure that your horse has no medical issues. TTEAM work is a great adjunct to veterinary care, but doesn't replace it. Tension in the body may make it difficult for the horse to do what you wish and may make some movements uncomfortable or even impossible. By running your hands softly over his body you will be able to identify where he seems to enjoy being touched, and where he lets you know it's not OK. You will also find places where he is tight, and you will certainly notice changes in the texture of his coat and temperature changes related to circulation. It's important that he be free to move as you do this - you want to be able to see what he does, and learn more about his way of expressing himself.

Tension patterns influence posture, and posture is intimately related to behaviour. You



may notice that your high-headed flighty horse has a tight neck and poll and a dropped back, or that your nervous horse - who does a great imitation of an elephant balancing on a barrel - has a lot of tension in his legs and belly. It's very exciting to become aware of these relationships and understanding them

removes a lot of the mystery from behaviour.

There are common connections between concern in certain parts of the body and specific kinds of behaviour. We often find that horses labeled "emotional" or "neurotic" have issues about being handled around the mouth, or hold a lot of tension in lips and jaw. Tension in the flanks and sides can make a horse unresponsive to the leg, while at the same time they can be surprisingly reactive to being groomed there. Tension in the shoulder and upper legs can reduce circulation to the feet - they may have icy cold lower legs - and we sometimes find that these horses are nervous about changes in footing, or are spooky. Clamped tails and tension in the hindquarters are common in horses who are nervous about things behind them, or who rush through doorways.

Even without going into specific TTEAM techniques to address these tensions, you may find that your roving touch will tell you a great deal about why your horse behaves as he does, and why he needs your help and consideration. Your appreciation and awareness of what you are feeling is the beginning of making a

difference. Just as someone's hand on the top of your tight raised shoulder triggers you to relax it, your touch will set some changes in motion.

Fears

Fears are very strongly affected by how safe an animal feels. Feeling insecure can aggravate fears, or cause them to develop. Insecurity also undermines the ability to learn, and the stress it causes can have physiological as well as behavioural consequences. A sense of security is vital to overcoming fear, and we can provide security to our horses by allowing them some freedom to move. Do you remember as a child shrugging off the grip of a nervous parent, since being held tightly made you feel less safe? Horses with good balance are more confident, and allowing the head and neck to be free gives them the chance to balance themselves. Movement, too, is helpful, since it has a physiologically calming effect. Have you ever felt the need to move after getting bad news?

When our horse acts up we often wish he would stand still, and it's common for us to want to hold him more tightly, or tell him to smarten up - somehow to stop him from whatever he's doing. The next time this situation occurs, try this: First of all - exhale! Allow the horse a bit of space by stepping forward so you aren't pulling back on his head, and give him enough freedom to look around. If we want our horse to develop self control we have to back off a bit from trying to control him. If you know what's provoking him, turn him sideways to it, and when you ask him to move forward keep the scary

thing to his side where he can see it. You may well see his head come down and the panic subside, and find that he can be aware of what's bothering him and at the same time be able to listen and respond to you. This is great learning for him.

Linda Tellington-Jones, the originator of the TTEAM method, has described the intention of the work as helping horses to "move beyond instinct and learn how to learn." These instincts are represented by reactive behaviours and also by protective tension patterns, which interfere with movement and colour attitude. Simply running your hand slowly over your horse can begin to release tension and change habitual postures. Giving him short breaks will help him to process the effects of your touch, and experience what feels new in his body. Allowing him some freedom to re-balance and take stock of his environment will help him to develop greater self-awareness - a clearer self-image. The pay-off for this is better self-control and improved athleticism. Best of all, you will find your relationship deepening as you allow him opportunities to speak to you, and as you listen to what he has to say.

listeningtowhispers.com/candleLight.shtml



Tellington TTouch on Birds

Every pet bird can benefit from a little TTouch.

In most cases, behavior problems in birds are the result of fear or stress. It is virtually impossible to give your birds a stress-free life. We can buy them the big cages, the best food, or give them all of our attention, but that doesn't keep them from getting stressed or scared from time to time.

Stress for our pet birds can be anything from a new cage to the sound of the doorbell. Something that bothers one of your birds may not affect your other birds.

We all know how damaging stress can be to our human bodies. To combat our stress, we exercise, take vitamins, get massages, meditate, or do anything else to help us relax.

Unfortunately, our birds don't know how to "de-stress" themselves without causing damage to someone or something (unless we teach them). The result of these daily stresses can be feather-plucking, self-mutilation, screaming, biting, illness, etc.

Our hands can seem threatening to birds (especially the smaller ones). By doing the TTouch strokes with the two feathers, you can move along the contours of your bird's body in a gentle manner without using too much pressure. The feathers also allow you to stimulate areas of your bird's body not normally accepted by hand touching.

Birds who are fearful of hands usually accept the feather strokes. The feathers are used as an extension of the hand much like the wand is used for TTouch with other animals.

You can use your hands to do the TTouch only after your bird accepts various strokes with the feathers. Using your hands too soon could cause your bird to react unfavorably to your advances.

How to do the Tellington TTouch on Birds

With kind permission from Dawn Eischen.

(Before you begin, please seek the advice of your avian veterinarian. Some behavior problems are the result of an injury, disease, or illness. If this is the case, your avian vet can prescribe the proper treatment for your bird. The TTouch can be performed on birds undergoing veterinary treatment to help them relax and recover from the illness or injury more quickly.)

What you will need

T-stand or the back of a chair:

Your bird's head should be no higher than your chest when perched. Make sure the stand does not wobble either. The idea here is to make your bird as comfortable as possible. Please remove any feeding cups or toys that may be attached to the T-stand.

Two feathers:

If possible, use two feathers from the bird you will be working with. If no long feathers are available, use a feather from one of your other (healthy) birds--preferably of a color similar to the bird you will be working with.

Try to save the long feathers your bird sheds throughout the year. The longer the feathers the better.

Caution: Diseases could be transmitted to your bird by using feathers from other birds.

Two long cotton swabs:

The long cotton swabs are better than the short ones because it allows your hand more distance from the bird. Hands too close could frighten a shy bird.

Attach the stick end to the base of the feather with clear tape. I call this my "feather wand".

A quiet room:

Put the T-stand or chair in the quietest room, away from cages, tables, and your other birds or pets. Check the room out to make sure there isn't a perfect escape route close by (like curtains or a convenient table, for example).

If your bird refuses to come out of his cage or cannot sit on the T-stand, work with him wherever he feels most comfortable (as long as he is still no higher than chest level).

The last thing you want to do is to frighten your bird by chasing him all over the house in order to get him on the T-stand. It is important you show your bird that he/she can trust you.

Patience:

...the most important tool you'll need! Do not expect overnight miracles.

Relax by taking a deep breath and letting it out before you begin your session. If you feel nervous, hyperactive, or stressed, please realize that your bird may mirror your behavior, resulting in a frustrating session for you and your bird.

The TTouch PROCEDURE**PHASE ONE - USING THE FEATHERS**

With your bird perched in front of you, hold a "feather wand" in each hand. Begin by stroking one of the feathers on your arm where your bird can see you. Tone softly with your voice (draw out your words- "goood birrrd").

Then stroke the feathers together. Once your bird seems comfortable, stroke the perch on

either side of him with the feathers. If he reaches out to bite, don't jerk away. Slowly go back to stroking the feathers together and ease into touching the perch with the feathers.

When perch stroking is successful, stroke both feet at the same time. Again, if he gets restless, go back to where he was comfortable. Then ease back to the feet later. There is no need to rush or force anything.

After successfully stroking the feet, stroke either side of the wings, making sure you are still toning with your voice and breathing. Move on to other areas of your bird's body, stroking smoothly and evenly.

TTouch sessions should be very short in the beginning.

Never end a session the moment the bird bites or tries to escape.

Instead, you want to end each session on a positive note. Say, for example, a few seconds into the session, you are stroking your bird's feet, and he strikes at the feathers. Go back to stroking the perch until he calms down, and then end the session. That way he knows you won't go away if he bites. When you come back, after giving him a break, you can pick up where you left off (stroking the perch).



Remember, with TTouch "less is more". The less you push your bird, the more results you'll have with the TTouch. Don't be disappointed if your sessions only last a couple of minutes when you first start. If you continue to end on a positive note each time, the sessions will soon get longer. Also, don't lose your cool. Anger only makes matters worse.

Try to visualize your bird enjoying the feather strokes while you are doing the TTouch. If you are thinking *this is never going to work* or *my bird is a hopeless case*, you won't get anywhere. Negative attitudes only produce negative results.

PHASE TWO - USING THE COTTON SWAB

While your bird is relaxed during the feather strokes, turn one wand to the cotton swab side. Do tiny circles under the feathers while your other hand supports your bird with the other feather.

The TTouch circle starts at 6 o'clock and goes clockwise passing six again to end on 9 o'clock. Remember to only press down enough to move the skin. Do not slide over the feathers.

Sometimes it is easier to do the circles on the back of the head or on the legs and feet. Feather pluckers benefit from doing these circles on the plucked areas. However, be careful around delicate pin feathers.

You can also do the circles with the feather end of the wand. The feather circles are great for use around the ears, beak, and eyes. However, do not attempt to press hard enough to move the skin when using the feathers to do circles (you will end up with a frayed feather). The feather circles are used as a warm-up to cotton swab and finger circles.

PHASE THREE - USING YOUR HANDS

Please do not make the assumption that phase one and two are useless and phase three is where you should begin. You would be making a big mistake!

Use the tip of your finger to do the clockwise circles on your bird's body. You may want to use your pinky finger since that is the finger least likely to exert much pressure. This is very effective to do when your bird is feeling frightened during wing trims or while visiting the vet. Concentrate these circles around the head to help release some of the stress your bird may be feeling. Remember to use very light pressure.

To feel how light the pressure should be, do the clockwise circles on your closed eyelid. Using the lightest possible contact, press down on your eyelid just enough to move the skin. Transfer that touch to your arm. The result is a #1 pressure (on a scale of 1-9). This is the level of pressure most comfortable for birds. Anything harder would possibly be too painful, since they have such thin skin.

Most people who see this therapy for the first time automatically think it is massage. Actually, the TTouch stimulates the nervous system, whereas massage is generally used for the muscles. This happens because you are only pressing hard enough to move the skin. The nerves that need stimulation are only in the top few layers of skin. If you were to press any harder, you would be moving muscle tissue.



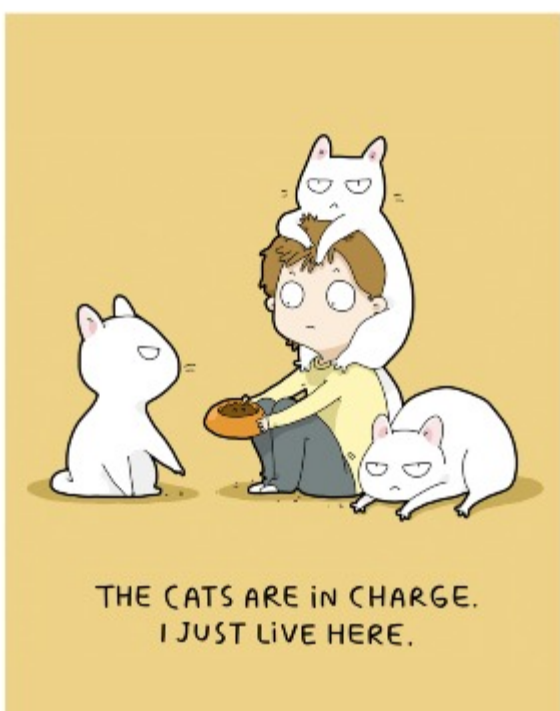
MEOWED UNTIL
HUMAN WOKE UP.
DOESN'T NEED ANYTHING,
JUST BORED.



CARRY ME
TO MY FOOD,
SLAVE



THE CATS ARE IN CHARGE.
I JUST LIVE HERE.



CATS ARE LIKE POTATO CHIPS
YOU CAN'T HAVE JUST ONE



<http://shop.lingvistov.com/>

Website of the month

www.companionanimalpsychology.com/

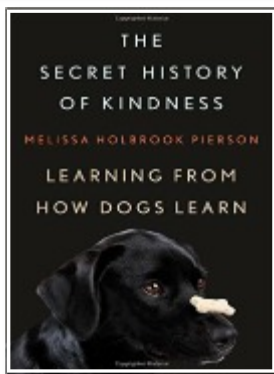
Companion Animal Psychology...

Companion Animal Psychology

Because science matters to our dogs and cats.

is about the science of people's relationships with their pets. Topics include dog training, canine behaviour, feline behaviour, enrichment, behaviour problems, attachment to pets, and the human-animal bond. Dogs, cats, rabbits, ferrets, guinea pigs, horses and fish are all included. Topic suggestions are welcome. Companion Animal Psychology is based in Maple Ridge, BC, Canada.

Book of the month

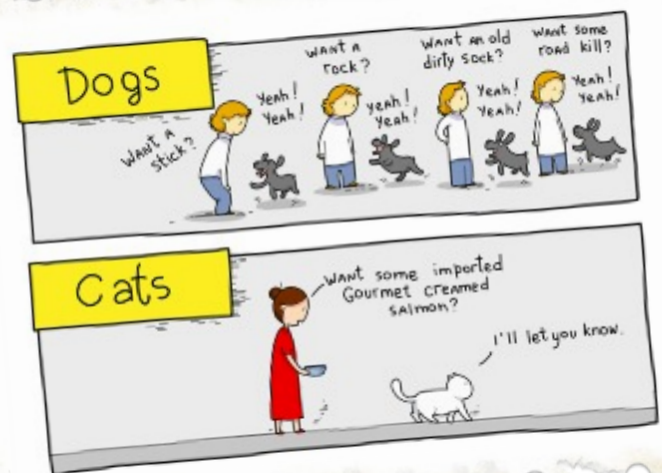


The Secret History of Kindness: Learning from How Dogs Learn

An intimate, surprising look at man's best friend and what the leading philosophies of dog training teach us about ourselves.

Years back, Melissa Holbrook Pierson brought home a border collie named Mercy, without a clue of how to get her to behave. Stunned after hiring a trainer whose immediate rapport with Mercy seemed magical, Pierson began delving into the techniques of positive reinforcement. She made her way to B. F. Skinner, the behavioral psychologist who started it all, the man who could train a pigeon to dance in minutes and whose research on how behavior is acquired has ramifications for military dolphin trainers, athletes, dancers, and, as he originally conceived, society at large.

Bits and Pieces



Talking animals

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nGeKSiCQkPw>

Seven Reasons to Use Reward-Based Dog Training

By Zazie Todd, PhD, for Companion Animal Psychology

It's amazing what we can do when we use rewards to train our companion animals. Here are some reasons to give it a try.

Positive reinforcement is recommended by professional organizations

Many professional organizations have spoken out against the use of punishment in dog training because the scientific evidence shows that it carries risks.

For example, Dogs Trust recommend the use of rewards in dog training. "In order to be effective and to gain the best results, all training should be based around positive rewards. Positive reward training works because if you reward your dog with something he wants as soon as he does what you ask, he is far more likely to do it again."

In their advice on finding a dog trainer, the American Veterinary Society for Animal Behaviour says "AVSAB endorses training methods which allow animals to work for things (e.g., food, play, affection) that motivate them rather than techniques that focus on using fear or pain to punish them for undesirable behaviors. Look for a trainer who uses primarily or only reward-based training with treats, toys, and play. Avoid any trainer who advocates methods of physical force that can harm your pet such as hanging dogs by their collars or hitting them with their hands, feet, or leashes."

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