



4485 N. Carl G. Rose Hwy. Hernando, (352) 341-0600

While we all love our dogs as companions, friends and family members, there is more and more evidence in medical literature about how important pets in a home are to our health. This goes beyond just mental health and having a sense of love, friendship and bonding with another living thing; it goes to true medical health that has been demonstrated in a range of different clinical trials and research studies.

You are probably aware of the growing trend of using therapy pets including dogs, cats, miniature horses and even ducks and rabbits. These animals are specially trained and socialized and are brought into hospitals, rehabilitation centers, hospices and nursing homes to provide one-on-one, hands-on interaction for patients with loving, gentle and very accepting animals. While the focus for this type of therapy is often mental health grooming, walking, and caring for the animals also helps patients stay motivated in their treatment and recovery process. Dogs can be powerful motivators for a patient to increase mobility and to participate more in regular exercise and activities.

As a dog lover and dog owner you may not realize that some of those therapeutic benefits are a part of your life as well. Our daily interactions with our pets may actually be extending our lives and boosting our overall health in ways that are finally being quantified.

If you stop and think about your interactions with your dog, or your dog and your other pets, you can probably remember a time when being around your pets help you to calm down and think through a problem. This is because being around a loving animal, or more than one, actually helps to lower your blood pressure. It also helps to reduce stress which decreases harmful chemicals in your blood system that are linked to cardiovascular disease. Being around your dog or cat and petting them, walking them and just enjoying their companionship lowers levels of norepinephrine and cortisol and boosts the levels of the feel good brain chemicals including dopamine and serotonin.

The result of lowering the harmful chemicals and boosting the feel good brain chemicals is a better, more effective immune system combined with a lower risk of developing depression, anxiety and other stress related conditions.

New research also indicates that allergies in children and later, as we age into adulthood, are significantly less likely if there is a dog or cat in the home from our infancy. This percentage ranges from a 19 to 33% reduction in the rate of allergies and eczema in families with pets compared to those without, another health benefit to be thankful for.

LuAnn

Dirty Dogs Salon

4485 N. Carl G. Rose Hwy. Hernando, FL 34442

Tel: (352) 341-0600

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Our Opening Hours!

Open:

Tues - Saturday
at 9am

Closed:

Sunday and Monday

Quiz

Which Beatles song was recorded with a dog whistle that is inaudible to humans?:

- A. Let It Be
- B. A Day in the Life
- C. Twist and Shout
- D. Beautiful Dreamer

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I am a member of National Dog Groomer Association of America Inc.

When most of us talk to our dogs, we tend to forget they're not people. ~ Julia Glass

IF YOU ARE NEW TO THIS NEWSLETTER PLEASE TAKE A MOMENT TO READ THIS PAGE AND FIND OUT MORE ABOUT WHAT I COULD DO FOR YOU AND YOUR PET!

Five Important points to look for when choosing a good Dog Groomer!

It's important to remember that not all groomers are the same and that the service they provide will not always be what you'd expect. It's so important that the person who grooms and cares for your dog does so to the highest standard. Because it's critical that you have trust and confidence in this person, I have highlighted the five benefits that a good groomer will provide to you:

1. Assurance that the care and welfare of your dog is their top priority:

Any good groomer is first and foremost a dog lover, so caring for your dog comes as second nature to them and is given at all times. By providing breaks during the clipping process and by never leaving your dog unsupervised, they reduce unnecessary stress while ensuring safety and security. They also attend to your dog's basic needs by providing them with such things as fresh drinking water.

2. Grooming of the highest standards that reflects the needs of you and your dog:

A good groomer must be able to demonstrate the ability to groom your dog to high standards and to provide an appropriate look for your pet. They must have the ability to accurately determine your needs while advising you on different options for style and finish. A good groomer will never inflict pain or undue stress on your pet just to achieve a certain style.

3. Understanding of the different temperaments and characteristics of dogs:

As not all dogs are the same, they cannot all be approached and handled the same. For example, a shy and slightly fearful dog requires calmness and patience, while a lively bouncy dog may require immediate leadership. A good groomer will be able to adapt their approach to meet the psychological and behavioral needs of different dogs to ensure minimum stress during the grooming experience.

4. Quality products and methods that do not risk the health of your pet:

A good groomer will never compromise on the quality of products they use on your pet. Cheap dog products are available everywhere, yet they can cause severe health problems for your dog. Therefore, you must be confident that your groomer uses quality controlled professional grooming products. A good groomer will never cut corners with their products just to save money or to provide cheaper rates.

5. Advice and information on all aspects of dog ownership:

It's important that you have someone to turn to when you need advice or help with your dog, and a good groomer will be this person. While groomers cannot offer all of the answers, such as a medical diagnosis, they should be knowledgeable enough to offer some assistance and to point you in the right direction. A good groomer will always attempt to identify and inform you of any physical or behavioral changes that may indicate a health problem. This can make all the difference in recovery, as early detection ensures early treatment.

As a groomer, the above five benefits are the guide by which I provide my services. Dogs and grooming are my passion, not just my business. By bringing your dog to me for grooming, you can be assured that you and your dog will receive all five benefits as well as the care and service that you deserve.

What you can Expect if you Bring your Dog to Me!

Would you like your dog groomed so that she's looking gorgeous and left just the way you want her to look? Do you want her coat smelling delightful so there's no more 'doggy' smell in your home? Would you like her coat feeling soft while being just a dream to cuddle? And above all, would you like reassurance that your dog is getting the same gentle care and kindness during grooming that you would give her at home?

Well, you've just found a groomer that can provide everything you want, plus much, much more!

With me, you can be sure that your dog will be groomed to the highest standard. You'll be so pleased with how she looks, you will be proud to walk her down your street and show her off to your neighbors - just like the many other clients I have.

Your preferences and lifestyle, as well as your dog's character, are always taken into account as I advise you on grooming styles. The health, safety and welfare of your pet are always my priority, so you can have peace of mind knowing that I only offer the best advice to help you choose the right options for your dog.

As a caring dog owner, you'll want your pet to be healthy and happy. Therefore, it'll be reassuring to know that, with me, you'll have someone looking out for potential health issues and changes in your dog - some that may only be noticeable during grooming. Early detection of ailments can make all the difference to your pet, so I make sure to keep a close eye out for physical and behavioral changes during grooming.

Your dog will be well looked after and will always get the 'one on one' attention that she needs. You'll always feel confident that she's in the safest of hands with me; I can assure you of that.

Your pet deserves the best so I only use the best and safest products that will get her coat looking gorgeous but won't ever harm her. Others may choose to use cheaper, inferior products in grooming but that's something I simply will not compromise on.

With me, you'll also have someone to turn to if you have issues or worries about your pet. Advice and help is a free extra service I'm more than happy to provide. You can call me if you ever have any problems or just need to chat about your little friend.

So if you're looking for a groomer who will leave your pet looking fantastic then give me a call. You'll be over the moon when you see what I can do for you and your little furry friend.

Dirty Dogs Salon

"Expert in leaving your dog looking gorgeous"

- ✓ **Have your dog gorgeously groomed so that she is left looking and smelling wonderful. You'll be delighted with how she'll look and you'll be so proud to show her off to your family and friends.**
- ✓ **You'll never have to worry when you leave your pet with me. She'll be groomed in a clean, relaxed environment where only the best and safest products are used.**
- ✓ **As a customer of mine, you'll get the respect and service from me that all good dog owners like you deserve.**
- ✓ **Help and advice is freely given so you'll always have someone to turn to if you ever have a problem or a worry about your little friend.**
- ✓ **I use a calm, 'tender loving' approach when grooming, where patience, praise and kindness is assured.**
- ✓ **And of course, kisses and cuddles for your little buddy are provided in abundance. She'll just love being groomed with me and you'll love how she looks afterwards!**

Call for an appointment today. Tel: **(352) 341-0600**

Back to School Prep

While you may be very excited to have the kid's heading back to school in the not too distant future, your dog is definitely not looking forward to being alone again. This can be a problem for dogs that are prone to separation anxiety or dogs that don't have a companion pet around the house to spend time when the family is at work and school.

Most dogs that have been around the family for more one or two years will easily detect that something is changing in the household. There is more activity, more excitement and a general change from the more relaxed and interactive days of summer. This is particularly true if the whole family has been home for part or all of the summer and has been doing a lot with the dog that is different than when school is in session.

The really important thing to remember is that all dogs thrive on a routine. They love to be able to predict what is going to happen and that even though you are going to go away you are going to come back. Getting into a routine that is just like a work and school day for the dog before everyone heads out the door is a simple way to help prepare your pet.

- **Walk daily** – get started with a brisk morning walk or jog with your dog. This is a positive for you both and gives the dog exercise to avoid getting into mischief when you are at work and school.
- **Dog at home** – if you have been in the habit of bringing the dog with you when you run errands or go out during the summer, start leaving the dog at home for short periods of time. Have a routine place where the dog stays and provide a toy or bone when you leave.
- **Limit goodbyes** – never make leaving the dog a big, emotional event for the pet. Avoid playing with the pet right before you leave but provide a toy or leave a radio on to help the dog with something to listen to and do.
- **Limit greetings** – when you arrive back greet your dog in a normal, positive fashion but don't make a huge production. Normalizing both the leaving and the returning makes it less stressful for the dog.

Finally, make sure that you spend time with your dog when you can. Playing for 20 or 30 minutes each evening, practicing obedience work, going for an evening walk, and routine grooming and spending time together is a terrific way to keep the dog feeling involved and part of the family.

Remember too that having a companion dog or pet is not the same as spending time with the human family. While you may be tired after getting home, that 20 or 30 minutes of playing, relaxing and interacting with your dog or dogs leaves them content, happy and very much a part of the family – and you will feel better too!

Canine Hydrotherapy

Hydrotherapy has been used for humans, horses and other large animals for years. It has also been used in the treatment and recovery of traumatic injuries, musculoskeletal conditions and even after surgery in dogs of all ages and all sizes.

What is Hydrotherapy?

Hydrotherapy is the use of exercise in water, for dogs it is typically warm water, to allow the use of joints and muscles without stress or having to carry the dog's weight. Swimming is very effective in building muscles in the legs, along the spine and even in the abdominal area so that the dog is able to walk, move, sit and stand quicker and with less chance of reinjury.

The dog, fitted with a hydrotherapy doggy life vest, is carefully carried into the pool by a trained therapist. The therapist, depending on the size of the dog, will support the dog from underneath or from a specially designed grip on the back. Dogs are very comfortable in the warm water and tend to enjoy the sessions and look forward to their time swimming in the hydrotherapy pool or on a hydrotherapy treadmill, which is also in water.

Why is Movement Important in Recovery?

According to the Canine Hydrotherapy Association a dog's muscles will begin to waste or shrink within three days of inactivity. It is not at all uncommon after a traumatic injury, surgery or an illness for a dog to be immobilized for significantly longer.

Hydrotherapy will build muscles, reduce swelling and inflammation and even help to restore circulation and relief of pain and swelling. It is often recommended for weight loss in very obese dogs and can be a highly effective treatment, in conjunction with medications, for cardiovascular and respiratory health conditions.

The Must Have Grooming Tool for Heavy Shedders

If you have a dog that has a thick, heavy, double coat and is prone to seasonal or all year long heavy shedding, you absolutely have to try a shedding rake. This tool will literally make your life a lot easier as it is designed to reach down into that thick double coat and remove those fine hairs of the undercoat that cause such a mess.

These sturdy grooming tools are designed just like a little hand-held gardening rake but with much finer teeth. Look for a design that is sized correctly for your dog and that has a thicker comfortable handle for you.

To use a shedding rake simply start at the base of the neck and groom in the direction of hair growth back and down on the body. Try to take longer strokes and, at the end of each stroke, use your other hand to remove the handfuls of undercoat you have just successfully and painlessly removed from your pooch's coat.

Dogs and Grief

Just like us, our dogs can grieve over a loss or even a change in their life. This could mean a family member moving out of the house, a death in the family, or even a death of a companion pet.

It is so sad to see our beloved pets grieve, but it is natural and it will pass with time and with your love and support. There is no way to speed up the process, but we can do things to help our dogs stay physically and emotionally healthy during this time.

When there is a change or a loss in the family try to spend more time with your pet doing favorite activities. Regular walking is perfect as it keeps the dog engaged in what is going on around them in the neighborhood.

Taking your dog to a dog park, setting up play times with well socialized dogs and just spending time grooming and interacting with your dog can be very comforting and helpful. Obedience work and training can provide mental stimulation but always keep it positive and appropriate for the dog's age and abilities.

Getting a new dog, puppy or companion pet in the family can be a good idea, but only when you and your dog are ready. Once your dog starts showing interest in other dogs again and is playful and back to his or her old self it may be a good option. It is important to get the right match for your dog and look for a good combination that will make the transition easy for both.

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Quiz Key

The correct answer is B. A Day in the Life from the St. Pepper album recorded in 1967.

Walking: The Best Exercise Ever

Sometimes, as dog owners, we get caught up in trying to always have the very latest in everything for our pets. In our desire to have the best exercise equipment and toys to keep our dogs active and physically fit we may forget that good old walking is still the best exercise for our dogs.

Walking is ideal because it isn't too intensive so it is a great exercise for young, growing puppies, overweight adult dogs and even our senior companion pets. By walking on a daily basis we can help our dogs to stay mobile, lose weight, maintain a healthy weight and also we really help them with mental engagement and interest that is essential to prevent dogs from becoming bored. Bored dogs, as we all know, are going to get into anything they can, regardless of their age or how well behaved they may be.

You can start walking either by time or distance. You may want to set a goal of around a few blocks or a 20 minute walk twice a day. Remember, you can always start with a gentle, slower walk and pick up the pace as you read your dog's fitness level.

The great thing about walking with your dog is that it doesn't cost anything, can be done in anywhere, and is also possible in almost all weather. Try changing things up and taking different routes, exploring new areas or even getting a group together, you will be amazed at the change you notice in both yourself and your dog!

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Tel: (352) 341-0600

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