**Teaching your pet to accept being checked over.**

Being able to touch and handle your pet all over is an important part of being a pet owner. This means that, when your pet is injured or ill and needs at-home care, then you can safely help them without stress.

It will save you money being able to give at-home care for procedures such as nail clipping, brushing, giving medication and removing parasites.

Being hands-on also helps you learn what is ‘good’ and normal for your pet, so then you can spot something early when they aren’t well.

**Start early**

Even if your pet is healthy, it is best to do this practice now when you don’t need it, so it is easy when you do!

Although long haired and brachycephalic (flat-faced) animals need everyday health care, your short haired mixed breed pet will still need to learn this skill for times when they are poorly in the future.

**Things to practice**

You’ll want to be able to touch every part of your pet, make sure to include**:**

* Holding paws and looking at nails
* Looking into ears
* Smoothing lightly around the eyes
* Looking under the tail
* Looking at teeth
* Fussing around the neck. Vaccinations and flea drops go into the back of the neck so you can get them used to the feeling by rubbing/lightly scratching that area.

**Top tips for your practice sessions**

* Keep sessions short. Reward well and make it fun!
* Make it part of lovely fuss. Extend fuss to different parts of the body to increase the area they accept you to touch. Also increase the time you hold or stay in one place.
* Let your pet tell you what is OK and what isn’t. Look for calming signals for when to stop. Read our article on calming signals on our website.
* Use distractions and diversions such as lickimats and fussing the head whilst touching elsewhere.
* If they don’t like it, then go gradually in your training. See our further advice on Touch training for reluctant pets. If your pet is clearly distressed, seek advice from your vet.

**Extra details**

* Get them used to being near unusual objects such as nail clippers, brushes, flea treatment syringes and tick removers so they are less scary when they come out to be used.
* Once they are happy to be touched whilst in a familiar room, then do it in different places. This is called ‘generalisation’. It is especially useful if you can handle them whilst they stand on a lino/hard floor (or table if they are small) as it is like a vet’s room surface.

For more Pet Health advice visit www.bcdh.org.uk/pet-care-advice