

PET PARADE

Where would we be without our fine furry and feathered friends? We help you make the most of your pet with a spot of animal whispering and all the best in pet news



It happens all too soon. That one-time tubby puppy loses the spring from their step, preferring to rest their greying muzzle on our lap and snooze.

We love our dogs through all stages of their lives, and caring for a senior pooch is no less fulfilling. With a few tweaks, your dog can still get a lot of pleasure from a walk – and they can still pull a mad half-hour out of the hat.

We want to ensure their diet is rich in vitamins and minerals that help maintain strong bones and teeth, and ensure their joints and skin are healthy. Be sure to buy a food designed for the life stage your pooch is enjoying. Read the ingredients and ask the retailer if you need help.

Go easy on treats – extra weight may put stress on your senior dog's frame. A few well-chosen favourites

shouldn't do any harm, but ask your vet if you are worried about your dog's weight or if you feel they are not getting the best from their food.

You can buy vitamins and minerals for senior dogs, omega-3 and glucosamine being tried and tested. If your best friend has stiff joints in the morning, try Flexi-Joint Plus by Healthspan, 120 for **£17.95** or VitaPaws Complete for Senior Dogs, 180 sprinkle capsules for **£10.29** (capsules can be swallowed or opened and the contents sprinkled over food).

Special chews and toys can be used to clean and maintain your dog's teeth. Always keep an eye on them and ensure you buy chews of the right size. Whimzees Natural Dental Chews are available on Amazon from **£13.99** and look out for Dentastix Daily Oral Care at Pets at Home, from **£13.99**.



Virus Detection Dogs?

Broadcaster and author Anna Webb has studied at the College of Integrated Veterinary Therapies (CIVT). She lives in London with Prudence and Mr Binks.

In both World Wars dogs served on the front line and boosted morale. Dogs even sensed impending air raids in WW2 by hiding or barking, alerting families to quickly seek shelter.

Today the Army and police harness the extraordinary canine sense of smell to help keep us safe. A dog's super-sensitive nose can be trained to sniff out almost anything, from counterfeit cash to disease.

The pioneering life-saving charity Medical Detection Dogs is known for its research into dogs smelling volatile cancer chemicals in breath and urine, plus training assistance dogs for diabetics. Now it has

begun training dogs to sniff out and alert people to COVID19 in a bid to help save lives.

Every dog owner knows how a dog's canny intuition can lift your mood with just a wag of the tail, and it's scientifically proven that dogs can "sniff" fluctuating levels of the stress hormone cortisol in our bodies to know exactly how we're feeling.

As stress barometers, dogs could help us monitor our own anxiety levels if we acknowledge their clever cues like yawning or licking their lips. In dog language this is expressing concern or intimating that they're actually feeling a bit overwhelmed too.

Studies agree that

simply having a dog in the same room lowers your blood pressure. Stroking your own dog is mutually beneficial as this simple action releases the happy hormone, oxytocin, in both you and your pooch.

No matter if you're having a bad hair day or your jeans are too tight – dogs are masters at staying present without judgement, not least in bringing their routine and structure to punctuate our day.

Spending more time with your best friend during this time will pay dividends. It's a reminder that you can feel lonely in a room full of people... but you're never alone with a dog by your side.

Making A Difference

If you don't have the time or room for a pet in your life at the moment, but are longing to reach out a helping hand for animals in need, please do think about sponsoring an animal. The funds you give will ensure the safety and health of animals both wild and domesticated. You can start your special journey of help and hope at the support pages on the WWF website, www.bornfree.org.uk and www.dogstrust.org.uk. Alternatively you might consider supporting a zoo or sanctuary, or your local wildlife trust – all continuing their good work during lockdown.

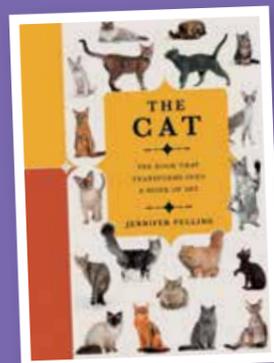


No Place Like Home!

Is your budgie cage looking a bit tired? Would you like an upgrade for your little feathered friend? Well, hop on over to www.omlet.co.uk and have a look at the gorgeous Geo Bird Cage. At **£99**, this beautiful dome is a comfortable and spacious habitat for your budgie, giving them the room to show off their bright feathers perfectly!

So Soothing

If felines are some of your best friends, why not treat yourself to Paperscapes' *The Cat: The Book That Turns Into A Work Of Art* from Amazon, **£20**. The book contains beautiful photography and descriptions of over 50 species of cat, with press-out pictures for you to display and enjoy.



Pals Reunited

By Melanie Cruickshank, internationally renowned animal communicator.

A few years ago, I was contacted by David and Mel Stevenson. They had lost two beloved dogs in quick succession, leaving a vast hole in their lives. Someone recommended they contact me.

Their dog Max had a special bond with David. He brought back memories to share with David, one of which was returning from a walk covered in fox muck! Towards the end of his life, Max explained that he was tired of vet visits for more tests as they struggled to get yet more blood from him.

It was a battle to keep going but as soon as he left the earth, he felt at peace. He was reunited with his lifelong friend Cassie; even now she continues to tease him, but they will always be playmates.

David was happy to share his experience. "I've been around dogs for 60 years and was a little cynical about being able to effectively communicate with live ones, let alone those that had passed. Cassie and Max were our entire world and their loss left us both mentally flattened. Melanie convinced me that animal communication was not only possible but

actually essential in our dealings with our fellow creatures. If only everyone could do this, or least accept its existence, the world would be a much better place."

