

CONTRA-INDICATIONS FOR ANIMAL MASSAGE

Disclaimers: Before massaging your animal please ask your Veterinarian whether there are any contra-indications for local or systemic massage to be applied to your animal companion. The following conditions are contra-indications for massage:

- Diabetes
- Pregnancy
- Colitis
- Diarrhea
- Fungal infections of the skin
- Hernias
- Acute arthritis
- Phlebitis
- Cardiovascular in general
- Senior dogs. (Special care and precautions apply here) Consult with your Veterinarian before massaging your senior canine companion.
- Open lesions. Stay away from direct contact with lesions, you can spread disease into any open lesion or wound.
- Infectious diseases. Consult with your Veterinarian if you are in doubt about whether your canine companion has an infectious disease.
- Broken bones that are not fully healed. Consult with your Veterinarian to find out when it is alright to start work over the healing bone.
- Temperature. If your animal companion has a temperature over 104 degrees consult with your Veterinarian.
- If your animal companion is in shock don't massage them. Consult with your Veterinarian immediately.
- Sprains. A sprain is trauma to ligaments that causes pain and disability depending on the degree of injury. In severe sprain, ligaments maybe completely torn. The symptoms of sprain are pain which may be accompanied by heat, discoloration and localized swelling in the affected area. If your animal friend is limping badly and has the preceding signs please consult with your Veterinarian immediately. Massage may be applied when the sprain has turned into a chronic condition and the Veterinarian has approved light massage and stretching to help the recovery process.
- Strains. A strain is trauma to the muscle or the musculotendinous unit from violent contraction or excessive forcible stretch. Do not massage or stretch the muscle when it is strained. Consult with your Veterinarian to find out whether your injured animal companion has a sprained ligament or strained muscle. Ask the Veterinarian when you might be able to start massage on the strained muscle.

- Cancer that is metastasizing or encapsulated in a tumor. Metastasizing cancer moves through the blood and lymphatic pathways. If a cancerous tumor is present and you massage over the tumor or close to it you can spread the cancer to the surrounding area. Light healing touch can be done for dogs that are in a terminal state and need a loving touch and kindness to ease the way. Anytime you feel a hard lump on your animal companion consult with your Veterinarian to make sure it is not a tumor. Lipomas which are fatty cysts are common in some breeds. A lipoma is generally soft and will move around in the tissue. If you are in doubt, consult with your Veterinarian.
- Neuropathy. Neuropathy is any disease of the nerves.
- Hip dysplasia. Stay away from stretching the hind limbs in this condition and only do light work in the hip area. The bone is degenerating in this condition and you can hurt the animal easily. Consult with your Veterinarian to get advice on how to help your animal companion through nutrition and acupuncture. Do not over exercise your animal companion if they have this condition.
- Pain medications. When the animal is on pain medications they can't give you feedback if you are hurting them.
- Plates, pins or bars that have been put in by a surgeon after an injury. Surgically limited range of motion. If the surgeon has limited the range of motion of a joint after an injury do not try to stretch the joint past the limit that has been placed on it.
- Extreme fatigue. If your animal is extremely fatigued there may be some undiagnosed degenerative disease. Take your animal companion to the Veterinarian to find out why your animal is so fatigued especially if this condition lasts more than a day.
- Medications. If your animal companion is taking medications consult with your Veterinarian to see if massage could cause an adverse effect.
- Post-operative precautions. Do not massage on or near a healing post-surgical scar or ligature until you get approval from the surgeon, only do light massage near the area until it is fully healed and you have permission from the surgeon to do deeper massage to break down the scar tissue.
- If your animal displays psychotic behavior and/or is normally aggressive have a Veterinary psychologist examine and treat your friend.
- If you have any questions or doubts about whether it is appropriate to massage your animal companion, please consult with your Veterinarian.

These conditions are the most common contraindications for massage. There is no way for us to cover all the contraindications for massage of your animal companion so we suggest that you consult with your Veterinarian to see if there is any existing condition that your animal companion has that would contraindicate massage for them.