

CHIROPRACTIC CARE...

Treating Aches & Pains for those with 2 and 4 legs

By Dr. Leah Garlan

Back pain, neck pain, or difficulty walking...People have been going to chiropractors for years for these common complaints. Do you ever think your pet may be suffering from the same conditions that you are?

Animals have spines too!

Chiropractic was founded by D.D. Palmer in 1895 and has become the most popular alternative treatment for people in the United States. Presently there are over 70,000 chiropractors worldwide. What most people don't know, is chiropractors have been treating animals since the early 1900's. When human patients began getting great results with chiropractic, many of them wondered if an adjustment would benefit their pet as well. The answer is yes...today animals can live a higher quality of life with chiropractic adjustments.

Chiropractic is the science, art and philosophy of correcting spinal misalignments thereby increasing range of motion, flexibility and overall health. Chiropractors locate subluxations (spinal misalignments) and correct them by an adjustment. An adjustment is applied using a specific gentle force that is most commonly performed by hand. In my experience, the majority of the animals I work with enjoy getting adjusted. I notice they relax when they sense you are there to help them and make them feel better.

The brain and nervous system controls every cell and tissue in your entire body. If you or your animal has a misalignment in their spine, the nerves can get irritated or pinched causing inflammation and pain. Chiropractic care reduces the effects of the subluxations and therefore promotes healing. Our bodies have an innate healing





ability and a desire to be in a state of homeostasis. When we are out of balance, the body will exhibit symptoms in many different forms.

The American Veterinary Chiropractic Association (AVCA) was founded in 1989 and is currently the only organization of its kind. Their mission is to train and certify chiropractors and veterinarians in animal chiropractic. The AVCA has certified over 800 doctors worldwide and those numbers are increasing. To find a current certified doctor in your area visit www.animalchiropractic.org. Another program offered to doctors of chiropractic and veterinarians is veterinary orthopedic manipulation (VOM). VOM exists in between veterinary medicine and chiropractic care. It has similarities to some of the chiropractic modalities and helps to reduce the effects of "subluxations." It uses a hand-held device that is similar to the one used in a popular human chiropractic technique called "Activator Methods".

HOW DO YOU KNOW YOUR DOG NEEDS AN ADJUSTMENT?

This is a question I get asked on a daily basis. Just as you know when your body doesn't feel quite right, you will sense when your animal doesn't feel good either. Typical signs you will see are difficulty walking, playing, jumping or overall attitude.

Common problems the practitioner may observe are:

- Performance problems
- Behavioral problem
- Agility dysfunction
- Hip Dysplasia-like syndromes

- Acute and non-acute lameness
- Progressive lameness
- IV disc disease
- Joint problems

CANINE'S STORY:

When I met Caine, he was a nine-year-old 120 lb red Doberman paralyzed in both hind legs. He had been evaluated by two veterinarians who offered a similar "bleak" prognosis due to his age, size and condition, therefore it was determined he be put down. The owners heard about how I had helped a paralyzed dog previously and were hoping chiropractic could help their dog too. After an initial examination, I adjusted caine for two days and by the second adjustment he appeared to be responding to stimulation in his legs. By the end of one week he was back on his feet and within a couple of weeks he was walking by himself! Caine's story is just one of the chiropractic success stories heard all around the country.

OTTO, TOBY, AND TESSA

I had just started working at Mill Pond Veterinary Clinic, when the vet referred me three Labradors with similar front leg problems. Within a couple of adjustments, they all improved and are now seen about every six to eight weeks for maintenance care. Tessa was also pictured in the Intelligencer Newspaper of Doylestown for a featured story on animal chiropractic.

COCO

Coco is a twelve-year-old dachshund who injured himself about

a year ago. After an unsuccessful back surgery, coco remains paralyzed and walks around with a wheelchair. He currently gets chiropractic and laser treatments on a weekly basis and does physical therapy twice a week. He has shown positive signs of improvement and our hopes are that he walks again soon.

Chiropractic adjustments are great for performance animals such as agility dogs and show dogs or the "senior" animal with arthritic and achy joints. Animals appear to respond faster than humans to chiropractic adjustments and most owners see results within a few visits. The frequency and duration of care will vary depending on the severity and age of the animal.

I advise owners consult with their veterinarian prior to making an appointment to confirm a diagnosis of the problem. Because your animal cannot talk, or tell you what hurts, x-rays or blood work will help diagnose the condition. My patient's get the best results when the chiropractor and veterinarian work together. Commonly, animals have sprain/strains or arthritic conditions that can benefit from chiropractic adjustments. If your animal is not responding to conventional veterinary medicine or you would like to try alternative medicine in conjunction, then chiropractic is an alternative option.



Dr. Leah Garlan is a licensed chiropractor specializing in animal chiropractic care. She is certified by the AVCA from Parker Chiropractic College in Dallas, TX and practices in Bucks County at the Silverdale Wellness Center.

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