

# Reiki Helps Animals

## Can Reiki reduce stress and anxiety in dogs?

Writing the dissertation for her BSc (Hons) in Applied Animal Behavioural science and Welfare, Elizabeth Powley conducted tests to determine whether Reiki therapy could be a viable treatment method of managing and reducing stress and anxieties in pet dogs by observing their behaviour, heart rate and blood pressure readings.

As a Jikiden Reiki practitioner, Elizabeth hypothesised that Reiki would measurably reduce the levels of stress observed in the dogs, shown by a change in behaviour, heart rate and blood pressure, over a three-day study. The results from dogs receiving Reiki would be compared to the results found in the control and placebo groups.

### Method

During this study three groups of five dogs were subjected to differential treatment: Reiki, Placebo and Control, in a typical living-room set up, to mimic an owner's house. Each of the three groups were given 10 minutes to get used to the room before a heart rate and blood pressure reading was taken. (See fig 1)



Figure 1 - Taking a HR/ BP reading

Another very dramatic case occurred with a pet guinea pig of mine named Miranda. This little creature developed a milky film over one of her eyes. Naturally, I took her to the vet. He explained that this was a cataract and while the situation could be handled in humans by simple surgery, it was impossible to operate on guinea pigs. He told me that there was about a 20% chance that the cataract would shrink a tiny bit around the edges, thus restoring a little bit of her eyesight. I was determined that all or most of her eyesight would come back.

I set up a treatment protocol to send Reiki distantly to Miranda. In addition, I gave her regular twice-weekly Reiki treatments for 10 minutes at a time. For a small animal like a guinea pig, 10 minutes is enough for a full treatment. I am happy to say that, eight months later, the cataract has shrunk to only 1/8 of its original size. Even the small portion remaining is not nearly as opaque as it was in the beginning.

I also had a beautiful grey cat named Henley whom I rescued from a very neglectful home. One day, he just walked away and disappeared. I did not see him again for two more days. When he came back, he was in a very bad state, looking extremely tired and thin. He would not eat the food that I set out for him. This continued for several more hours. Ordinarily he ate ravenously. It was obvious that he had picked up some sort of stomach ailment, possibly from some rotten food.

I set him on the ground in the front yard in the warm sun (it was spring) and started to administer Reiki. I was pleasantly surprised to hear him begin purring. He lay perfectly still and continued to purr, obviously enjoying the Reiki treatment. I could feel a constant gurgling in his stomach. After about 20 minutes, the gurgling stopped but I continued to treat him for an additional 10 minutes or so. If it can be said that a cat can look blissful, that is what I saw that day. At the end of the treatment he got up and went over to his food dish and started eating as if he were starving.

I believe that Reiki can be used to treat nearly any type of ailment experienced by people or animals. Every animal I have treated seems to love Reiki. It is truly a blessing that I am delighted to share with the animal friends who have so enriched my life. □

Valerie J Mann, Maryland USA.

Reiki can be great for pets and Valerie Mann has some anecdotal evidence.

Reiki teaches us that as long as our life-force energy is flowing unimpeded throughout our bodies, we will be in good health. The health of humans and animals alike is dependent upon the free flow of energy. I have heard it said that pets sometimes respond to the emotional state of their human companion and take on the characteristics of that person, including any symptoms of ill health. With Reiki we can respond to human and animal needs to a supportive and benevolent end.

A very good friend of mine who practises Reiki was dismayed to learn about a year ago that her yellow labrador-retriever had a two-inch tumor on his side. Her veterinarian suggested that she bring the dog back in about two months so that it could be determined whether the tumor was growing. He prescribed no other treatment. Since she incorporates Reiki into her daily life, it seemed only natural to treat her pet for his tumor. She gave him Reiki for about 30 minutes and thought nothing further of this until about a week later, when her husband was shocked to find that the tumor was completely gone.

Each group's treatments were observed according to their 15-minute assignment: The Control group dogs received nothing except observation, Reiki group received hands on Jikiden Reiki and finally the Placebo group were given placebo Reiki in the form of physical touch. A focal ethogram(\*) recorded the behaviour observations at every minute from 0-15 minutes throughout the assignments.



**Above:**  
Elizabeth  
giving a Reiki  
treatment

### Results

The results showed that there was a significant decrease in the overall frequency of stress behaviours displayed and a significant increase in the overall frequency of relaxation behaviours displayed – such as 'settle', 'relaxed facial muscles' and 'relaxed body muscles' – by the Reiki group compared to the Control and Placebo groups. However the heart rate and blood pressure results showed no significant change between the test groups.

### Discussion and Conclusion

The data collected from this study has neither proved nor disproved the original hypothesis, because although Reiki did have a measurable effect on the behaviour of the dogs, their heart rate and blood pressure remained unaffected.

The heart rate and blood pressure may have shown no change in this study due to a number of reasons: during the taking of the heart rate and blood pressure the dogs were provided with treats to make the experience nicer for them, Lane and Cooper (1994) suggest that food has been known to increase these factors, therefore with the food

increasing the heart rate and Reiki potentially decreasing it, this could explain why these results remained at a standstill. Another suggestion as to why these results may not have been affected is that blood pressure depends on a number of factors; Baldwin et al (2008) suggests that longer sessions of Reiki maybe needed to observe an effect on this measurement.

It could also be that Reiki is affecting the dogs physiologically in another way to induce these changes in behaviour; therefore further research is needed into the physiological effects of Reiki, such as testing cortisol levels and brain-wave activity.

The behavioural results showed that the dogs in the Reiki group showed the greatest decrease in stress and the greatest increase in relaxation compared to the other test groups. This could have been due to the effects of receiving the Reiki treatments but also could be due to the dogs naturally becoming used to and therefore less stressed by the environment. More investigation is needed to rule out the effects of desensitisation to the environment, compared to Reiki therapy.

To conclude the findings of this research: the results have shown that behaviourally Reiki therapy does have a significant effect on the levels of stress observed in pet dogs and that regular sessions of Reiki would continue to decrease the levels of stress, allowing your dog to be more relaxed. This suggests that Reiki therapy could be used as an effective complementary therapy for reducing and managing stress and anxieties in our pet dogs. As it is a non-invasive therapy it can be used alongside traditional veterinary or behavioural treatments or therapies. □

### References

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FOOTNOTE: \*an ethogram is a quantitative description of an animal's normal behaviour, constructed by watching animals, taking careful notes, and making sense of the observed behaviors.

# Reiki & social media

By Sally Hunter

Everyone says social media is where it's at for creating a buzz about your alternative health business. It's also good for forging international links between groups of likeminded people. The Reiki Association has a busy Facebook page and at Touch Magazine we frequently ask our readers for their ideas and contributions on our Facebook group.

But for the uninitiated or the downright confused, how does it all work?

Ian Lickorish, speaking at a recent CPD event hosted by Balens insurance, gave his audience some guidance on how to use the internet and social media to their advantage.

Speaking about blogs, websites and Facebook, he explained how social media can tell your potential clients about goods or services you offer, help you find out what those clients think, help you attract new clients and build stronger relationships with existing customers. As a first step, Ian advises practitioners to set up a website that is informative, clear and concise and easy to navigate. It is also a good idea to encourage a call to action, he says: encourage your readers to sign up to a mailing list or book an appointment.

There are numerous options for setting up a website yourself. Ian recommends a free Wordpress website as a good starting point, and there are sites such as *Wix.com* or *HealthHosts.com* that offer off-the-peg designs that you can customise. A key strategy, Ian suggests, is to think about how people will find your page via search engines and include the relevant key words (which potential customers search Google with) as frequently as is possible but without alienating your reader. Mentioning your local area will help nearby clients find you.

Once you have set up your website or blog, you can submit it to directories such as *Yell.com* or *HotFrog.co.uk* or to trade organisations and specialised directories. You can also write articles and submit them to



**Left:**  
Ian Lickorish

content providers, such as *EzineArticles.com* or *HubPages.com*. All of these things will help your website become more easily found on search engines.

Facebook is a great tool for communicating with clients and starting discussions. And every time somebody "likes" your post or joins in a debate, it exposes your page to their friends and increases your social media reach.

Twitter can be great for those with a pithy turn of phrase. All posts (known as tweets) have to be less than 140 characters. Many alternative therapists, particularly in America, use Twitter to great effect, offering links to their blogs with a catchy or thought-provoking quote. If you are a visual person, you'll love *Pinterest.com*, which allows you to collect images on different topic boards and share them with others.

It's a good idea to have a social media strategy, but, says Ian, it is equally important to channel your efforts and not to let it become a distraction. Be patient too, it can take about 18 months to reap rewards from your efforts on the internet in terms of client interest. The key is to use social media to share your love of what you do. □

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