

Creature Companion™

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A Pet Care Magazine

PET CARE

**CORONA VIRUS
AND PETS
A HELPING
GUIDE**

FELINE MATTER

**SUMMER DIET
TIPS FOR CATS**

INDUSTRY SPEAK

**FELINE CLUB
OF INDIA
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Publisher's Note

Dear Readers,

Pets hold a special place in many people's hearts and lives. For pets, we are their family and they have complete faith that we will take care of them. James Cromwell has rightly stated, "Pets are humanizing. They remind us we have an obligation and responsibility to preserve and nurture and care for all life." Today, people proudly call themselves as 'pet parents', so being responsible parents, it is their duty to protect their beloved pets. As the present scenario suggests, Coronavirus has had a terrible impact on entire mankind. The wrath of Covid-19 pandemic has been such that even we are not safe for our furry friends. Considering the current situation, we present a helping guide for all pet lovers, aiding them to protect their pets from being prey to this virus.

This is an era of digitalization. Various entities and communities are doing wonders on their respective online platforms bringing about awareness regarding proper pet keeping and attending to diverse pet issues. DogSpot.in and the Feline Club of India are amongst such entities who are playing their part well in furthering this cause. We are pleased to feature key personalities behind these entities, Mr. Rana Atheya and Mr. Saquib Salim Pathan, respectively. They share with us their vision and mission for the pet population in India.

As we are the 'Instagram Generation', clicking photos is not the same as it used to be a few years ago. Not only pet parents but their pets as well are part of this generation. Do meet our Pet of the Month 'Neo- the Super Shihtzuu' with a separate account of its own on Instagram. We are also introducing renowned pet photographer 'Aaditi Kulshreshtha' who shares her insight on the techniques on how to take Instagram worthy photos of pets.

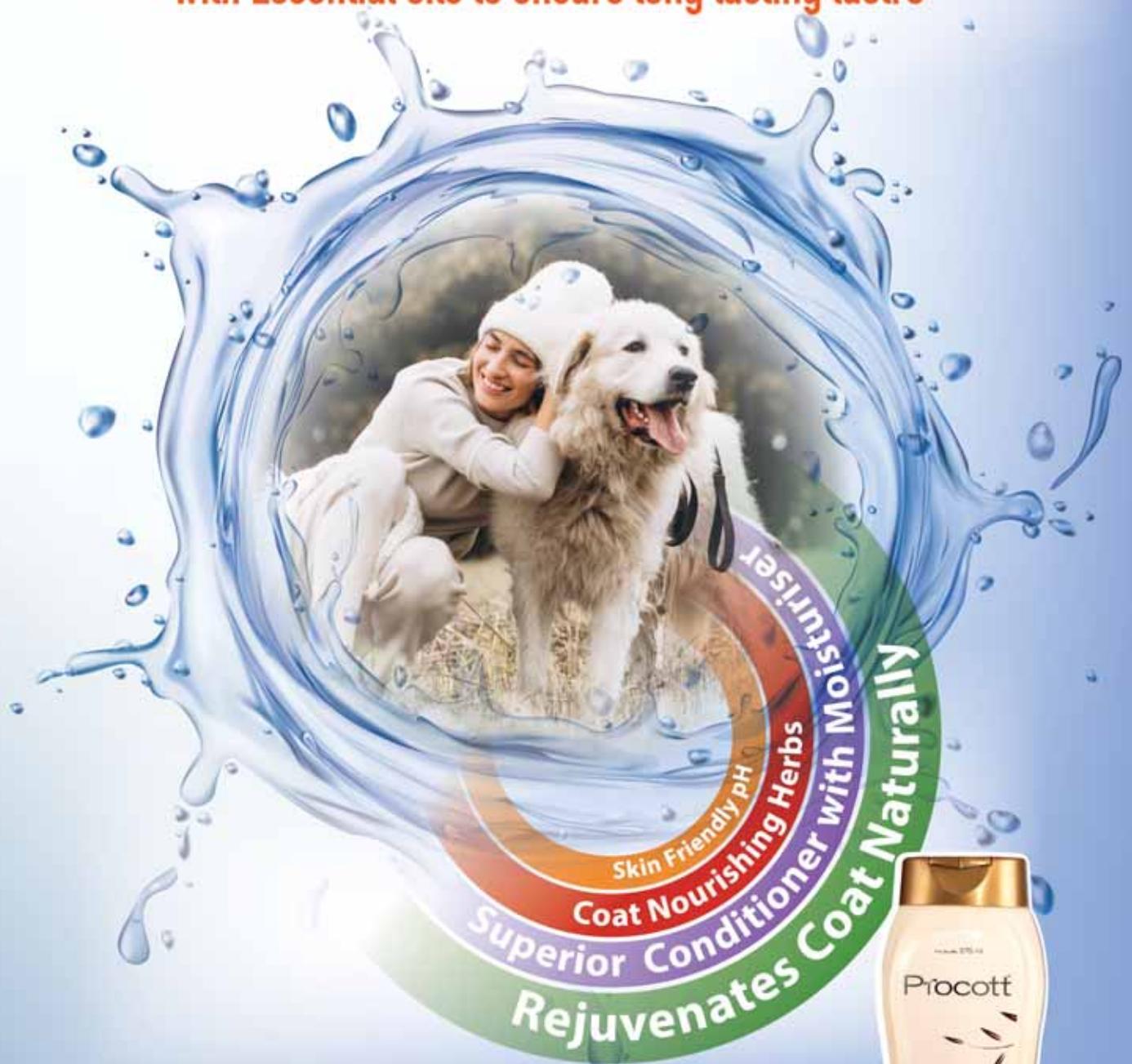
In the present edition, we have put together for your reading pleasure informative and appealing articles by renowned specialists on how to take care of our feline friends. We also introduce a new dog breed with all its characteristics to satisfy the curiosity of passionate dog lovers.

Happy reading!

Linda Brady Hawke



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TOGETHER, WE ARE THE HEALTH GUARDIANS OF OUR PETS

We all want to provide the very best health for ourselves, our families, and our pets. In these extraordinary circumstances, it is important to keep good health practices top of mind.

In an effort to help you, here is practical information to foster the health and well-being of your cats and dogs, now and always.



IMPORTANT TO KNOW

Human Coronaviruses belong to a family of viruses called Coronaviridae. Coronaviruses tend to be species specific.

This means it's ok to continue to love your pets as always. There is no evidence showing that pets can be a source of infection to other animals or humans. There is also no evidence that humans can infect their pets*.

ACTIONS TO TAKE

- i** Keep clean water available for your pets at all times.
- i** As you and your family spend more time at home, it is important that each pet receives the exercise it needs. Find new ways to play inside – feeding puzzles and indoor toys can help stimulate your pet's mind and exercise its body.
- i** Always practice good hygiene and proper hand washing when handling pets.
- i** Ensure that each pet receives the nutrition that its health needs (this is especially so for pets that have a special veterinary diet). Please ensure you have sufficient quantity on hand and contact your pet nutrition supplier with any questions about product availability.
- i** Make sure your dog is sufficiently walked outside, following government's guidelines. When walking your dog, practice 'social distancing' with other people and animals.
- i** Contact your veterinarian if you have any concerns for the health of your pets.
- i** If you need to be separated from your pet for a period of time, make plans for its ongoing safety and care.

HEALTHY AND HAPPY TOGETHER

Scientific evidence demonstrates that pets can provide tangible health benefits - physical and emotional – to their owners. Pets can help us cope during these times.**

Studies have also shown that animals can act as 'stress buffers'. They often ease the distress associated with anxiety-provoking experiences, and help decrease our perception of physical and emotional pain.**

* Source: World Organization for Animal Health (OIE), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Small Animal Veterinary Association (WSAVA)

** Source: Waltham Human Animal Interaction Playbook

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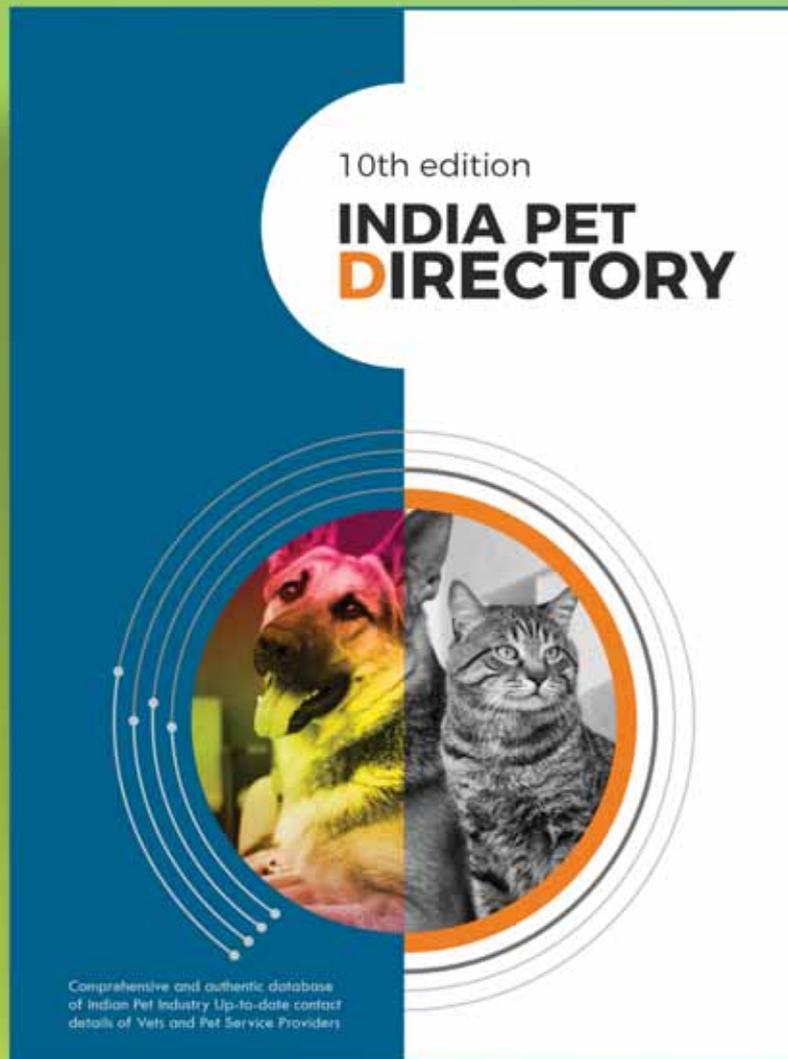
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New pet food e-commerce tool for Mexican vets and pet shops



Petmarkt, a local premium pet food distribution company, is launching an innovative and disruptive platform to support veterinarians and independent pet shops in Mexico. Such a tool would bring pet food suppliers closer to consumers.

The digitalization of the pet food market in the Mexican veterinary channel was long awaited, as veterinarians have been losing ground due to the tight pricing strategies of online retailers.

With this new online platform, veterinarians and pet food sellers are no longer required to stock pet food for reselling; now they can place orders through an application and send the products to their consumers directly using a cargo company.

Petmarkt works like a B2B-wholesale marketplace, where sellers have their virtual shop and more. Additionally, they can generate product catalogs to share with their customers through social networks or by email.

Innovation prize winner 'Bond Pet Food' launches first product to market

Boulder, Colorado's Bond Pet Foods has announced the launch of its flagship product, the Protein-Packed Dog Treat Bar. The company uses biotechnology to make animal-free and protein-rich pet food. Its first product to market offers 29% minimum protein content as compared to 12–20 % protein in traditional dog treats. The Bar is also peanut-free, for pet owners and pups with allergies.

Bond Pet Foods is the first clean-meat company producing meat protein in a way that doesn't require major technological breakthroughs to get to price parity with conventional meat.



China aims to reclassify dogs as pets

China has created new guidelines to reclassify dogs as pets, rather than livestock amidst this pandemic. The Humane Society called this a 'game-changer' in animal welfare. Although Shenzhen has officially banned the consumption of dogs, it remains a delicacy in various parts of China. In a notice, the Ministry of Agriculture stated that human affection for dogs has led them to become companion animals. Internationally, they are not regarded as livestock and that they would not be considered as livestock in China either.

The livestock definition basically means that animals can be bred for milk, fur, fiber, and medicine, or to be used in sports or military activity.

The draft of the guidelines that was published considers cattle, pigs, poultry, and camels as livestock. They have also added 13 species that would be exempted from wildlife trading including reindeer, alpaca, pheasants, ostriches, and foxes.

Free Tele-OPD for pets and strays in Gurugram



CGS Veterinary Hospital, based in DLF phase 3 in Gurugram, has started free Tele-OPD for pet lovers where they can describe their problems over the phone to the doctors who then prescribe basic medicines for them. The hospital has been responding to emergencies like caesarean delivery, fractures, and minor surgeries of pets. The staff stated that the lockdown has taught them that humans are not the only ones affected.

The hospital is also treating strays. Most recently, the doctors performed a caesarean delivery on a stray dog and saved a litter of three puppies that are healthy and are being taken care of by the hospital staff.

To prevent the stray pets from starvation, the doctors of CGS hospital are feeding fresh food twice a day to about 500 dogs and cats around the vicinity. The animals are being given a good mix of carbohydrates and proteins. The hospital has also provided various Animal NGOs with over 600 kg. of packaged food for feeding the strays in other parts of the city.

'Street Dog Adoption and Management Programme' in Shimla



The lockdown has left Shimla's stray dogs in lurch as the street food joints and dhabbas are shut. The majority of these animals have no source of food. However, the animal lovers in the town of Shimla decided to do their bit for as most street dogs are now being adopted.

The Municipal Corporation of Shimla has launched the 'Street Dog Adoption and Management Programme.' Under this programme anybody that adopts a street dog will receive incentives such as garbage collection fee and parking fee exemption.

Shimla's rural legislator Vikramaditya Singh, son of former chief minister Virbhadr Singh recently adopted two street dogs. Under the community adopting scheme, Shimla Beopar Mandal has adopted 70 dogs from areas around Mall Road and Lower Bazaar.

Currently, around 155 stray dogs have been adopted in this town.

Migrant Workers walk home to Nashik with their Pets

A Mumbai-based animal rescuer, Rajesh Natraj posted a picture on Facebook of migrant workers seen walking on the Bombay-Nashik Expressway accompanied by their pets – a duck and a puppy, to reach their home. He stated that this family turned down foster offers for their pets. They refused to abandon their pets even in such a challenging situation. While speaking to the Hindustan Times he said that they would never part from their pets, come what may. Some other migrants were also



seen carrying cats and rabbits. Even though the times are tough, they have acknowledged and honoured commitments towards their pets, which is extremely inspiring.

NEOO

THE SUPER SHIHTZUU

By **Monali Das**

Woof woof, woof woof! Okay stop Neoo, I am here to speak; no one will understand your gibberish. Hello, all my fellow companions! I am Monali and this is my hooman Neoo, the super shihtzu. Yes, you heard it right! I am saying so as I believe in the saying "You don't own a dog, you coexist! Dogs don't need you, you need them".

I was born a cynophile, I love spending time with dogs since I was a child, maybe it came to me from my mom. This love is not restricted to a specific breed or a dog, I love them all. When I was young, while coming back home from school, I used to feed and play with all the doggos and little puppies in the vicinity and just the sight of them playing, eating, and having good time would make me a happy clam. So before going home, I would stop by and play with the dogs around, which in turn ended up in me getting scolded for not coming home right away. But all was good as long as it was about playing with dogs.

Then there came a time when we shifted from that place to a new place. I missed everyone. It was hard to leave them all behind, but then it was not possible to take everyone with me as well. Days passed by, we grew older, and there were things to take care of. I would still feed and spend time with dogs whenever I saw any. A few months ago, my friend, roomie, gossip partner, giggle mate, and the only sister got married and all of the fun had gone with her. As we all say, every cloud has a silver lining and this was the time when my loving jiju gave me the ultimate super little cute baby lion, Neoo.

Neoo was a teensy-weensy ball of fur when he came to me, I was so happy and overwhelmed, tears of joy rolled down on the sight of this adorable little monster. He was so small that he could fit in my palms. Despite being small he had a huge personality. It didn't take



much time and effort for Neoo to become the most pampered kid of the house; he is the 'Rajasahab' here now. He's 'mummy ka ladla beta', everyone loves him so much. Neoo has turned my "No dogs allowed!" dad to "Where's my little baby monster", both of them adore each other so much and they are bestest of buddies now (happy for this!)

He has been with me since the day he came home to us. Not a single day has passed without us seeing each other. Neoo is such a darling and has personalities of almost 100 men. Sometimes, he's a grumpy old grandpa, the other moment he turns into a super dog flying around the house and all over us. He's such a cuddle baby, he sometimes eats like he's been hungry for ages and sometimes he throws tantrums like a



spoilt brat and turns into a picky eater.

Neoo is the reason that this Covid-19 lockdown and work from home has been so bearable for me. I need to wake up at any hour to do my work and this little companion of mine would just lean on me looking into the laptop screen. God knows what he understands, but if we keep going on like this, soon he'll start helping me to get my work done!

Neoo and I, we've been to many places. We love travelling and he has seen most places in Pune now. We are planning to extend our adventures to far distances after the lockdown. Neoo loves running through grass, in water streams, chasing birds, meeting new dog buddies, watching people, cars moving, and sometimes, he'll behave like a wise old retired man who's got his life sorted, has enjoyed, has lived his life to the fullest, and now is just calmly adoring things around. Neoo also has his own page on Instagram named 'neoo_the_supawtzuu' that we have recently started where we post all the adventures of this little fellow. He has also got a number of buddies whom he likes to meet often.

Neoo has now become a part of our family and has rooted so deeply in such a less time. He is now growing from a small little furball to a cute majestic lion. We will continue to explore places and make new buddies. One crucial thing this furbaby of mine has taught me is, 'to live in the moment'.

With this I'll stop and wish all the companions a wonderful and bright future ahead. Lots of Love from Neoo! Stay safe! Stay Healthy! Take care of one another!



PET CARE DURING CORONA SCARE

By **Dr. Karishma Gupte (M.V.Sc)**

It took me 2 hours to convince a pet owner, not to choose euthanasia for his pet. He was insisting on having his dog euthanized as he thought that his family will get coronavirus infection because of his pet.

It is quite disheartening to see that pets are being abandoned, beaten or euthanized by misinformed pet owners.

The intention of writing this article

is to assess the risks of having a pet during COVID-19 pandemic.

We know that the source of COVID-19 infection is the wild animal market of China. Also, few dogs and cats were tested positive for COVID-19. Hence, it is natural for people to get scared to be around animals (pets). However, I would like to point out that the pets that were tested positive for COVID-19 were positive only because their owners were tested positive for this pandemic disease. Thus,

these cases are of human-to-animal transmission and not the other way around. These pets recovered or were later tested negative for the virus suggesting that though pets may get infected by virus, they do not spread the infection to humans. The CDC, the World Health Organization, the World Organization for Animal Health and other public health bodies and experts agree on this: There's no evidence that animals transmit the virus to humans or have played a role in its spread.

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toxicity and death of the dog. First of all, pets don't transmit COVID-19 and secondly, not all herbs that suit humans, also suit dogs or cats. Please consult your veterinarian before administering herbal remedy to your pet.

Further, please remember that disinfecting of floors with pet-friendly disinfectants will ensure that pets do not get skin allergies.

Most importantly, transmission of COVID-19 is human to human. So, ensure that you are compassionate towards your pets and strays who are currently suffering due to lack of food availability and misinformation amongst people. Treat pets as you would treat other human family members – do not let pets interact with people or animals outside the household. If a person inside the household becomes sick, isolate that person from everyone else, including pets.

Stay safe, stay strong, and stay compassionate!

* Author is Director, Vetbiotics Animal Healthcare Pvt Ltd.

CAN PET FUR TRANSMIT THE VIRUS?

The AVMA's (American Veterinary Medical Association) statement was updated on March 15, 2020. The Association gave its assessment of 'pet fur' as a possible contact source. According to the statement:

'Smooth (non-porous) surfaces (e.g. countertops, doorknobs) transmit viruses better than porous materials (e.g. paper money, pet fur) because porous, especially fibrous, materials absorb and trap the pathogen (virus), making it harder to contract through simple touch. Nonetheless,

organizations do advise you to wash your hands before and after handling your companion pet.'

I came across a case wherein due to this ongoing 'Corona Scare', a pet owner washed paws of his pet with bleaching powder, resulting in severe allergic reaction and swelling of paws. Here, I would suggest that dipping of paws in Betadine solution is much simpler way of disinfecting paws. Ensure that you dry the paws thoroughly after doing the same.

Another pet owner gave some herbal decoction to his dog, resulting in



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CORONAVIRUS AND PETS A HELPING GUIDE

Compiled by **Priyanka Kaushal***

Recent news of animals getting infected with coronavirus, which causes 'Covid-19' in humans, has raised threatening questions in the minds of people who spend most of their time around animals i.e. pets and generally also, for people who come in contact with animals frequently. So, here we put together some basic facts and information about coronavirus and pets.

FACTS

• **No evidence suggesting animals transmit the virus to humans or play a role in its spread**

There is no evidence that animals transmit the virus to humans or in any way play a role in its spread. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the World Health Organization, the World Organization for Animal Health and other public health bodies and experts agree on this point.

Reasons:

i. Scientists emphasize that there is difference between infected and infectious. In a few cases, this virus doesn't seem to be transmittable i.e. it is not able

to complete its lifecycle in order to spread further. Those cases are known as 'dead-end hosts'. Hopefully, dogs are such dead-end hosts according to the scientists because the virus doesn't appear to reproduce well in them. However, cats are still being studied for this.

ii. AVMA (American Veterinary Medical Association) is of the view that smooth (non-porous) surfaces (e.g. countertops, doorknobs) transmit viruses better than porous materials (e.g. paper money, pet fur) because porous, especially fibrous,

materials absorb and trap the pathogen (virus), making it harder to contract through simple touch. Nonetheless, all the public health organizations do advise to wash hands before and after handling a companion pet.

• Susceptibility of different animals to this pandemic disease

Recent cases that have come to light and various studies that have been conducted, suggest that cats are more susceptible.

- i. A laboratory experiment was conducted in which scientists introduced the virus to animals. They found that cats and ferrets were highly susceptible in comparison to dogs. However, pigs, chickens, and ducks were not at all affected. In that study, cats showed signs of illness.
- ii. A preliminary study of blood samples from 102 stray, shelter, and pet cats in Wuhan, China, found that about 15 percent had been infected with the virus.

However, scientists are of the view that these cannot be considered as conclusive proofs as research is still going on about the susceptibility of cats to this virus.

• Recent cases suggest human-to-animal transmission

Pets around the globe, which have tested positive — two dogs and one cat in Hong Kong, a cat in Belgium, a Malayan tiger at the Bronx Zoo, and two pet cats in New York, in all of these cases, according to scientists, the animals were either infected by humans or were assumed to have been. The zoo cats were infected by

an employee who was asymptomatic (showing no symptoms). The pets got it from their owners. In other words, what we are seeing is human-to-animal transmission.

• Difference between 'Canine and Feline Coronavirus' and 'new Coronavirus' causing Covid-19 in humans.

The new coronavirus that causes COVID-19 is a member of the *Coronaviridae* family along with 40 other species of coronaviruses. The canine and feline coronaviruses also belong to the same family. Some people have confused these viruses with COVID-19 virus. While canine and feline coronaviruses lead to the development of specific diseases in dogs and cats, respectively, they cannot affect humans. So it is important to remember that one 'coronavirus' is not the same as other coronaviruses.

IT HAS BEEN OBSERVED IN STUDIES THAT VIRUS INFECTS MOSTLY SMOOTH SURFACES NOT THE FIBROUS ONES AS PET FUR. HOWEVER, ANIMAL FUR IS NOT AMONGST THE SURFACES THAT HAVE BEEN TESTED, SO GENERAL PRECAUTIONS NEED TO BE TAKEN.

• Research still in progress

- There has been a little research on animal cases, and much remains to be 'teased out'.
- Idexx Laboratories, a veterinary diagnostic company, had reviewed more than 5,000 samples from pet cats and dogs in 17 countries that were submitted by veterinarians for respiratory-related tests. It found zero cases of SARS-CoV-2 (scientific name for the coronavirus).
- There can be a possibility that just as is the case of asymptomatic humans, more animals may be infected than we know about as the virus doesn't seem to greatly sicken cats and dogs.

Therefore, even if there is lack of conclusive evidence, it doesn't mean that there is absence of risk. It just means that we haven't been able to sort it out. So we need to take precautions at all levels.

FAQS

• Can I walk my pet amidst this crisis?

You can take your pet for walks if all the following conditions are complied with:

- i. You comply with all the guidance/regulations of your local government regarding this point.
- ii. You have no symptoms of COVID-19.
- iii. You don't live with someone who is showing symptoms or has been diagnosed with this disease.
- iv. You don't have any underlying conditions that would make you especially vulnerable.
- v. You have not been instructed to self-isolate.

Points to remember while walking your pet:

- i. Keep your walks relatively short, generally within your own neighbourhood.
- ii. You should socially distance yourself, this means ensuring that you keep a safe distance from other people.
- iii. It is also advised that you should keep your pets on their lead where possible to minimize contact with other people/animals.

• Can pet fur carry the virus?

- It has been observed in studies that virus infects mostly smooth surfaces not the fibrous ones as pet fur. However, animal fur is not amongst the surfaces that have been tested, so general precautions need to be taken.
- Don't let COVID-19 infected person to come in contact with your pet, so as to avoid any droplet to be left on pet fur by that person's sneezing and coughing.

• How to deal with my pet when I am sick?

- It is recommended that all pet owners put in place plans so that

a friend or a family member can help in case a pet owner becomes ill. This may involve feeding your pet, taking them for a walk or caring for them in their own home until you fully recover.

- It is recommended that caretakers must take all precautions when they enter the home of an infected person, as the virus can survive on surfaces.
- If you do not have anyone to take care of your pet, it is recommended that you must contact your local animal welfare organization/shelter to ask for their advice.

• Should I get my pet tested for virus?

If your pet is showing signs of illness, you should consult your veterinarian and do as advised by him.

• Should my pet wear a face mask?

You can take every possible precaution as you can. However, masks made for pets may not be effective in preventing diseases transmitted by bodily fluid droplets. To protect your pet from respiratory diseases, you should get your pet vaccinated for Bordetella, parainfluenza, and canine influenza, which are the

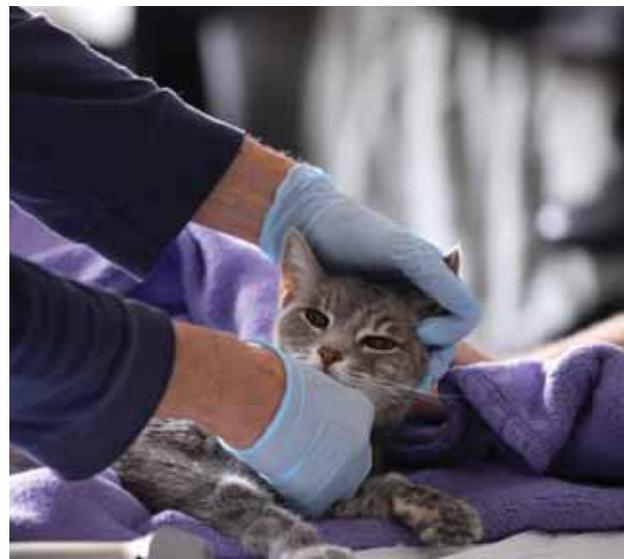
most common vaccine-preventable respiratory diseases in pets.

TIPS

• Taking care of pets

Pets are part of our family and deserve the same level of attention during an outbreak as any other family member. Following points should be kept in mind:

- i. Regular exercise- It is important for animals to get the daily exercise they need, so if you are unable to walk your pets due to the lockdown then you should indulge them in minor physical activities while playing with them.
- ii. Food- Feed your pets at regular intervals. Do not let their routine get disturbed due to the lockdown situation. If your pet is reluctant to be physically active and feels lazy, then keep the quantity of his food proportionate to his physical activity in order to avoid the issue of obesity.
- iii. Essentials- You should have in store the prescribed medication and supplies to provide adequate care to your pet.
- iv. Grooming- Bath your pets once a week or once in two weeks. Keep special care of their hygiene.



• Training tips

Like many of us have been adjusting to new routines amidst this lockdown, our pets are also likely to find this change difficult. Fortunately, this is an opportunity to spend time with your pets. You can even utilize this occasion to indulge them in mild training activities. Following are a few tips:

- i. Keep training period between 7-10 mins. Do not overdo it.
- ii. Keep training period short, simple, and fun.
- iii. Always end training sessions on a good note.
- iv. Pets can start exhibiting behavioural issues such as attention seeking or separation anxiety, so you should separate them from you for a while and let them enjoy their own company. This is important as after lockdown is over, pets will have to unlearn one thing and learn completely new thing and adjust to new environment.
- v. Pets usually pick up the moods of their owners or people around them, so stay happy and positive.

• How to keep pets engaged during lockdown?

Due to this current situation, pets will find their daily routines suddenly changed and their owners at home instead of being at work. While this can be an anxious time for everybody, it is important to see things positively and use this as an opportunity to do things, we might not usually have time for. Following are some ideas how you can keep your pets engaged:

- i. Search games- Hide some treats and toys all around the house. Let your dog hunt for them.

YOU NEED TO PUT SOME FOOD OR A TREAT IN AN ICE-CREAM CONTAINER, FILL IT WITH WATER AND FREEZE IT. YOUR PET WILL HAVE LOTS OF FUN WAITING FOR THE ICE TO MELT AND REVEALING THE DELICIOUS SURPRISE FOR HIM TO ENJOY.



- ii. Shell game- Place three plastic cups upside-down on the floor and hide a treat under one of the cups. Move the cups around each other while your dog watches the movements. Then see if he can find the cup with his reward.
- iii. Frozen treats- You need to put some food or a treat in an ice-cream container, fill it with water and freeze it. Your pet will have lots of fun waiting for the ice to melt and revealing the delicious surprise for him to enjoy.
- iv. Chewing- It is natural behaviour of dogs. Chewing toys such as 'kongs' can keep your dog busy for hours, as well as help in maintaining good dog dental hygiene.
- vi. Fishing games- Turn some string into a kind of fishing rod. Fix a shuttlecock at the end of it and then swing it through the room. Your cat will love chasing it.
- vi. Torch game- Use a torch to make a light spot dart around the room and let your pet indulge its passion in hunting it.
- vii. Obstacle courses- Build a small and safe obstacle course using a few small boxes of different

heights with treats on top of them, so that your pet is kept busy finding the treats.

- viii. Ball games- Throwing a bouncy ball against the wall will keep your pet busy trying to catch it.
- ix. Do-it-yourself toys for your pets- Various videos are available online to make DIY toys for your pets. You just need to use a little imagination considering the interests of your pet.

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https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=2860955910606733&id=100000770563365, Dr. Sangeeta Vengsarkar on CNN News18
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 indogspot (DogSpot.in)
 brindaspetbakery (Brinda's Pet Bakery)

* Editor- Creature Companion and an avid pet lover

DUTCH SHEPHERDS

A GLIMPSE INTO THE RARE AND VERSATILE BREED

By **Adnan Khan***

A beautiful and quite rare dog breed, recently introduced to Indian dog lovers, is one to watch out for, known as Dutch Shepherd. A close cousin to the Belgian Shepherd and the German Shepherd Dog (GSD), this breed is fast gaining popularity in its second phase of life. One of my personal favourite breeds, the Dutch Shepherd is one of the very few breeds that have faced extinction and then revival for many years, which is still an ongoing process today.

I, along with a few other patrons of this breed introduced Dutch Shepherds to India. I was responsible for bringing in 4 of the formative dogs from the KNPV-Dutch Police Dog Program to India. Today, along with a few of my friends, we have almost 10 founding dogs brought in to India. Out of them, we have less than 20 puppies as progeny and we are in the very formative years of developing and introducing this breed.

Some famous personalities like MS Dhoni and Preity Zinta are proud parents of the Dutch Shepherd and it is fast picking up interest from

many others. There is no doubt that it is a near complete breed with less recognition as it checks in all the points for me, be it health, looks, fitness, or temperament.

The Dutch Shepherd is currently the best breed preferred and selected by the International Police, Military, and Special forces alongside the Belgian Malinois. Hopefully, we will soon be deploying some of our Dutchies into the Indian defence forces and private security.

HISTORY

The 'Dutchie' has a vast history, which will raise any working dog lover's interest and curiosity. Fondly known as 'Herder' by the Dutch, the initial dogs very closely resembled their Belgian and German cousins. A standard fit herding companion, who was also helpful in cart-pulling and protecting the family and the flock.

It is a complete dog for the Dutch farmers. The breed standard and coat colour were differentiated and the



Photo by Adnan Khan

Dutch Shepherd was made into an 'official' breed in 1898.

However, this breed became extinct around the First World War and very few specimens of Dutchies were left in Holland. It has taken decades since then to bring back that kind of a dog over successive years of breeding. To diversify the gene pool, 'Herders' fans would not be shy to add GSD and Malinois blood into the breeding.

There are about 2000–2500 Dutch Shepherds registered under FCI, who would only accept pure breeding of the brindle herders to each other.

There are probably many more Dutchies being bred and raised by the KNPV program of the Dutch Police, who do accept Malinois into the mix as long as they get the right nerves, drive, and temperament.

The current trend, till this breed is big enough in numbers, is that in a Malinois x Dutch Shepherd litter, the brindle ones would be considered as Dutch and the solid coloured ones would fall under Malinois category. This is the mindset of only KNPV trainers and breeders, and the FCI 'purists' would have a contrasting opinion.

APPEARANCE

The Dutch Shepherd is a strong, agile, muscular and well balanced dog in terms of size and appearance. The structure is usually well squared. As per the breed standard, the body length:height ratio should be about 10:9.

They usually weigh between 25 and 32 kg; however, some massive specimens are present in KNPV due to the diversity of gene pool used from various breeds. I personally know of a few between 45 and 60 kg. These kinds of giant Dutchies are usually out of the standard but if they have the right drive and training, they are well sought after with the elite protection dog clients.

Their height ranges from 22 to 25 inches at the withers; however, some could be taller than that. Very few are on the smaller side of 22 inches in this breed.

The Dutch shepherd coat is bred into three variants of the dog:

Short Haired: The most common and presently most preferred of the three variants, this short-haired dog has a coat like the Malinois. They would not demand intensive or regular

grooming, thereby making them easy to handle in the military and defence forces.

Long Haired: The long-haired Dutchie is more prevalent with the herding dog handlers. This dog resembles the GSD or Belgian Tervuren when it comes to coat length. There are very few breeders of the long haired ones and sometimes a puppy will come out in a short haired litter as a recessive gene.

Wire Haired: It's a type that is slowly gaining attention and popularity. A raggedy looking breed, to some it resembles a wolf while others match it to the Beauceron. There are some wire-haired Dutchies working in professional security jobs these days.

TEMPERAMENT

One of my favourite reasons besides health that I consider Dutchies as my favourite breed is their commendable temperament. Dutch shepherd is an active, high energy dog with an undying stamina. Their athleticism allows them and their handler to attain remarkable feats and challenges, which most other dog breeds cannot physiologically match.



Photo by Adnan Khan

A BREED WITH ONE OF THE HIGHEST PREY DRIVES, WHICH MAKES IT AN AMAZING DOG FOR THE EXPERIENCED HANDLER.

Breed Profile

This dog has a balanced temperament, which is very clear with its on/off switch towards humans. They are extremely loyal to their family/pack and especially their primary handler or trainer.

They are very alert and intuitive, so one of the perfect breeds to guard and protect the home and family after their day of working. They do not tire out easily and will never be too tired to stand up for their family whenever required.

A breed with one of the highest prey drives, which makes it an amazing dog for the experienced handler. On the other hand, the novice handlers may find it too much to manage at times.

They are very sociable and malleable for their temperament and will easily adjust with other dogs and kids if raised from the start. They can adapt to any lifestyle or living situation as long as their needs are taken care of by the family adopting them.

HEALTH

Another favourite aspect I love about this breed is their health quality,

which could easily be counted in one of the top 10 breeds of the world. Along with my Malinois, the Dutchie is another breed which I rarely need to consider taking to the vet besides the routine visits or vaccinations.

This breed has very negligible occurrence of genetic diseases, which is almost as low as 2–8% likelihood of issues like allergies, myopathy etc. Hip and elbow dysplasia also has very low possibility of cropping up, which is likely to be passed on from the German Shepherd Dogs used to revive them in the past.

There is a point to consider based on my personal experience with working breeds. The health and lifestyle quality of the dog also highly depends on the right kind of training and exercise being provided to the dog as much as is needed, throughout their life.

Once these dogs are worked less, they start to become weak with a dull coat and develop higher chances of health issues.

So, a happy and fit dog is also a healthy dog.

GROOMING

The Dutch Shepherd Dog is a great dog to have for handlers who do not have enough time for regularly brushing or grooming the dog. It is a fairly 'easy to manage' breed, which would be fine even if we brush them twice or thrice a week only.

The longer or wire haired variants, however, would need more regular exercise.

The shorter haired Dutchies are much more preferred by defence and security forces due to their minimal exercise requirements.

A working Dutchie will have their nails filed through activity, but we must keep track of the nail length and condition so that their paws are in good shape. This is important to avoid injury to the dog as the nails being too long or ingrown can injure them.

EXERCISE

One of the most important factors of living with a high intensity working breed like the Dutch Shepherd is their exercise requirements. If not physically and mentally stimulated, these dogs can turn neurotic and develop severe behavioural issues. The Dutchies can also jump very high, which means it's easy for them to escape a kennel or a boundary wall in case they are bored.

During their initial years, it is important to take care of the developing bones and muscles, so over exercising must be avoided at all costs. It is advisable to have multiple short sessions and different forms of exercise instead of one long and tiring one as this can hamper the growth, motivation, and fitness of the dog.



Photo by Adnan Khan

Photo by Adnan Khan



The Dutchie is a great running and cycling companion, if trained to accompany peacefully. They can also be risky with runners or cyclists if their prey drive is not properly channelized from an early age.

They love to play tug and bite on things so that would be one of the best forms of exercise advisable for Dutchies. Young pups before and after the teething phase would love to play this game. It is suggested to get professional guidance before doing such activities. The tug and bite pillow games really help the dog once they later pursue the protection training. The confidence to bite and ability to take pressure comes from regular tug sessions in different environments.

An adult Dutch Shepherd requires a minimum of one hour exercise per day in different forms. Repeating the same exercise can become mundane for the dog. Most important thing to keep in mind is that the physical and mental health of the dog is dependent on the quality and consistency of exercise provided to the Dutchies by their handlers.

TRAINING

Here comes the most favourite aspect of this article, both for me and the breed. This dog is a 'trainer's breed' in its true sense. Anyone who is highly experienced and passionate about dogs and getting their true nature out of them will love to raise a Dutch Shepherd. The Dutch Shepherd is a multi-talented dog who is perfect for guarding, scent detection, tracking, herding, cart pulling, and many other advanced activities. Dog sports like agility, dock diving, bite sports etc. know the true value of the Dutch Shepherd.

My advice for getting in a puppy is to have already researched a reputed trainer with a good track record of training such breeds. Early socialization to sights, sounds, and smells is a huge benefit to raising a stable Dutchie. Crate training is highly recommended especially if the family has elders and children or other dogs in the house. They are not dangerous to any family member



Photo by Adnan Khan

or strangers, but leaving them open for the entire day means they have license to be highly notorious.

They do great as family pets if their exercise and training needs are met. It is one of the most preferred dogs for me, to guard family and personal property. Do remember, no dog is born with the training, just the right drive, and instincts. A suitable owner and trainer can get the best out of the dog but it can also be difficult to get results if left untrained.

In closing, I would like the readers to think for themselves. Are you the right owner for a Dutch Shepherd? Yes, they look great and have the highest work ethic. Their reputation and rarity compliments their complete qualities and health. But getting this dog as a status symbol or because of their reputation will be a mistake. Research long and well, and then choose wisely. The Dutch Shepherds do not come cheap and are an investment for 15 years. Do not get this dog if you do not have the time, energy or funds to manage them. A Dutchie puppy will cost somewhere between \$2000 and \$3000 but it is a very worthy investment. What we spend on the quality of the dog, we save on vet bills and excessive training or damage costs. Do set aside a decent budget for working equipment and early training as well as courses for yourself.

All the best with one of the most underrated breeds of dogs as they are!

Adnam Khan is the owner of K9 - a well reputed and sought after canine training school located within Delhi NCR.

He has been working with and training police and military dogs world wide since 2010.

He is amongst the pioneers who have introduced Police line Dutch Shepherds to India.



Cat Ringworm

Infectious skin disease in cats

By **Vet. Amir Ahmed Yousef***

Boha, an Egyptian Cat, was brought to my clinic one month ago. She was suffering from general hair loss with patches on her head devoid of hair. When I examined her, I found crusts and scales on these patches. Further, I used my Ultra-violet lamp in order to closely examine Boha's skin. After thorough examination, I found fluorescence of these patches; this is a rapid technique to diagnose a very common skin disease in cats, called as cat ringworm or dermatophytosis.

I told Ms. Nagwan (Boha's parent) that Boha is suffering from dermatophytosis and this is a zoonotic disease i.e. it can be transmitted from cats to humans. I started giving her Vacderm (intramuscular injection against dermatophytosis), 3 injections with a gap of 12 days each. Along with that I gave her a local cream 'Miconaz', to be applied twice daily for a span of 21 days. I advised Ms. Nagwan to let Boha sit in the sun daily especially after sunrise and before sunset for



AFTER FINISHING THE COURSE OF TREATMENT FOR ABOUT 45 DAYS, BOHA HAS CURED NOW AND HER HAIR HAVE GROWN AGAIN BEAUTIFULLY.

about half an hour as the sun plays vital role in treatment of this disease. Further, I prescribed her immulant syrup (immunostimulant drug) with the dosage of 2 ml daily for complete one month.

After finishing the course of treatment for about 45 days, Boha has cured now and her hair have grown again beautifully.

I shared this experience with you to let you know, how cat ringworm can be treated practically.

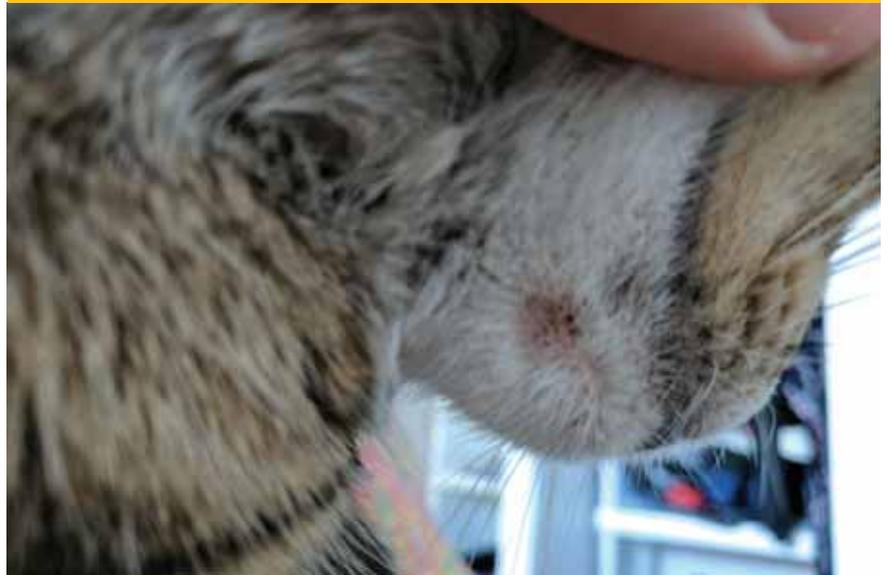
Following are a few important pointers regarding Cat Ringworm, which every cat parent must know:

1. Dermatophytosis affects mainly immunocompromised cats and cats under stress, such as kittens, pregnant cats, senior cats etc.
2. It appears as circumscribed patches devoid of hair with crusts on the skin of the cats especially on areas such as head, neck, legs etc.
3. It can easily spread among cats and humans by two ways: (i) direct contact with infected cats, and (ii) indirect contact with contaminated objects (cat toys, combs, towels etc.).
4. Dermatophytosis infection depends on many factors such as age, immunity, nutrition etc.
5. If you notice your cat suffering from heavy hair loss with or without patches on skin, you should visit a veterinarian to get her examined for this disease by one of the following means:
 - i. By using U.V. lamp on skin of cats; fluorescence will appear in case of dermatophytosis. This is considered as the most easy and rapid technique to diagnose this disease in cats.
 - ii. By direct microscopic examination after scrapping the skin with scalpel from the infected area.
 - iii. By fungal culture of hair and crusts from the infected areas. This is considered the most accurate method of diagnosis of this disease, but it takes very long to get the results, almost about 3 weeks.
6. Treatment of dermatophytosis takes around 30-45 days.
7. Recommendations for its treatment by the veterinarians may include the following things:
 - i. Give your cat good quality and quantity of food.
 - ii. Give your cat anti-internal and anti-external parasites periodically every 2-3 months.
 - iii. Exposure to the sun especially in the early morning and before the sunset is very important.
 - iv. Avoid bathing your cat repeatedly as continuous humidity on the skin aids in the spread of infection.
 - v. Avoid using the infected objects as combs, towels, bowls, and litter box.
 - vi. Give your cat immunostimulant drugs, omega 3&6, and multivitamins.
 - vii. Give your cat local and systematic antifungal drugs.
 - viii. Shaving of cat hair helps in better treatment.
 - ix. If you have cattery containing many cats, isolate the infected cat to avoid spread of infection.
 - x. Use strong disinfectant such as diluted bleach solution to clean your place, however, keep your cat away from such disinfectants.

All the cat parents do keep these pointers in mind. Best wishes for good health to you and your cats!

* The author is B. V. Sc. & M. V. Sc. Infectious diseases, Cairo University, Specialist in internal medicine & infectious diseases and can be reached at amir.vet.center@gmail.com

AVOID BATHING YOUR CAT REPEATEDLY AS CONTINUOUS HUMIDITY ON THE SKIN AIDS IN THE SPREAD OF INFECTION.



Summer Diet Tips for Cats



By **Fatema Siamwala***

We all feel the heat in summer due to which we tend to eat less and prefer drinking more liquid during this period. Similarly, our felines feel hot too leading to loss of appetite. And if this gets you worried, then don't. Just make sure that your cat is getting enough nutrition and is hydrated. The reason behind less food intake is because cats need less energy and calories to keep themselves warm during summer as compared to winter season.

Cats have a tendency to give us signs when they start to feel the summer heat so pay attention to it. You will

notice your cat is now taking longer naps, may not be eating as much that results in weight loss, resting in cooler place (for e.g., on the floor or in shade). It is considered to be normal if you do notice these signs in your cat during summer. However, as a cat parent you must make certain changes in your cat's diet so that their nutritional requirement is met.

A well balanced diet is the most important element for maintaining your cat's good health. Every cat needs a certain amount of energy to keep up to their daily activities and this energy comes from their diet which consists of high amount of

WHEN FEEDING DRY FOOD, IT IS IMPORTANT TO CHECK IF IT IS STILL FRESH AND NOT STALE BECAUSE YOUR CAT IS MORE LIKELY TO REFUSE EATING STALE FOOD. SO STORE THEIR FOOD IN COOL AND DRY PLACE.



PLACE A SEPARATE BOWL FILLED WITH ICE CUBES. MY CATS THOROUGHLY ENJOY LICKING ICE CUBES DURING SUMMER: I USUALLY PLACE THE ICE CUBE FILLED BOWL AFTER THEIR LONG NAPS.

protein, moderate amount of fat, and a minimal amount of carbohydrates.

Since cats lose appetite in summer, you need to ensure whatever amount of food they eat, it still has all the nutrition they require i.e. proteins, vitamins, minerals, fats, amino acids, and carbohydrates. Most of the reputed commercial cat food companies incorporate the required nutrition in their packaged food (read the key ingredients before buying). When feeding dry food, it is important to check if it is still fresh and not stale because your cat is more likely to refuse eating stale food. So store their food in cool and dry place.

All cat parents are aware that it is essential to keep their cat hydrated at

all times especially during summer. However, we do face the challenge when cats ignore their water bowls. To overcome this situation, there are certain things you can follow to make your cat's hydration level a little better. Try these remedies:

- Consider feeding your cat plenty of wet food as it contains higher protein, nutrition, and moisture. Wet food is highly palatable and appetizing for cats and they seem to enjoy eating it too. There is a wide variety of flavours available in the market such as Chicken, Salmon, Tuna, Shrimp, and so on, which infuse a close resemblance to your cat's natural eating instinct 'JUICY MEAT'. This way, you'll not have to worry about their nutrition and hydration.

- Ensure your cat always has access to fresh and clean water. Place their water bowls at different spots throughout your house; avoid keeping it near their food bowl and their litter box.

- Place a separate bowl filled with ice cubes. My cats thoroughly enjoy licking ice cubes during summer: I usually place the ice cube filled bowl after their long naps. This way I know they are keeping themselves hydrated. You could give it a try too!

Remember to keep your cat hydrated during summer

There may be instances when your cat may refuse to eat this season, do not panic and never force them to eat because they will only eat when they want to. Cats know best when it comes to their body requirement, all you can do is place wet food in their bowl, a little bit of dry food, and plenty of fresh water. If you notice any other signs along with this, then go with your instinct and take them to your vet for a check-up.



* The author is Fatema Siamwala, popularly known as 'Fats & Cats' amongst her friends

For over 30 years, she has had cats as pets (Pedigree and Non-Pedigree) and so she likes sharing her knowledge and experience about cats with all the cat parents.

Rana Atheya

DogSpot.in

DogSpot.in is India's most visited dog portal and e-store. Today, it is the largest pet community site in the Asia-Pacific region and has registered organic growth year on year.

Creature Companion Magazine got an opportunity to touch base with Mr. Rana Atheya, CEO and founder of DogSpot.in. A product and customer management professional, Mr. Atheya founded DogSpot.in with an aim to ease pet parenting woes and bring knowledge and insight to the larger community. In 2016, the company received funding from Ratan Tata amongst others and has since then grown to further strengths, adding new products to their line-up and furthering their goal of helping people to be better pet parents and caregivers. He shared his strategy and vision with us regarding pet population in the society.



WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO START WITH DOGSPOT.IN, WHICH IS NOW INDIA'S LARGEST ONLINE PET COMMUNITY?

DogSpot.in came into being as an idea to help people raise their pets. I have been an avid dog lover and a reader all my life. While working at my corporate job, I was frequently asked to advise on pet keeping. I identified the knowledge gap and thought it would be a great idea to start putting this information in the public domain and involve other pet owners to share their experiences as well. DogSpot.in was started as an online community that told people the how-tos and gotchas of raising pets in the Indian context.

HOW DID YOU MANAGE TO BUILD THIS PET-CARE COMMUNITY? WHAT STRATEGY DID YOU FOLLOW TO KEEP YOUR AUDIENCE ENGAGED?

Our engagement strategy has had to evolve over the years because the community has evolved. It is mostly data and analytics driven, but also greatly instinctual. We started by providing information and enabling pet owners to share their experiences. We also started clicking pictures, creating awareness about pet events. This gave us a lot of visibility and users on the website. We launched e-commerce for pet supplies and today, we are more focussed on creating videos and using social media platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube. There is more live and instant interaction on these platforms which is what the audience wants too.

WHAT IS THE DRIVING FORCE THAT KEEPS YOU GOING, WHILE SPREADING

DURING THE LOCKDOWN, WE HAVE TEAMED UP WITH SOME OF THE TOP TRAINERS, VETERINARIANS, AND OTHER PET ENTHUSIASTS TO BRING MORE KNOWLEDGE AND INTERACTION TO THE COMMUNITY AND HELP PET PARENTS ENGAGE THEIR PETS.

AWARENESS ABOUT HEALTHY PETKEEPING?

I love animals in general. It is a very niche space we operate in, so there is that. It is constantly evolving and changing, and is therefore very challenging. The biggest driving force though is when someone gets in touch with us regarding how we helped them. It might sound altruistic, but I love the idea that we can help people raise better pets, and break the taboos and myths around keeping a pet in Indian homes. There are so many people actively devoted to the cause; it feels great to just be able to create that synergy.

HOW DID YOU DEVELOP SUCH IMMENSE AFFINITY FOR PETS?

My father is a Professor of Veterinary Sciences, and I was raised in a university town. I guess it was growing up with nature and a lot of animals around the house that made me so fond of them. Also, when you observe animals, you realize that they are very singular in their needs and extremely unconditional. It is a unique quality that is very endearing.

WHAT INITIATIVES ARE YOU TAKING TO GET PET PARENTS THROUGH THIS LOCKDOWN AMIDST COVID-19 CRISIS?

One of the first queries that we received was regarding pet supplies and the lack of availability of basics like pet food etc. during this time. The first goal therefore was to make sure that we are able to get operational in that space. We wanted to ensure

that pet parents have access to food and other essential resources for their pets. DogSpot.in store has been one of the few that are active and delivering online during this crisis. The second initiative that we have taken on is spreading awareness and engaging the community. We have done multiple IG and YouTube videos even before the lock down started to create awareness on how pets do not cause corona. During the lockdown, we have teamed up with some of the top trainers, veterinarians, and other pet enthusiasts to bring more knowledge and interaction to the community and help pet parents engage their pets.

WHAT IS YOUR VISION FOR ANIMALS/PETS IN SOCIETY?

I once read a quote "Animals are a window to your soul and a doorway to your spiritual destiny. If you let them into your life and allow them to teach you, you will be better for it." In terms of society, I hope we can learn to co-exist better. As humanity, we need more compassion not just towards man-kind but all kinds. I truly wish, someday we can strike a balance and raise our bars to respect life of every being. The virus has taught us how fragile our ecosystem is. We need more harmony, more acceptance, and brave strides in that direction.

As an industry, the pet industry is resilient to recession. People are getting a chance to spend more time with their pets. This is going to increase the companionship and indulgence of pet owners with their pets.

Saquib Salim Pathan

Feline Club of India

The Feline Club of India is the first and the 'only' cat registry of India. It is working for the betterment of cats in the country through series of conventions, registration drives, and cat shows.

Creature Companion Magazine had an opportunity to have a conversation with Mr. Saquib Salim Pathan, key person behind the Feline Club of India. He took an initiative in the form of this club to bring together like minded people and cat lovers in order to educate them and make them aware about cat issues in India. He shared with us a few excerpts from his journey of bringing about this change and his mission for cat population in India.



WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO START WITH THE 'FELINE CLUB OF INDIA'? WHY YOU SPECIFICALLY CHOSE FELINES AMONGST ALL OTHER PETS?

I have been a cat lover all my life; I have had multiple cats at my home for years. But apart from just having a cat, I was very keen on knowing the best practices in cat's upkeep. So I tried searching for it and found that we in India lack tremendously in knowledge about cats grooming, show culture, and breed standards as compared to dogs, where the show culture is much developed and the breeding practices have improved due to it. Sadly, this was not the case with cats. We lack behind western countries and even some Asian countries when it comes to general

awareness, breeding practices/standard, knowledge among cat parents, breeders, and even veterinary practitioners.

To fill this knowledge gap, we thought of bringing together like minded or rather cat crazy people where we can educate them, share each other's experiences, and ultimately improve the cat hobby in India. We analysed the problems faced by the cat parents, what India lack as compared to other countries, and decided to tackle them with our own ways and that is how Feline Club of India was started.

We started with the first requirement i.e. a central registry of cats, where each cat will be registered. We plan to register up to 7 generations.

FCI has conducted more than 80 Conventions where experts speak on various topics related to felines, this has greatly helped spread knowledge across all stakeholders. This year, we have also put up 20 championship Cat show that has inculcated cat fancy and show culture in India.

TELL US SOMETHING ABOUT 'INDIMAU', A BREED NAMED BY FCI.

Indians have long had a fascination with cats; they too served a purpose, like dogs, of keeping the mice at bay! Even today lakhs of Indian cats have a loving home but they do not have the recognition, which they deserve. People in general do not value them as much as exotic breeds, but we should remind ourselves that a lot

FCI IS STRIVING TO GIVE OUR INDIAN CAT ITS DUE RECOGNITION, HENCE GIVEN THE NAME 'INDIMAU'. WE ARE DOING ANATOMICAL AND MORPHOLOGICAL STUDY WITH RESEARCH INSTITUTES AND WILL SOON GET IT REGISTERED AS A BREED INTERNATIONALLY.

of the exotic breeds loved around the world are local breeds of some or the other region like the Norwegian Forest cat, Siberian breed, Main Coon breed etc. FCI is striving to give our Indian cat its due recognition, hence given the name INDIMAU. We are doing anatomical and morphological study with research institutes and will soon get it registered as a breed internationally.

We have encouraged their registration with FCI Registry and have seen a change in people's perception.

Many NGOs are happy with increased adoption of Indimau cats and kittens as they are having Registration certificate now, which gives a sense of pride to the parents.

HOW ARE YOU USING TECHNOLOGY FOR SOLVING VARIOUS ISSUES OF CAT POPULATION IN INDIA?

FCI is the only organization globally, which follows 100 percent 'microchipping' for registration of cats. Each microchip comes with unique ID number. Now, this activity of registration is vital for many reasons, if we have the record of a cat with details like breed, father - mother, DOB, colour pattern etc, we can solve numerous problems:

- Prevent in-breeding i.e. in the same family, which leads to genetic problems in future generations
- Improve breed specific standards
- Access to information about the lineage/pedigree of a kitten to new parents

- Medical study and research of diseases in cats

The possibilities of putting this data to good use are immense.

Due to our unique requirement and for optimum utilization of this data, we had to develop our own software; the software development took almost a year and is still getting improvement updates time and again. The software has capability to track 7 generations of any blood line. It also keeps track of the FCI Championship Show marks tally for each cat to determine Champion cat of the year, Best breed, and other categories of awards.

WE HAVE GROWN FROM A SMALL GROUP TO THOUSANDS OF CAT PARENTS. CAT PARENTS WHO HAVE BECOME BETTER INFORMED WITH FCI ARE ENGAGING WITH EVEN MORE ENTHUSIASM WITH OUR EVERY ACTIVITY AND SHOW.



The future potential of the software also includes DNA analysis, where once we have the DNA samples of the cat in our record, we can determine the sire in case of Multi Sire Litter or Dual Sire Litter by the same mother. The DNA samples of the Champion Cats can also be recorded.

The data and software can be used to eliminate the errors during breeding and also improve breeds. With the help of our scientific panel and its ties with PETBIOTECH and IISc Bangalore, we are working on genetic finger printing, breeding mutations, DNA testing, and colour coat genetics. Cats with genetical disorder like congenital disorder, elbow dysplasia, hip dysplasia etc. will not breed as it passes on in generations down the line.

Neutered cat for Show – Everyone knows and talks about health benefits of Neutering a cat, FCI has been keen on promoting Neutering of cats in its Conventions, Webinars, Cat shows. We altogether have a different category for Neutered cats in our cat shows, which is called as Premiership Division (on similar lines, for non-neutered cats, it is called as 'Championship Division').

FCI is also working with government agencies to develop cat-centric policies for its welfare. FCI recently worked with Indore Municipal Corporation for generating its first-ever database of cat parents in the city.

WHAT IS THE DRIVING FORCE THAT KEEPS YOU GOING, WHILE SPREADING AWARENESS ABOUT THE CAT ISSUES AND CHANGING THE FACE OF INDIAN CAT FANCY?



The kind of support and love FCI has received in this short time is overwhelming. We have grown from a small group to thousands of cat parents. Cat parents who have become better informed with FCI are engaging with even more enthusiasm with our every activity and show. The difference we are able to bring in cat fancy and grooming is acknowledged by the judges of our shows who have witnessed firsthand the difference in quality of groomed cats from our 1st to the 10th show.

Cat was not a prominent segment for vets who usually had a few cats visiting the clinic in a week as compared to dogs. Our efforts to educate cat parents about various health issues and hygiene have also resulted in vets getting an increased number of cats at their clinics and even the vets benefitting from the Feline conventions to abreast themselves of new treatments.

The pet industry, dominated by dog products, also got a platform in the form of FCI, where they can reach the cat parents directly, which was missing previously. The FCI events have given an opportunity to companies to directly connect with cat parents to promote their products and to get feedback. The support from

the industry has been instrumental in supporting us in our efforts for raising the cat hobby in India.

AS IN ABROAD THERE HAVE BEEN CASES, WHICH SUGGEST THAT CATS ARE SUSCEPTIBLE TO CORONAVIRUS INFECTION FROM THEIR OWNERS, WHAT INITIATIVES IS FCI TAKING TO EDUCATE CAT OWNERS AMIDST THIS COVID-19 CRISIS?

There have been speculations and lot of misinformation around this topic, which is understood given the unprecedented situation faced



by the world presently. But the cases reported have been of human transmission of COVID-19 to animals and no case showing the other way round yet. As there is no clear evidence of COVID-19 spreading from cats to humans we need not panic unnecessarily, but need to take precautions for our cats as we take for ourselves.

WHAT IS YOUR VISION FOR INDIAN CAT POPULATION AND WHAT ROLE WILL FCI PLAY IN IT?

VISION AND MISSION

- To bring the scattered Indian cat community together on a common platform.
- Promoting the welfare of all cats, both pedigree and feral, through progressive actions that range from legislative advocacy to the support of feline research and providing breeder assistance.
- Promoting the interests of breeders and exhibitors of pedigreed cats.
- To educate cat owners on how to help their cats live long, healthy, and happy lives by spreading information on cat health issues, how to spot, prevent, and cure them.
- To encourage our members to take an active role in the community and encourage responsible pet keeping by holding awareness campaigns for public education.
- To prevent inline breeding
- To improve the Indian breeds' standards



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SIAMESE ALGAE EATERS

By **Rajiv Sharma***



Siamese Algae Eaters (SAEs) or *Crossocheilus oblongus* are freshwater fishes. They belong to Cyprinidae family. SAEs are one of the best algae eaters. They are one of the most active fishes in consuming algae. The whole time, they are busy grazing algae over rocks, woods, glass surface, filter pipes, and other decorations. They can be referred to as freshwater goats due to their algae grazing habits.

APPEARANCE

Siamese Algae Eaters have a long narrow cylindrical body. Upper side of the body has some paly brown and golden tint. They have black strips from mouth to tail. These strips are covered by thick golden strips.

SIAMESE ALGAE EATERS CAN BE KEPT IN 100 LITRE AQUARIUM WITH LOTS OF PLANTS AND HIDING PLACES. ARTIFICIAL CAVES CAN BE MADE TO FORM SUCH HIDING PLACES FOR THEM.

Identifying the gender of Siamese Algae Eater is difficult. They are almost identical, but females are large in size in comparison to males. This is the only visible difference between males and females. Their gender can be identified at the age of 3-4 years. It is very difficult to identify their gender in early stages of life.

FEEDING HABITS AND BEHAVIOUR

Siamese Algae Eaters are omnivores and easily accept flake foods and pellet foods in aquarium. Although their main diet should be vegetable based, they like planted aquariums with lots of plants. In absence of algae and food, they can also nibble delicate plant leaves and mosses.

So, provide them healthy food in the absence of algae. Their body shape allows them to enter in most of the aquarium parts in search of algae.

They are peaceful and social creatures. They search the spots of algae in groups and graze together without any fight for food. They sit on the spot and then graze the algae. Most of the times, they stay near the bottom surface of decorations. Any sharp decorations or rocks may damage their barbels.

WATER QUALITY

Siamese Algae Eaters belong to fast moving streams and rivers of South Asia. Water of these rivers is acidic with high content of oxygen. These rivers have lots of rocks, gravels, and tree logs in the bottom, which provide them algae.

TANK SETUP

Siamese Algae Eaters can be kept in 100 litre aquarium with lots of plants and hiding places. Artificial caves can be made to form such hiding places for them. Soil or substrate should be fine and smooth. Sharp decorations and items should be kept away from SAE setups. They like moderate lighting. The ideal range of pH is 6.5 to 7.5. Temperature ranging 23 degree Celsius to 27 degree Celsius is ideal. Water flow should be moderate to high as per their natural habitat. Nowadays SAEs in the hobby are from fish farms. They are able to adopt a variety of water conditions. They like acidic and oxygenated water. Adding some driftwoods in aquarium is helpful for making water acidic. Water flow also plays an important role in cleaning and oxygenating water.

They are peaceful by nature so don't keep them with aggressive and very

IT IS ADVISABLE, NOT TO KEEP SIAMESE ALGAE EATERS WITH CICHLIDS. IT IS BEST TO KEEP THEM ONLY WITH PEACEFUL FISHES.



large-sized fishes. SAEs are known to nipping the fins of long-finned fishes such as betta fish or gold fish. Always keep in mind before housing them with these fishes. Bottom dweller fishes like Rainbow Sharks and Red tail sharks are terrestrial. Keeping them with these sharks is not advisable. Most of the cichlids are territorial fishes. They can harass any intruders in their territory. It is advisable, not to keep Siamese Algae Eaters with Cichlids. It is best to keep them only with peaceful fishes. Any large-sized fish can harass them till death. The best tank mates for SAEs are small peaceful fishes like tetras, danios, rasboras etc.

TAKING CARE OF SIAMESE ALGAE EATERS

Keeping SAEs is not a difficult task. They are easy to keep and maintain. They don't have any specific requirements. Some important points to remember while keeping SAEs are as following:

a. Water should be clean with

moderate to high flow. Clean filter time to time. They can live happily in a wide range of water parameters. Keep them in toxin free water. The parasite of disease White Spot (*Ichthyophthirius multifiliis*) can easily infect them.

- b. Keep them with smooth substrate. Sharp substrate and decorative materials can lead to cuts and scars. These scars and cuts can lead to many types of infections.
- c. Provide them lots of hiding places. Artificial caves or coconut shells can be used to form such hiding places for them.
- d. Never keep them with territorial and aggressive fishes.
- e. Introduce SAEs in a properly cycled aquarium. Check water parameters carefully prior to releasing them.

Happy Fishkeeping!

The author is founder of online aquarium forum www.aquapetz.com, an aquarium hobbyist and planted aquarium designer. email id: rsrajivji@gmail.com, Ph. 9958075234

HOW TO TAKE INSTAGRAM WORTHY PICTURES OF YOUR PET

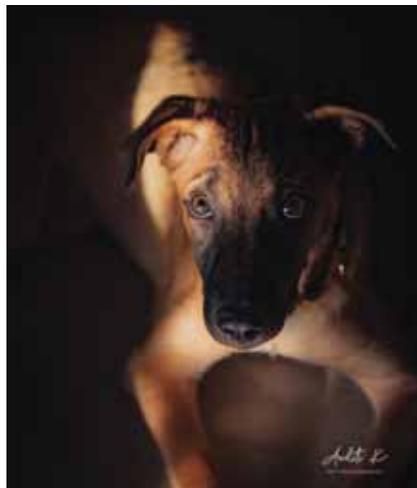
By **Aaditi Kulshreshtha***

It's 2020 and most pets today, have their own Instagram handles! Some are even more famous than their humans! However, since pets and children are often the hardest subjects to photograph, how can we do justice to the photographs we take of our furry Instagram stars?

Here are some simple tips and tricks I've learnt from photographing pets for over 20 years that will help you take better photos.

STAGE 01 - LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION!

To begin with, here are the first 3 key elements that you need to get right with pet photography.



1. LIGHTS

Think of photography as an art of painting with light. Therefore, I cannot stress on how important good light is for photography in general, but even more so with pets.

Use Natural Light: Sunlight is beautiful. Photograph your pets outside or near a window if you are inside. For dark coloured pets, to be able to see them clearly, always shoot with the sun behind you and on a bit of an angle. Morning and evening light is the best - this time of the day is also cooler than the afternoons, so your pet will be more comfortable as well.

Don't Use Flash. If you don't know how to get the best results with a flash, avoid it altogether. If you're photographing using your phone camera - often the pet's eyes look strange with a flash, therefore it's best to photograph pets in areas with naturally sufficient light so that the flash isn't needed in the first place.

It's important to have a lot of light when you are trying to photograph pets in action - otherwise you'll get blurry photographs. Depending on the camera you are using, you might be able to solve this with your camera settings



2. CAMERA

When it comes to photographing pets - your equipment can affect your ability to get certain kind of photographs.

Using your Phone Camera: If you are using your phone camera - with the standard camera app and its basic settings, you will struggle with capturing fast moving pets when light is less. However, in situations with ample light and if your pet isn't moving much, you'll have no problem. Therefore, consider using a camera app for your phone that allows you to change your camera settings for capturing your pets in action. 'Lightroom' by Adobe is one such app.

Using a DSLR: If you have the option of photographing your pets with a Digital SLR, use faster shutter speeds and burst mode for photographing pets in action. For pets that are not moving much, try a wide-open

aperture to get beautiful bokeh and softer backgrounds.

Focus on the Eyes. This is a rule that can be broken of course, but often some of the best photographs of pets are when the eyes are in focus.



3. ACTION

Technicals aside, this is the fun part! Capture your pet in unique poses, doing what they love doing. Personally, I love quirky photos of pets - upside down, tongue out, 'giving paw' - the quirkiest the action, the better it is!

Treat them Well (pun intended). Reward your pet with treats, toys, and positive reinforcements when you are photographing them so that this is a fun exercise for them. Don't force them to do what you want them to. At the end of the day, remember they are animals and not models - so embrace their natural streak and capture them doing what they want to. Some pets are very food-motivated, so you can use food to steer their attention towards the camera and then reward them with treats as a thank you for doing what you wanted them to do.

Take Lots of Photos. You'll never regret taking extra photos of pets in action. Sure, it'll cost you some extra time to shortlist the photos, but the more, the merrier to choose from.

Relax and Have Fun. Don't forget to enjoy the process. If you're stressed then your pet will get stressed too. If your pet, for example, is determined to lie down upside down, think of interesting photographs you can get with him/her doing just that. If your pet is feeling utterly lazy, prop something fun near him like a book maybe, to suggest a quirky moment with your pet reading. Get creative!



STAGE 02 - DON'T TAKE A PHOTO - MAKE IT

Now that you have the basics of photographing your pet covered, here's how to take your photographs up a notch.

1. FRAME IT

Sometimes your pet is doing the cutest thing and you have to get that on camera! Sure, in such a situation the action is more important than what the frame looks like. But when you've got that first photo and if the action continues, try and move to get a less cluttered background, or rearrange things in order to achieve this.



- **Simple backgrounds** make your pet stand out more. This could be solid colours - like wallpapers or painted walls. Blurred backgrounds can be achieved if your pet is far away from the background and you are shooting in a 'portrait-mode' on your phone camera. The sky often makes for a beautiful backdrop as well.

2. GET SOME PERSPECTIVE

Try photographing your pet from a different perspective. Photograph, not from your eye level, but theirs. Stoop low to your pet's eye level and see how that looks for you. Then try from right above them and capture them looking up at you - for a classic 'puppy-dog-eyes' kind of expression. Don't be afraid or lazy to try taking photos from a different perspective – you would love the results!

3. MIND THE GAP

Don't photograph your pet from the same distance always.

Go Really Close. How close is too close? Captured a reflection in their eyes? Focused on their wet nose?

Go Really Far. If you're in a beautiful location, capture your pet enjoying this surrounding. This is a must do

if you travel with your pets - and it makes for an iconic travel photo.

There is one rule of pet photography that must never be broken -



PATIENCE, PATIENCE, AND PATIENCE!

It'll often take many photographs to get the one that you want. Remember, your pet is not a model and you want the photographs more than your pet does. Have patience with your pet just as your pet is having patience with you getting him/her to do various seemingly odd things. Pets always come first - everything else, including their photos, always comes second.



There's only one downside to mastering these tips and tricks and taking lots of great photos of your pet. There's going to be a point where you will want to be in the photos too!

Sure, you'll have 'selfies' from time to time, but it's nothing compared to a wonderful photograph with you and your pet captured by a seasoned Pet Photographer. I know that feeling only too well and which is why I will be there at that junction to solve this for you. Until then, enjoy mastering these tips for better photos of your furry Instagram superstar.

The best thing about memories - is making them - so capture some beautiful ones!

One of India's Top Pet Photographers, Aaditi Kulshreshtha captures beautiful memories for pets and their humans.

Formerly, Aaditi has been an Award-Winning Film Director; an Associate Director in Bollywood; a Visual Effects Supervisor & Artist; and a Creative Commercial Photographer. Her clients include brands like Disney; ADIDAS; Conde Nast Traveller and Foster + Partners, London. She studied Film & Photography in London and then worked in UK before moving to Mumbai.

After shooting for major brands, first with humans - and then with dogs, Aaditi realized she had the ability to capture candid moments of pets in a way that most general photographers don't understand them. This led her to combine her love for dogs (dogs > humans kind of love) with her passion for photography and steer direction into Pet Photography.

Aaditi believes, "our dogs have shorter lives than we'd want them to, and when they're gone, wouldn't everyone want beautiful photo memories to look back on? That's why she create beautiful memories, for pets and their humans."

The author is Pet Photographer, Aaditi K Pet Photography

HEALTH IS UNIQUE TO EVERY BREED

Similar at first glance, a closer look at these pure breeds reveals a completely different story. In their tails, body coats and structures.

Royal Canin recognises the uniqueness of every breed. That is why we have developed BREED HEALTH NUTRITION® formulas, with exclusively designed kibbles to help you bring out the best in your breed.

FOUR WAYS PURE BREED DOGS ARE UNIQUE

1. FACIAL AND JAW STRUCTURES



A dog's muzzle type can affect how it picks up kibble.

- **MESOCEPHALIC**

Muzzle longer than it is wide

Beagle, Cocker Spaniel, Labrador Retriever, German Shepherd, Golden Retriever

- **BRACHYCEPHALIC**

Short muzzle broad head

Beagle, Cocker Spaniel, Labrador Retriever, German Shepherd, Golden Retriever

2. BONES AND JOINTS



Pure breed dogs' bones and joints are affected in different ways.

- **DOGS WITH SHORTER LEGS**

Dachshunds put mechanical stress on the spine

- **POWERFUL AND ACTIVE DOGS**

Boxers put pressure on their bones and joints

3. SKIN TYPES



It is necessary to take an individualized approach to healthy skin care.

- **SENSITIVE SKIN**

German Shepherd and West Highland White Terrier's skin need greater care

- **WRINKLED AND FOLDED SKIN**

Pug and English Bulldog's skin traps more moisture and heat than other breeds

4. DISTINCTIVE COATS



From colour to texture, there's more to a coat than meets the eye.

- **CURLY COATS**

Poodle

- **CONTINUOUSLY GROWING COATS**

Shih Tzu

- **WATER-RESISTANT COATS**

Labrador Retriever

KIBBLES DESIGNED FOR DIFFERENCES

We understand how a pure breed's muzzle length, jaw structure, lip and biting patterns affects the way it picks up a kibble and that's why we have kibbles designed exclusively for each breed, with unique shapes, textures, sizes and densities.



- **SHAPE**

Shapes matched to breed's differing ability to pick up and chew

- **SIZE**

Optimally designed for each breed's jaw and tongue size

- **TEXTURE**

Designed to break at different times as per breed's jaw strength

- **DENSITY**

Adapted to each breed's rate of ingestion



PET PARENTING, SIMPLIFIED



Countless hours of browsing the internet, frantic calls to friends & relatives, worrying over every little hiccup along the way. The initial days of being a new pet parent can be unnerving.

Thankfully, it gets easier.

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