

Muscle Release Therapy (Animal Arm of Bowen Therapy)

We recently had a 3½ year old Dog at the Albury clinic which presented with neck pain & progressed to being unable to walk & yelping in pain whenever she moved. She was given a very poor prognosis unless she had spinal surgery. Each day for 4 days Raquel gave her a Muscle Release Therapy treatment which was combined with pain relief & smooth muscle relaxants. One week later she came back in for her revisit walking and trotting around very bright & happy which astounded us all!

Muscle Release Therapy is a very gentle non invasive manipulation of the soft tissues stimulating the body to restore its balanced state. It is never forced and is very relaxing for your animal. Muscle Release Therapy assists in relieving restrictions in the connective tissue of the body (especially the fascia which covers the muscles & extends to the organs of the body), freeing congestion, promoting the circulation and thereby increasing the nutrient supply to the body and the removal of toxins.

What conditions can be treated with Muscle Release Therapy?

Muscle Release Therapy assists in relieving pain and inflammation, improving the circulation (nutrient supply to the body), improving the lymphatics (removal of toxins from the body) and relaxation of muscle spasms therefore its is very useful in the treatment/management of the following conditions

- Any acute injury – sprain or strain
- Back pain
- Chronic and/or degenerative conditions i.e. Arthritis, hip & elbow dysplasia
- Anxiety/Stress
- Post operatively after surgery – especially musculoskeletal surgery to aid in pain relief and improve recovery rates
- Cystitis/urinary disorders
- Respiratory problems
- Working or competition dogs to maintain optimum health

What to expect in a treatment:

Each treatment is tailored to the specific needs of your animal. The treatment entails an initial assessment then a sequence of moves with breaks in between some of the moves to enable the animals body to process the treatment. In this time they may show a range of responses, some of the response include

- yawning
- drinking
- sleeping
- licking themselves
- stretching or sitting in different positions
- panting
- twitching
- taking themselves to a quiet corner for a few minutes before returning

What to expect after a treatment:

After a treatment your animal may sleep for a prolonged period which is fantastic as this enables the body to process the treatment & initiate repair & healing.

Your pet may be going through changes within his body for up to 7 days after a treatment.

Generally you will notice that your animal seems much more relaxed, the condition of their coat looks fuller and softer and the coat may also change colour – become darker. They may also have changes in their behaviour i.e. happier. Offer your animal plenty of fresh water & allow him/her the space & time they need.

It is good to encourage light walking to help with the circulation & changes in the body but in most cases best to avoid strenuous exercise for a minimum of 4 days.

The general treatment protocol is once a week for 3 weeks then a fortnight later but this may vary depending on your animal's condition.

I use Muscle Release therapy every day in my routine treatment of animals & I have been absolutely amazed at the results. It is so rewarding to be able to see the changes in the animals both physically & mentally. To see them enjoying their treatment and actually relaxing in the consultation room is fantastic.

(Dr. Raquel Stoll is currently studying Muscle Release Therapy which is the equivalent of Bowen Therapy for Animals.)



Dr Raquel Stoll

Anke Woeckel

It occurs to me tonight that I have been with Family Vet Centre for almost 3 years and have never formally introduced myself, please accept my apology for such a long delay!

My husband and 2 young boys arrived from Sydney after a fairly traumatic trip to Albury in January 2008. I had moved to Australia permanently in 1994 after transferring my Veterinary Science degree to Sydney Uni from Munich's Ludwig-Maximilians University.

After graduating with a Bachelor of Veterinary Science in 1997 I worked in mixed animal practice on the NSW Central coast for 12 months, followed by an intense Internship at the Randwick Equine Centre. Horses remained my passion until 6 months pregnant with our first beautiful son, Jack. Then it became clear that kids and horse vetting are almost incompatible.

The experience as a mixed practitioner initially made it easy to go back to small animal practice, although mostly part time. Part-time small animal work was accompanied by one or two days of race-day work at any of the Sydney city and metropolitan racetracks. By now our inner Sydney terrace was crumbling and bursting at the seams with son Joseph arriving; and our good old dog Henry getting more and more obese with mere self guided walks to the butcher at the Surry Hills mall. It was time for a tree change!

My husband Gerard was offered a great job opportunity and the terrace found a nice new owner so off we went to Albury-Wodonga. Initially I worked for the Hume Animal Hospital Group but was made very welcome by the Family Vet Centre in April 2009. The FVC has been a great employer and I enjoy working in both the Albury and Wodonga clinics.



Anke

Our clients show me a love and passion for their pets that leave no doubt that their pets are Family Members. As such lies our responsibility as vets to ensure that bond is fostered and maintained. I hope I will be contributing to that role and be part of the team at the Family Vet Centre for many years to come.



FAMILY VET CENTRE

The most affectionate creature in the world is a wet dog. ~ Ambrose Bierce



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Welcome...

The photo that is our banner for this issue is of Brooke at the Wodonga Childrens' Fair. I shake my head when I look at it, simply because the photo was taken in October last year, and yet that only seems like yesterday. Brooke and Chris were there to represent the clinic and it's a great opportunity to see families outside of normal clinic duties.

Comings & goings? Nurse Bec, and her husband Scott have welcomed a new little sister for Ava – Olive Ella. By all reports they are well, and Ava is enjoying a sister. Kimberly is taking on the grooming business at Wodonga, and is doing a great job pampering her grooms. Having worked previously elsewhere as a vet nurse, Cassie has joined us during Bec's leave, and Raquel joins our veterinary team. Raquel has also worked previously in Albury as a vet, and now returns to the region after some time in Wollongong.

Raquel has a strong interest in Muscle Release Therapy (Bowen Therapy) and is happy to offer it as a service. With Mara doing further studies in acupuncture this year, we are quite proud of our ability to provide complementary therapies – physiotherapy, acupuncture, and Bowen Therapy all within our practice.

In this edition Raquel tells us a little about Muscle Release Therapy. Anke has been with us now for a number of years – so a little introduction is better late than never! Both Chris and Nadine each have a story about older kitties and the health care needs that they have. Talking about kitties, the photo to the right shows Mia the kitty not sharing Xavier's

enthusiasm for playing on the slide. Mia is very patient with Xavier, and I know that they are great friends – like all our pets, part of the family!

Skin problems are one of the most common cause for seeing a vet – Peter has written a little bit about itchy skin. Peter has a very strong knowledge of skin medicine and as he writes in the article, how we combat skin problems has very much changed over recent years. Finally with another Easter just around the corner, there is a little note on chocolate toxicity – dogs are just as tempted as us to over-indulge if given the opportunity.

I hope you and your family have had a safe and enjoyable start to the year and we look forward to seeing you on your next visit to the clinic.

Until next time, Cheers,

Justin



Xavier and Mia



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BOARDING

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- We seek to grow relationships with families that enhance their pets' lives through professional, quality and caring health-care.
- We seek to be the voice for all pets.

Your family Vet



Properly trained, a man can be dog's best friend.
~ Corey Ford



COMFORTIS

Here's a great product to consider this summer to eliminate fleas from your dog. **Comfortis** is the no-fuss, no-mess way to protect dogs against fleas for a whole month. Dogs love the taste of the beef-flavoured chewable tablets, which provide rapid treatment and lasting control of fleas.

Here are just a few reasons why we think Comfortis is right for your dog!

Fast acting

Comfortis starts killing fleas in 30 minutes, providing fast relief from fleas for your dog.

Family friendly

Comfortis can't rub off onto you, your family, other pets, clothing or furniture.

Convenient

Comfortis is easy to offer. Your dog will love the taste of the beef-flavoured, chewable tablets!

Can't wash off

Comfortis can't be washed or shaken off, making it ideal for dogs that are washed or swim regularly.

Come in and visit us to discuss a flea control strategy for your dog.



Chocolate Toxicity

A timely warning before Easter for all the pets out there.

Human chocolate is not for pets!

However, the "chocolate" treats for our pets that are made for them are fine to use.

Chocolate contains two toxic chemicals – theobromine and caffeine. The general rule is: the more bitter the chocolate, the more of these chemicals it contains.

Chocolate	Theobromine (mg/100g)	Caffeine (mg/100g)
White	0.9	3
Milk	155-210	21
Dark	490-850	80
Cooking	1400	125-170

These compounds act to:

- stimulate the more forceful and rapid contraction of muscles (including the heart) resulting in possible heart rhythm irregularities
- increased Central nervous System stimulation which may lead to seizures

Symptoms you may see include:

- either increase or decreased breathing rate and depth
- hyperactivity through to possible seizures (high intakes)
- vomiting or other tummy upsets
- increased urination.

Typically, the signs are seen within one to three hours after eating the chocolate and can persist for several hours.

The amount of chocolate required to cause symptoms will vary with the size of the dog and the type of chocolate but toxicity has been seen as low as a 10kg dog eating as little as 100gm of milk chocolate. Severe symptoms can occur with a 10kg dog eating 300 gm milk chocolate.

Treatment by your veterinarian involves removing chocolate from the stomach (if early enough after eating) and treating the symptoms as they occur.

Feline Diabetes

Emily had her first anniversary of being a well controlled diabetic. In mum's words "it took a bit more thinking, a bit more work and a bit more expense, but she is doing well".

Emily can be described as your average cat. She was an adopt-a-kitten 10 years ago. Desexed as a youngster and thereafter she had regular health checks and annual vaccinations.

She had a slight draw back in life and as it turned out, this saved her. She was diagnosed with recurrent urinary tract infections. As a precaution Emily's mum would collect a urine sample from time to time, which we would screen for early signs of an impending UTI.

On one such an occasion, we performed the Urine analysis and noticed a positive glucose reading. This led to performing a blood glucose test which confirmed our suspicion of Diabetes Mellitus. She was therefore diagnosed before the common signs like weight loss, excessive hunger, thirst and urination occurred.

In our experience many of our clients shudder at the thought of injecting their pets twice daily. We also find that when people can overcome this initial reluctance most of them cope well

with giving the needles. It's probably more challenging for the owners giving the needle than for most animals receiving them.

Thanks to a committed mum, insulin and prescription food as well as a cooperative kitty, we trust that Emily, like other feline diabetics will have many more happy anniversaries.



Sensitive Skin issues in dogs.

Many of the dogs we see have itchy skin and we often need to manage how this problem affects your dog.

The first issue to consider is the cause – this is very difficult to state with any sureness. The causes can be varied and multiple.

Frequently, these dogs have a genetic predisposition to skin disease – the skin is not acting as a good barrier to the environment. With the skin acting as a poor barrier, there is increased water loss through the skin, the skin dries out, dry skin is itchy, the dog scratches which damages the barrier status further.

Once this happens, the skin is open to bacteria and yeasts starting infections. This serves to make the itching and damage to the skin worse.

What to do?

The emphasis for treating these skin conditions is now moving to helping the skin improve its barrier function once the

skin infections are treated. This is the important part of the control, and the most difficult. It is often difficult in today's world as it requires frequent input when the skin is looking better.

Shampoos:

Better shampoos that are available in the clinic aid in the maintenance of the moisture of the skin.

Conditioners:

Shampoos often don't supply sufficient moisture to the skin and a conditioner is used to help.

Lotions and Creams:

These have a more prolonged effect in the moisturising than just the shampoos and conditioners.

Fatty Acids:

Dietary additives such as Omega 3 and 6 fatty acids have been demonstrated to reduce the itchy reaction of the skin.

Other topical moisturisers:

Alpha keri bath oil and lotions aid

significantly in the moisture maintenance of the skin.

Essential Six (PAW):

This is relatively new in our arsenal of barrier function. This is applied once weekly to the back of the neck for an extended time. This is exciting as it gives us a very good approach to the topical treatment of a topical problem.

Once infections have managed to establish themselves, though, they are going to need treatment with medications through consultations and tests.

These allergens, such as pollens, house dust mite particles and others, start a low level allergic reaction that compounds the poor barrier status of the skin. This allows bacteria and yeasts to colonise the skin and set up infections. The itchiness rises further.

Given that there is a basic malfunction of the skin as a barrier, the question then is, what can we do to minimize the effect and try to control the ongoing deterioration?

Caring for the Geriatric Feline

Sooty is a 17 year old female Domestic Shorthair cat belonging to her adoring 'dad' who always wishes to do the best for her. Sooty's vet had known for some time that her heart was not 100%, although Sooty was not displaying signs yet warranting any heart medications. Sooty has regular check ups and blood tests as she is on anti-inflammatory medication for her severe arthritis, and it was recently noted at a check up that Sooty was in need a teeth scale and polish and some teeth removals. Her vet was very concerned about what effect a general anaesthetic may have on her heart, although understood that poor dental health was going to be painful for Sooty and may contribute to more significant systemic disease in the future.

Sooty's vet arranged for her dad to take her to see a cardiologist (a heart specialist) and it was found that the odd sounds in her chest were due to old age changes in the heart that would not be a problem for her under a general anaesthetic. Sooty had her dental and now has a more comfortable mouth and a very happy dad!

Caring for a geriatric feline can be very difficult when it comes to making



treatment decisions. It is hard sometimes to balance the benefits of a procedure versus the risk, the stress and the cost. Sooty's dad wished to proceed with treatment as he could see the teeth were a problem for her now, were not going to improve without a dental, and the severity of the condition and the risks of the procedure were only going to increase with time. He also knows that Sooty is still enjoying her life and her previous blood test was supportive of her overall fantastic health for a cat of her age. He is also very appreciative of Sooty's good company over the years and wishes to care for her as best as he is able. He can also recognize that cats require additional care in their older age just as geriatric humans do.

To help care for your geriatric cat in older age:

1. Watch for increased water intake. This can be an early sign of kidney problems or diabetes.
2. Weigh your cat. Obese cats are more likely to develop arthritis, liver problems and diabetes. Underweight cats may have an underlying condition such as hyperthyroidism, inflammatory bowel disease or cancer.
3. Observe your cat's mobility. If your cat can no longer jump onto the bed or lies around sleeping more than usual maybe he has arthritis, high blood pressure, vision problems or a heart condition.
4. Look in your cat's mouth. Poor dental health can be painful and mouth ulcers can be suggestive of kidney disease.
5. Improve your cat's diet. There are complete balanced diets on the market targeted at geriatrics to help with arthritis, dental health, digestive health, the immune system and skin.
6. Take your cat to the vet. A 6 monthly check up with or without blood and urine tests is the best way to ensure your cat is getting the most out of life in their older age and any problems can be spotted and treated early.