

CONTRA-INDICATIONS FOR ANIMAL MASSAGE

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

- Diabetes
- Senior dogs. (Special care and precautions apply here) Get permission and advice for your Veterinarian before massaging your senior canine companion.
- Open lesions. Stay away from direct contact with lesions you can spread disease into any open lesion or wound.
- Infectious diseases. Consult with your Veterinarian if you are in doubt about whether your canine companion has an infectious disease or not.
- Over broken bones that are not fully healed. Consult with your Veterinarian to find out when it is alright to start work over the healing bone.
- Sprains. A sprain is trauma to ligaments that causes pain and disability depending on the degree of injury to the ligaments. In severe sprain, ligaments may be completely torn. The symptoms of sprain are pain which may be accompanied by heat, discoloration, and localized swelling in the affected area. If your animal friend is limping badly and has the preceding signs please get them to the veterinarian immediately. Massage may be applied when the sprain has turned into a chronic condition and the veterinarian has approved light massage and stretching to help the recovery process.
- Strains. A strain is trauma to the muscle or the musculotendinous unit from violent contraction or excessive forcible stretch. Do not massage or stretch the muscle when it is strained. Check with a veterinarian to find out whether your injured animal companion has a sprained ligament or strained muscle. Ask the veterinarian when you might be able to start massage on the strained muscle.
- Cancer that is metastasizing or encapsulated in a tumor. Metastasizing cancer moves through the blood and lymphatic pathways and you could spread the cancer more quickly through system. If a cancerous tumor is present and you massage over the tumor or close to it you can spread the cancer to the surrounding area. Light healing touch can be done for dogs who are in a terminal state of cancer and need loving touch and kindness to ease the way. Anytime you feel a hard lump on your animal companion check with your veterinarian to make sure it is not a tumor. Lipomas which are fatty cysts are common in some breeds. A lipoma is generally soft and will move around in the tissue. If you are in doubt, check with a veterinarian.
- Neuropathy. Neuropathy is any disease of the nerves.

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- If your animal companion has a temperature over 104 degrees. Take your animal to the veterinarian if your animal has this elevated of a temperature.
- If your animal companion is in shock don't massage them. Take them to the veterinarian immediately.
- Pregnancy.
- Colitis
- Diarrhea
- Hernias
- Acute arthritis
- Plebitis
- Cardiovascular in general
- Fungal infections of the skin.
- Hip dysplasia. Stay away from stretching the hind limbs in this condition and only do light work in the hip area. The bone is degenerating in this condition and you can hurt the animal easily when this condition is present. Consult with your veterinarian to get advice on how to help your animal companion through nutrition and acupuncture. Do not over exercise your animal companion if they have this condition.
- Pain medications. When the animal is on pain medications they can't give you feedback if you are hurting them.
- Over plates, pins or bars that have been put in by a surgeon after an injury.
- Surgically limited range of motion. If the surgeon has limited the range of motion of a joint after an injury do not try to stretch the joint past the limit that has been placed on it.
- Extreme fatigue. If your animal is extremely fatigued there may be some undiagnosed degenerative disease. Take your animal companion to the veterinarian to find out why your animal is so fatigued especially if this condition lasts more than a day.
- Medications. If your animal companion is taking medications call your veterinarian and check to see if massage could cause an adverse effect while on the medication.
- Post operative precautions. Do not massage on or near a healing post surgical scar or ligature until you get approval from the surgeon and only do light massage near the area until it is fully healed and you have permission from the surgeon to do deeper massage to break down the scar tissue.

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- If your animal displays psychotic behavior and or is normally aggressive have a veterinary psychologist examine and treat your friend.
- If you have any questions or doubts about whether it is appropriate to massage your animal companion please talk to your veterinarian.
- These conditions are the most common contraindications for massage. There is no way for us to cover all of the contraindications for massage of your animal companion so we suggest that you talk to your veterinarian to see if there is any existing condition that your animal companion has that would contraindicate massage for them.