

TTouch Takes Those Fears Away ...

A Valuable Tool in Rescue and Shelter Work, as well as on the home front

... by Mary Bruce, CTPP

Rescue and shelter workers are extraordinary people who not only have dedicated their lives to helping those less fortunate, but they must also be, in effect, adept at wearing any number of hats: dog walker, cat socializer, kennel cleaner, behaviorist, communicator, trainer, handler, groomer, defender, protector, and caretaker.

There is a tool that can make the job a little easier, as well as benefiting the animals who enter unfamiliar environments, such as shelter kennels, rescue cages, or foster care homes. It also makes the transition to a new home and a new family much easier for the animal and for the adopters. It is called the Tellington Touch Method of Training, Rehabilitation and Wellness, or simply, TTouch®.



What is TTouch?

Originally adapted by founder Linda Tellington-Jones as a way to use the healing techniques of the Feldenkrais method on horses, TTouch has since proven highly effective on all animals, including people. TTouch uses circular motions on the skin and works on the cellular level to release fear and tension, as well as activating the regenerative intelligence of the body. Holistic in nature, this method works on physical, mental, and emotional levels with a series of gentle touch and awareness exercises. TTouch is used to help train pets, modify problematic behaviors, and support health and veterinary care. The method is easy to learn and can be of great help in dealing with such behavioral problems as: fear of the vet, grooming, or thunder; chewing and jumping up; and for wellness issues, such as: recovery from illness, injury or surgery; emergency care; and promoting overall health and graceful aging.

How can it help the rescue or shelter worker?

Rescue work can be made a little easier by using the proven techniques of TTouch to calm and soothe rescued and caged animals, create a stronger communication line, enhance the animals' ability to trust and bond with people, as well as modify behavioral patterns. This can be especially beneficial with abused animals. Once you can plow through the fears and mistrust that many of these animals are burdened with, it is easier to read the true personality underneath. A better understanding of the animal's personality allows the shelter handler to assess where and with whom the animal would best be suited in a new home.

Older animals who come into the shelter may have an even rougher time adjusting, especially if they have been someone's lifelong pet and now find themselves orphaned and alone. Giving them rejuvenating sessions of TTouch may not only improve their quality of life and health issues, but can help them adjust to this sudden traumatic change and increase their chances for adoption.

How can it help the new pet owner?

Many behavior issues are caused by pain or fear. The trauma of being rescued from a myriad of circumstances, to the shelter environment, and then to yet another new home and new people, can also contribute to stress and fear. TTouch alleviates these fears and assists your new cat, dog, or other animal, into adjusting to his or her environment more quickly and with less stress. TTouch can even help with adjusting your resident pet to the new "intruder," or facilitate the introduction of a new baby with greater ease and safety.

And TTouch can be of value to your current pets, enhancing their health, boosting their immune system, improving quality of life issues, and modifying inappropriate behaviors.

This positive, non-invasive, no-force method of training, rehabilitation and wellness has proven to be of great value in many situations, and is used world-wide by shelter and rescue workers, veterinarians and veterinary personnel, trainers, handlers, groomers, zookeepers, and pet owners alike.

And it just feels good, too!

About the author: Mary is a writer/lecturer/educator and editor of *strays*. She is a Guild Certified Practitioner of The Tellington Method of Training, Rehabilitation and Wellness for Companion Animals; a Licensed Wildlife Rehabilitator; Reiki Practitioner; and co-founder of Mindful Tails®, a company that provides TTouch, training, and other services for pets. She is a member of the APDT; hosts the "Ask the TTouch Practitioner" booth at Mayor's Alliance for NYC's Animals Pet Adoption days; works closely with a number of animal welfare organizations; and has used TTouch on dogs, cats, birds, small mammals, farm animals and others. She also uses TTouch in rescue and TNR work, as well as working with private clients and holding group workshops on TTouch for Companion Animals. www.MITAILS.com