

Reiking it In

How a gentle form of energy healing can benefit your four-legged pal

It's been proven that having a pet can lift your spirits and make you live longer—not that you needed proof to convince you of that fact. But what about your pup's own energy? How's he or she feeling these days?

If you're questioning the physical or emotional well-being of your pooch, consider taking him or her to have energy work. Reiki, a type of energy healing, originated in Japan and has been in the United States since the '20s. Meaning "universal life force energy," it's a subtle force that's around us all the time and can be channeled

and accessed by anyone once he or she is attuned.

Different from going to a traditional doctor, with reiki, the person or animal being healed is actually responsible for their own healing. "When it comes to an animal, the animal takes in the energy that they can use. And the more open the pet is, the more open a person is, the better the healing," says Bobbi Pollack, a Westchester, N.Y.,-based animal behaviorist and reiki master who is also certified in Tellington Touch and Bach flower essences for animals. Although she always recommends people see their vet before consulting with



Buddy and Soul



"Animals in general usually come less from ego. Because of that, and because they're in their bodies and they're able to be in the moment much easier than people do..."

her to rule out something like a vitamin or mineral deficiency, she's a big believer in her work. "The energy knows where to go in the body, it stays as long as it's needed, and then it leaves," she says.

"There are practitioners that I've spoken to and they'll define reiki very simply as 'love,'" Pollack says. "It's a heart-centered, compassionate energy. This is exactly what we need more of in the world."

Pollack says when someone finishes a treatment, he or she generally feels the same benefits as a massage, with some added results. "They'll feel spiritually more balanced, they'll feel lighter, they'll feel as if they've just gone on vacation, come back and all the worries and concerns are just kind of not important anymore, they're in the background," she says. "People are able to tackle new problems and new ideas because they don't have that baggage that they had before the treatment."

And when you take Fido to get a reiki session—for anything from paralysis to

aggression to fear issues—you can expect similar but even more powerful results. "Animals in general usually come less from ego," Pollack says. "Because of that, and because they're in their bodies and they're able to be in the moment much easier than people do... sessions are very short, they're intermittent and a lot of times the work is done off the body because the energy is too much for them." Interestingly, Pollack says, the animals will tell her how much they want. "When someone's on the table and they're receiving it as a person, they don't want to get off the table because they feel good," she says. "The dog or cat will walk away, and then they'll come back if they want more."

Typically, reiki practitioners who work with animals work on the floor or with the animal on their lap. And if the animal's struggling to get away, Pollack never forces him or her. "If they're struggling to get away, then the reiki isn't right for them," she says.

The results she's seen ranges from slower breathing to a deeper relaxation to more alertness.

Elizabeth Fulton, an animal reiki practitioner in the San Francisco Bay area of California, has had tremendous results working with animals who have had physical injuries. "They almost always heal faster with reiki than they would on their own," she says.

One of Fulton's clients saw firsthand the remarkable benefits this type of modality can have on a dog. Lynn Amon had taken in her son's dog, Bristol, a Cavalier King Charles Spaniel, because he was nervous the fearful dog would bite a visitor or his children. Amon called Fulton about a treatment, and Fulton paid a house call. "At first [Bristol] was a little afraid to come too close, but as she gave him the reiki treatments, he settled down," Amon says. "It got to the point where he would just go to sleep." After about six treatments, Amon says Bristol is like a normal little dog now. "He still prefers women over men," she says, "but he's never nervous anymore and he doesn't bark with strangers." Amon's son and his family was also blown away. "It was a transformation. It was truly amazing, and it was so fast," Amon says. 🐾

For more information on these two practitioners and animal reiki, visit www.healingforanimals.com and www.bobbisholisticcare.com.