

Wellness Assessment Massage for Pet Parents

Provide this massage to your dog once a week to help assess wellness. Report any abnormalities to your veterinarian and stop all massage until you get your vet's okay.

INSTRUCTIONS

Use light strokes and circular finger movements to soothe and search, feeling lightly for any abnormality.

- Start with light & slow strokes using a flat palm & extended fingers
- For circular massage, use pads of 2-3 fingers kept close together
- Look for signs of pain, heat, swelling and muscle atrophy (shrinkage)



SEQUENCE

- Begin by checking nose, eyes and ears for any discharge
- Stroke along the fur line from neck to back
- Stroke down from shoulder to front foot
- Stroke down from hip to hind foot

EARS

- Use pads of fingers to make light, circular movements at base of the ear
- Stroke ear flaps and note any heat or swelling

NECK

- Lightly stroke the neck from ears to shoulder
- Use gentle, circular finger movements around throat and behind the angle of each jaw
- Make a note of any swelling

MOUTH

- Check gums for swelling and redness
- Check teeth for brown scale and tartar
- Check side of face around roots of upper teeth for pain

CHEST

- Stroke up sides of your dog from chest to the back and make note of any tender areas
- Using the palms of your hands and outstretched fingers, stroke the back from neck to tail
- Run hand down tail and feel each vertebra
- Check along the side of the spine for tenderness (do this lightly)
- Check for pain around the rump area and base of the tail
- Visually check for symmetry (check legs for similar length, compare size of thighs and rump)

ABDOMEN

- The stomach should feel soft and resilient
- Gently stroke stomach checking for swelling and pain
- Do not poke or prod
- Carefully examine nipples and breast tissue for swelling and lumps. Gently squeeze each nipple and note any brownish or greenish discharge
- Visually inspect external genitals. Genitals should appear pink and moist. Brownish discharge from a female may indicate infection

FORELEGS & HINDLEGS

- Lightly squeeze each leg beginning with paw and working up the limb
- Watch for pain, heat and swelling
- Look for signs of hard swelling on the long bones especially near the ends of the bones
- Check for heat and pain between the toes

SKIN

- Ruffle the hair and roll skin all over between fingers and thumbs
- Check for lumps, external parasites and dermatological problems
- To finish, use palms of hands and extended fingers, smooth the fur back in place with brisk strokes from head to rump

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