

# Pet Gazette

## What's Your Pets New Years Resolution?

New Years Resolutions... everyone has one. We even have them for our pets. Now, if your pet's resolution this year is to lose weight and keep to a healthy diet then we can help! Our Doctors and staff are committed to keeping your pet healthy and we can format a healthy weight loss plan for your pet. Being an overweight dog or cat can take years off of your life and cause numerous medical ailments. Diabetes, thyroid disease and arthritis are among the diseases that can occur and are life long medical conditions, even if the weight is lost.

Know how can we stick to a diet when the dieter's have big brown eyes and sad little faces? Well, the tough part is saying "no". The easy part is staying on a diet plan. There are many treats and goodies that you can give your cute little friend that are low in calories and taste good. "Lean Treats" are a brand of treat for example that are a good snack. They come in both dog and cat flavors and they seem to be irresistible! We even use them in behavior classes for both puppies and adult dogs.

Most animals strive for attention, so whether you give them a yummy treat or just a big pat on the head it's all the same to them. Games and playtime are a large part of an animal's diet plan. Playtime can be anything from throwing a tennis ball for your dog or putting a feather duster on a door handle for your cat.

Now what food should you feed your pet in order for him to lose weight. You should ALWAYS ask your veterinarian before changing to a weight loss diet. He can tell you what food will better fit your pet's life style and which food will help your pet lose weight the healthy way. Your veterinarian can also help you with portion control which is also a very important part of a your pets weight loss plan.

If you think its time for your pet to start a diet plan or if your veterinarian has already recommended one, please call one of our offices and we can get your pet started today.

Here are a few more game ideas for both dogs and cats.

### Cats

1. Paper balls or any type of balls!
2. Scratching posts
3. Mechanical or remote toys
4. Feather dusters
5. Window watching
6. Game time with people

Cats are more independent than dogs so most of their games do not require a lot of human interaction.

### Dogs

1. Puzzle toys with low calorie filling
2. Search and rescue (hide their puzzle toys and have them search for them, you can also replace a human for the toy!)
3. Catch (Frisbee or tennis ball)
4. Leash walking
5. Scavenger hunting (through a couple lean treats in the back yard and have your dog search for them)
6. Puppy pushups ("sit" and then "down")
7. The name game (call your dog back and forth giving him praise every time he comes to his name, also helps teach recall!)
8. Swimming (only if your dog enjoys swimming)
9. Teach him a new trick
10. The park is always fun!

Remember most dog activities are outside so take weather into consideration, if your pet is overweight he will over heat quicker so keep water on hand and during the hot months play games when it is cooler outside.



## Did You Know

1. Dogs and cats age approximately 7-8 years faster than humans.
2. Dogs and cats that are overweight age faster.
3. There are special low calorie diets and treats available for both dogs and cats.
4. For a dog, one bite of steak is equivalent to a human eating an entire steak.
5. Portion control is a very important part of your dogs weight loss program, ask your veterinarian today a for measuring cup.

## A Happy Tail

During the Christmas holidays many of us find time to donate or volunteer to make others happy. In the field of veterinary medicine many of us want to make the animals we take care of extra happy during the holidays. This past Christmas Eve one of our technicians at Country Oaks Animal Hospital did just that. Joanna stopped by the SPCA of Suncoast with a box of goodies for the dogs and cats awaiting adoption. While she was putting the donated toys under the Christmas tree a young Golden Retriever who was just adopted came over and jumped into the box of toys helping himself to a chew toy! His tail was wagging and his eyes were so big, he brought the toy to his new person as if to say please, please can I have it. He went home on Christmas Eve with his new family and a new toy to put under his very own tree. Every dog and cat at the SPCA of Suncoast received a toy this Christmas lets just hope they will all be as lucky as that feisty Golden Retriever!

## **Pet Super Star**

In July a litter of kittens were dropped off on the doorstep to Country Oaks Animal Hospital. At first we thought they were sick, but when we opened the box, we realized they were just covered in canned food. So I took them home to foster them. There were 2 boys and 2 girls. Since they showed up in the middle of the night in the middle of the summer, they were named after Shakespeare's [A Midsummer Night's Dream](#). Oberon quickly became my favorite. He was a sweet boy and would spend many hours in the doctor's study playing with paper balls or sitting on my lap while I made client phone calls. The other three kittens were adopted out before him, and the staff tried to convince me I needed another cat. I made a deal that if Oberon was still up for adoption when I got my new house, I would take him home. The day I closed on my house, someone adopted him. Then about a month ago, Oberon came in with his family. He had broken his leg. They were very sad and not sure they could take care of him and the costly repairs during the holidays. I immediately assumed full responsibility and adopted him, and repaired his leg that day. I brought him home after a week in the hospital recovering. He is walking on all 4 legs, with a limp, of course. Oberon has the same 'injury' now as Eko, my dog. No cat fights have broken out between him and Opie, and I think Napoleon may remember him from the days when a baby Oberon lived in the bathtub - he just wants to love all over his kitty!



Oberon and his booboo

## Adoption Alley

Tinkerbelle is in need of a forever home. She is 1 1/2 year old spayed female calico who is up to date on all her vaccines. Tink was brought to animal Care Center as a 3 day old kitten one of our technicians bottle fed her and her brother and sister. At 8 weeks everyone was adopted very quickly. well now that Tink is grown up her adopted family was unable to take care of her any longer so they brought her back from were she started. Tink is looking for a home she can call her own. she does get along with friendly small dogs, other cats, and mature children. If you think Tink will be a perfect addition to your family please contact Animal Care center 727-376-7600.

## Potty Training

One of the hardest parts of having a puppy is potty training. Here are some helpful hints to help potty training run a little smoother.

### Schedule:

- Have a specific schedule that is followed
- Have a small area outside that is Fido's "potty area"
- Leash walk Fido on leash in this area/use command "go potty" while eliminating
- Reward Fido for eliminating in "potty area" (treats and gentle praise)

### Signals and times to take Fido outside:

- First thing in the morning
- 10-15 minutes after meals and drinking water
- After play time/chewing
- After naps
- Before bed time
- Wanders off on own
- When comes out of crate

### Avoid accidents:

- Consistency/ keep to Fido's schedule
- Lots of rewards and praise when goes outside
- Do not punish for going inside (you may unknowingly make her fear to go in front of you)
- Feed 2-3 times daily until fully potty trained (so we know when Fido needs to eliminate)
- Limit water intake before bedtime
- Feed last meal 2-3 hours before bedtime
- Keep in confined or in small area at night or when out of the house
- Watch Fido for "potty signals"

### What to do if Fido goes inside:

- Accidents are a normal part of potty training
- Accidents must be caught 2-3 seconds after (or during accident)
- Calmly tell her no and take her outside to her spot
- Praise and treats if she eliminates (remember "go potty" command)
- If she does not eliminate do not give reward
- Clean accident area thoroughly (lingering smell may cause future accidents)

### Crate:

Fido's crate should be large enough for him to turn around comfortably but small enough so he can't urinate or defecate on one side and sleep on the other. While potty training, avoid blankets or any bedding in crate. When completely potty-trained blankets may be put in crate as long as Fido does not shred them! Avoid putting water into crate. Crate should be in quiet low traffic area. This will enable Fido to go to his "quiet place".

Physical rehabilitation is becoming increasingly popular in veterinary medicine and is available at Best Care Animal Hospital. Dr. Steven Elliott is completing a canine rehabilitation therapy program through the University of Tennessee's college of Veterinary medicine. Dr. Elliott will be a Certified Canine Rehabilitation Practitioner (ccrp). Physical rehabilitation services that will be available at Best Care Animal Hospital consist of activities with a variety of equipment, including an underwater treadmill.

Traditional candidates for physical therapy have been patients with musculoskeletal injury or those recovering from orthopedic or neurologic surgery. As we learn more about the benefits of physical therapy, we find other applications for its use. Physical therapy is being recommended more frequently for pets with chronic osteoarthritis, and studies show that obese dogs benefit more from a combination program of weight loss and physical rehabilitation.

The first step in a physical rehabilitation program is to evaluate the patient and set goals. Each patient will have a unique physical therapy program depending on their age, medical history and type of injury, condition or surgery. Several modalities are available for different conditions.

Stretching and range of motion exercises help improve joint motion for post surgical patients or those with chronic conditions. They increase flexibility, reduce adhesion formation, remodel fibrosis around joints and improve soft tissue extensibility. Therapeutic exercises are designed to improve range of motion, muscle mass and strength, balance and performance. They also build endurance and reduce weight and lameness.

Some of these exercises include assisted standing and assisted walking. Assisted standing encourages neuromuscular function (communication between nerves and muscles) and re-educates muscles to help a dog gradually regain strength and stamina. Assisted walking helps patients that are unable to support their own weight.

"Dancing" and "wheel barrowing" are examples of more specific exercises that can improve flexion, extension or strengthen a specific joint or limb. "Dancing" can be used for a dog with rear-limb conditions because it places more weight on the rear legs and challenges the dog to balance. A dog's forelimbs can be strengthened by an activity like "wheel barrowing".

Aquatic therapy can also help strengthen muscles and increase range of motion and endurance without stressing limbs and joints, since the buoyancy of the dog in water minimizes weight bearing. As the water level is adjusted, a dog will bear more or less of his own body weight so limbs and joints can be worked at an appropriate intensity. Aquatic exercises are especially beneficial in weight loss programs because more energy is consumed performing the same exercise in water than on land.

If you have any questions regarding the physical rehabilitation program or think your pet may benefit from it, please contact one of our hospitals.

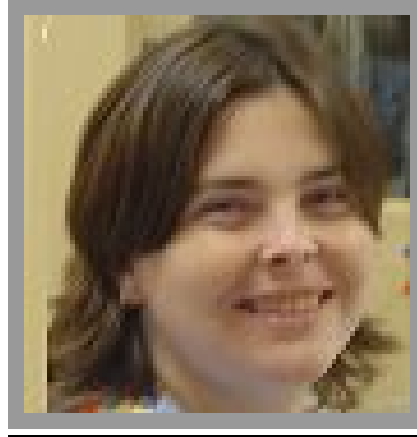
# Meet the Staff

## Bobbie

Bobbie has worked as a technician at Country Oaks Animal Hospital for approximately four years. Bobbie has an interest in Radiology and Veinipuncture and enjoys assisting our veterinarians during surgical procedures.

When Bobbie is not busy at work she is taking care of her growing family; she is married and has a beautiful daughter. Her extended family includes two Jack Russells Breeze and Prissy, a cat named KIKI and a recently rescued Schnauzer named Duke.

Bobbie is an asset to our team and we love her!



## Jennifer

Jennifer has worked for Animal Care Center Inc. for 11 years. She started working at Animal Care Center as a receptionist. She was such an awesome employee they promoted her to Country Oaks Animal Hospital's office manager about 5 years ago. (She also doubles as a receptionist and a technician when we are short handed.) Jennifer is a caring and sweet person who would do anything for her employees.

When Jen is not taking care of business at Country Oaks she is a full time mother of two great kids and a wife! Jennifer also has a canine rescue in her family; a Min Pin named Radar who is blind.

Jennifer is an amazing office manager and person, we love you Jenn!!!!



# Happy New Year!