



Dog massages becoming more popular

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KENS 5 Eyewitness News

People treat their pets more and more like members of the family these days.

Owners dress their pets up for Halloween, have them take pictures with Santa Claus, and some pet owners even celebrate birthdays with parties.

Now, pet owners can add massages for dogs and cats to that growing list of services.

At the Pawderosa Ranch on the city's North Side, dogs come for the day or stay in the kennel in canine-friendly surroundings.

On some days there's a special treat for the animals, a visit from Paulette Gutches of Austin.

On Wednesday, Gutches, a certified animal therapist, gave a hands-on massage to Foxy, a 2-year-old Sheba mix.

"They get very relaxed, and it's fun to just watch them go from being hyper to just very calm," said Gutches.

Why massage your pet? According to Gutches, what the human pressure touch does for your health, it can do for your furry friends.

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"It just helps circulation. It enhances mobility and agility. It helps to bring blood, oxygenated blood to the surface. I think it helps the hair grow healthier and look more shiny," she said.

A doggie massage takes about 20 minutes. Gutches says she uses a light touch because animals are very sensitive to pressure.

By touching your animals more often and more thoroughly, Gutches says you're more likely to pick up lumps and bumps or trouble spots you wouldn't otherwise notice.

She also says it simply makes Fido happy.

"(Animals) just love it because they just respond so well. Animals are just so receptive," said Gutches.

Animal therapists say cats and horses also enjoy massages.

Gutches will be giving demonstrations on Saturday at the Love My Pet Fair at the Alzafar Shrine, 901

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