

Pet Restraint Techniques and Pain Management

Approaching Solutions to Everyday Problems With
Your Pet

Intro

- Pet owners are faced with everyday problems like ear infections, cut paws, or upset stomachs.
- Basic restraint is vital first step towards investigating hundreds of dog and cat conditions.
- In dramatic situations, they can save your pet's life
- In any situation they ensure that you can safely examine your animal without causing injury to the pet or to you.

General: Signs of Pain

- Signs of pain in dogs and cats can be pretty subtle.
 - Animals that didn't hide signs of injury were more likely to be attacked.
- You must be alert to changes in behavior to determine if your pet is indeed in pain.
- Dogs tend to be more vocal and may yelp, hold a hurt paw, or limp.
- Cats more often simply hide and refuse to move.
- Other signs can include panting, drooling, refusing to eat, “hunching” or tucking up a painful stomach, “bowing” a painful neck, flinching when touched, or squinting if an eye is painful or watery.

Pain

- If you suspect spine problems or fractures, don't use any pain medication for first aid.
- Since the most common pain relievers can make bleeding worse, do not give as first aid when you aren't sure about the extent of the problem.
 - NEVER give aspirin to cats. One does of Tylenol is fatal to a cat
- Veterinarians have much more effective and safer pain medicines that they can give to pets once a diagnosis has been made.

Pain Treatment

- However, there are some effective and safe pain treatments that you can safely use as first aid.
 - Cortaid contains steroids that reduce painful inflammation. It works well on minor cuts and scrapes or insect stings.
 - Products containing benzocaine, like Lanacane or Solarcaine, contain topical anesthetics that numb the pain of sunburn and mouth sores. Benzocaine should not be used on cats.
 - Hot compresses work well on sore joints caused by arthritis
 - Ice numbs the pain of nearly any skin injury, bruise, or burn within minutes.

Restraint

- To examine an injury to your pet, you likely will need to restrain the animal.
- A humane restraint serves three purposes:
 - 1. it protects you from being bitten or clawed while administering first aid
 - 2. it restricts your pet's movements to prevent further injury
 - 3. it keeps your pet in one place so that the injury can be examined and treated

Muzzles

- Any pet will bite as a reflex when hurt
- While commercial muzzles are available, a home-made muzzle can be nearly or equally as effective

Muzzles - short nosed animals

- Cats and short-nosed dogs (like pugs) are a concern are a challenge because they do not have enough of a nose to tie shut.
- In this case, one of the best muzzles is a pillowcase.
- To make a pillowcase muzzle:
 - Fit a cloth bag over the pet's head and gently hold it around the neck
 - The fabric will keep the teeth engaged and pets often stop struggling once they can't see
 - You can also pull the case over the pets body as necessary to contain the front legs and/or paws
 - Allow the affected body part to stick out of the pillowcase for access
 - Some treatments, such as a cool water soak for heat stroke, can be done through the pillowcase

Muzzles – long nosed dogs

- You can use any piece of material from a necktie or length of gauze to a panty hose or extra leash
- Loop the material around your pet's jaw and tie it in a single knot (half-hitch) on top of his nose.
- Then bring both ends of the tie back down under his jaw and tie another single knot.
- Finally, pull the ends behind the base of his neck and tie them in a bow or knot.

Restraint Techniques

- Each form of restraint works best for a specific type of injury
- The selected technique should leave the injured area accessible for treatment
- If possible, have one person restrain the animal while another performs the first aid.
- It is best to place small pets on a counter or tabletop so that they are at waist level...this can prevent you from putting too much weight on an injured body part.
- Medium or large dogs are best treated on the floor – a long fall could further worsen a serious injury.

Reclining Restraint

- Place your pet on his side, with the injured area facing up.
- With one hand, grasp the ankle of the foreleg that's against the ground while gently pressing your forearm across his shoulders.
- With the other hand, grasp the ankle of the hind leg that's against the ground while pressing that forearm across his hips.
 - This technique works best for medium-large dogs and/or dogs with prominent eyes (e.g. Pekingese)
 - Holding these types of dogs around the neck produces pressure that may pop out their eyeballs

Reclining Restraint

- Proper techniques for reclining restraint



Stretch Restraint

- With cats and small dogs, grasp your pet by the loose skin at the back of the neck (scruff) with one hand
- Capture both hind feet with the other hand.
- Gently stretch out your pet and hold it against a tabletop



Hugging Restraint

- Bring one arm underneath and around your dog's neck (like a half nelson) to hug him to your chest
- With the other arm, reach under and around his chest and pull him closer against you.
- This technique works best for dogs over 20 lbs and is most useful when trying to immobilize the abdomen, chest, legs, and back.



Hugging Restraint



(a)

Kneeling Restraint

- Pressure around the necks of dogs with prominent eyes (e.g. Pekingese) may pop out their eyeballs.
- Instead of restraining with a neck grip or by the scruff, put your dog on the floor between your knees facing away from you as you kneel.
- Put one hand on top of your dog's head and the other around or beneath his jaws to steady his head while another person treats this area.
- This method also works for giving pills to cats.

Elizabethan Collars

- Elizabethan Collars (or E-collars) prevent dogs and cats from reaching injuries with their teeth.
- They also protect facial sores from pawing or scratching nails.
- You can get them at pet-supply stores, catalogs, or from a vet.
- They can also be home-made.

Making an E-collar

- 1. Measure the pet's neck and the distance from his collar to the tip of his nose
- 2. Mark these measurements on a piece of rigid cardboard or plastic.
- 3. Make a V-shaped cut from the outer edge to the inner circle.
- 4. Use a knitting needle or awl to punch holes along both edges of the collar.
- 5. Lace a shoe string or yarn through the holes to secure the collar around your pet's neck.

E-collars

