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2017

# Do dogs like hugs?

Here’s how to find out

By Melissa Erickson  
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If you’re one of the many people who like to post photos of you and your dog on social media, a psychologist might have been studying those photos when he scientifically estimated that you shouldn’t be hugging your dog so much.

Psychology professor Stanley Coren (who didn’t respond to emails as of press time), known for his best-selling books on dog behavior, wondered: Since it’s a widely held belief that dogs don’t liked to be hugged and hugging dogs may be associated with the likelihood of a dog bite, why is there no scientific evidence to support that belief?

Coren looked at 250 images of people hugging their dogs on Google and Flickr and found that 81 percent of the dogs showed signs of discomfort, stress and anxiety. The others seemed comfortable being hugged. His findings, which were not peer-reviewed, were published in a Psychology Today article — and created a sort of dog fight between people on both sides of the issue.

Nicholas Dodman, chief scientific officer of the nonprofit Center for Canine Behavior Studies, responded with his own article in Psychology Today. Whether a dog likes being hugged, tolerates

*“Hugging is not a natural canine behavior. Rarely, you may find a dog that is extremely tactile and enjoys such interactions. However, in my professional experience most dogs may tolerate hugging from their owners, but this does not mean they necessarily enjoy it.”*

— Hanne Grice, UK-based dog trainer and behavior specialist

it or is stressed out by it can’t be generalized so easily, he said.

“Nevertheless, this is an important topic for dog owners and parents,” said Dodman, author of “Pets on the Couch,” which addresses hugging your pet.

Pet owners should assess whether their dog likes to be hugged, Dodman said. They need to be aware that even if their dog like hugs sometimes, at other times their dog might be busy doing other things, such as resting or playing, and may not want to be bothered with a hug.

Dogs may even crave hugs sometimes. Dodman shared the account of his own dog riding in the car and creeping up into the front seat to sit on his wife’s lap, where he rests



[FREPIK]

“like a baby” cuddled in her arms.

Pets may even appreciate hugs from some family members yet not so much from others. Owners need to be in tune with their dog and wisely judge whether they’re ready for an embrace, Dodman said.

“Hugging is not a natural canine behavior,” said Hanne Grice, UK-based dog trainer and behavior specialist. “Rarely, you may find a dog that is extremely tactile and enjoys such interactions. However, in my professional experience most dogs may tolerate hugging from their owners, but this does not mean they necessarily enjoy it.”

Pet owners need to be aware of the subtle signs of stress.

“Common signs of a dog feeling

uncomfortable in a situation may include a turn of the head, a shift of weight away, a lip lick, yawn, lack of eye contact, body is orientated away from that person, ‘whale eye’ is shown (where the outer whites of the eyes are seen), the dog remains still or stiffens, increased breathing rate occurs which can lead to some panting, and so on,” Grice said.

If a person or child ignores these signs and the dog begins to feel pressured, “it may feel it has no other choice but do something about the situation to stop what’s happening (such as to remove or generate space away from the person), which may lead to a lunge, snap or actual bite,” Grice said.

As Dodman pointed out eloquently, “Let sleeping dogs lie.”



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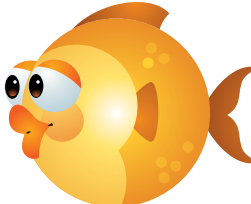
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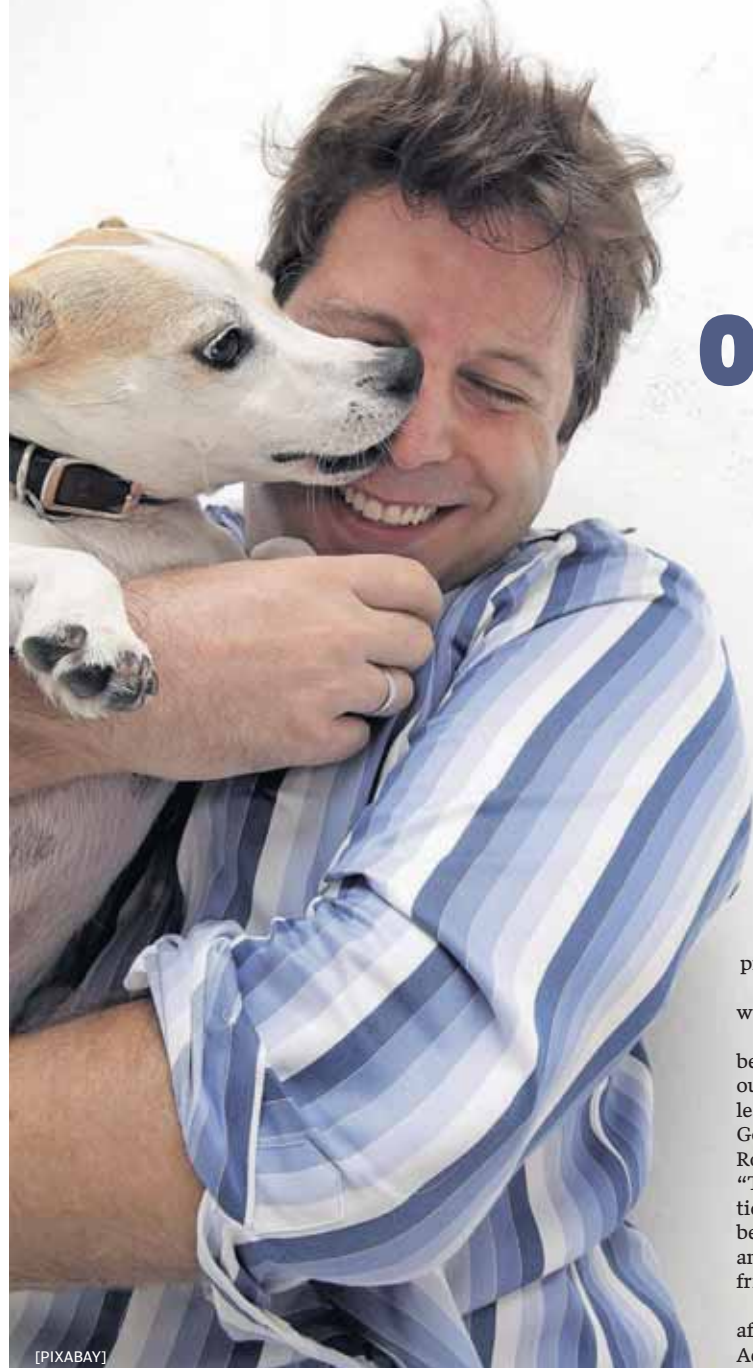
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[PIXABAY]

HEALTH

# Love on four legs

## Health benefits of pet ownership

By Melissa Erickson  
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Pets make their owners feel special, but the benefits of pet ownership are so much more than unconditional love and someone to greet you at the door when you arrive home. There is much research that shows owning a pet makes people happier and more physically healthy. Recognizing this, modern pet owners want their animals to feel special, too. “Young Americans are less likely to be homeowners or parents than previous generations, but one category they lead in is pet ownership,” said Brandie Gonzales, pet lifestyle expert for Rover, a services site for dog owners. “They shower their dogs with attention and splurge on expensive gifts because their dog is their best friend, and they want to be their dog’s best friend, too.”

Not surprisingly, all this love and affection lead to a variety of benefits. According to a recent Rover survey on

dog ownership:

- 94 percent of pet owners consider their dog family.
- 29 percent post more photos of their dog on social media than of their family, friends or themselves.
- 79 percent of people said they would include their dog in family moments like holiday cards, vacations and marriage proposals.
- More than 25 percent of pet parents have brought their pet on a date.
- 3 out of 4 dog owners have used their dog or a dog video as a pick-me-up when they’re having a rough day.

In addition to increasing a person’s well-being and outlook, owning a cat or dog brings plenty of health benefits. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, pets can decrease blood pressure and cholesterol levels as well as feelings of loneliness. One study of older men and women found that owning a cat or dog helped maintain or even slightly enhance their Activities of Daily Living score. Pets can also increase your opportunities for exercise and outdoor activities.



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# To the rescue

Learn what to do in a pet medical emergency

By Melissa Erickson  
More Content Now

What would you do if your pet suddenly stopped breathing? When an emergency strikes, will you be ready? “Being your pet’s best health ally is truly the best way to show how much you love him,” said Arden Moore, master certified pet first-aid/CPR instructor and the pet health and safety coach with Four Legged Life (fourleggedlife.com) and Pet First Aid 4U (petfirstaid4u.com). “When a dog or cat’s heart stops beating, that is known as CPA — cardiopulmonary arrest. ... The faster you can begin the chest compressions and mouth-to-nose rescue breaths, the better the chance you have of saving your pet’s life. “One minute, a dog can be happily enjoying a chew toy and the next, a small piece of the chew could block his airway and he stops breathing. Or a cat could be eating kibble from his bowl and a large piece of kibble could block his airway, and he begins to choke and then pass out when the airway gets blocked,” Moore said.

### Common issues

While felines and other small pets are at risk of choking, “dogs are four times more likely to choke on something than cats, as cats are just more finicky with what they put in their mouth and eat. Dogs ... not so much. Especially if you have a multi-dog household and there is competition for food and treats,” said Thom Somes, “The Pet Safety Guy” for Pet Tech Productions, an international training center for pet first aid. “A dog may sniff and then put a small object



**1 in 4**

more pets could be saved if just one pet CPR or first-aid technique were applied before getting veterinary care

— American Animal Hospital Association

in his mouth, such as a small toy or grape, causing choking and airway blockage. Dogs are more apt to wolf down their food more quickly than cats, and this hasty eating can trigger choking,” Moore said. “Cats are more apt to choke on linear objects like dental floss or shoe laces. They are hunters who like to stalk prey — even inanimate ones like thread, floss or shoe laces.”

One in 4 more pets could be saved if just one pet CPR or first-aid technique were applied before getting veterinary care, according to the American Animal Hospital Association.

“CPR for dogs and cats is warranted in less than 1 to 2 percent of all medical emergencies involving our pets. The

majority of time it is first-aid: choking management, burns, hyper/hypothermia, poisoning, insect bites and stings, rattlesnake (bites), hit-by-car, drowning,” Somes said.

### What you’ll learn

Anyone age 8 to 80 can learn pet CPR with great success, Moore said. Participants go through step-by-step instruction using a detailed course book with how-to photos and even try out the skill on a “veterinary school-approved rescue mannequin that gives students the chance to perform mouth-to-snout rescue breaths and witness the chest rising and falling,” she said. CPR styles vary depending on size and anatomy of pet.

“In a pet emergency, the most important being to protect is you. You need to be aware of your surroundings and know how to safely handle an injured dog or cat to prevent yourself from being bit or injured,” Moore said.



Pet first-aid and CPR instructor Arden Moore (wearing blue shirt) shows students how to perform CPR on Kona the dog (top) and Casey the cat. [ARDEN MOORE/PET FIRST AID 4U]



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## By the numbers:

**367**

That's the number of extra steps that kids with dogs take versus kids who do not have dogs, according to a study from the American Public Health Association.



[PEXELS]

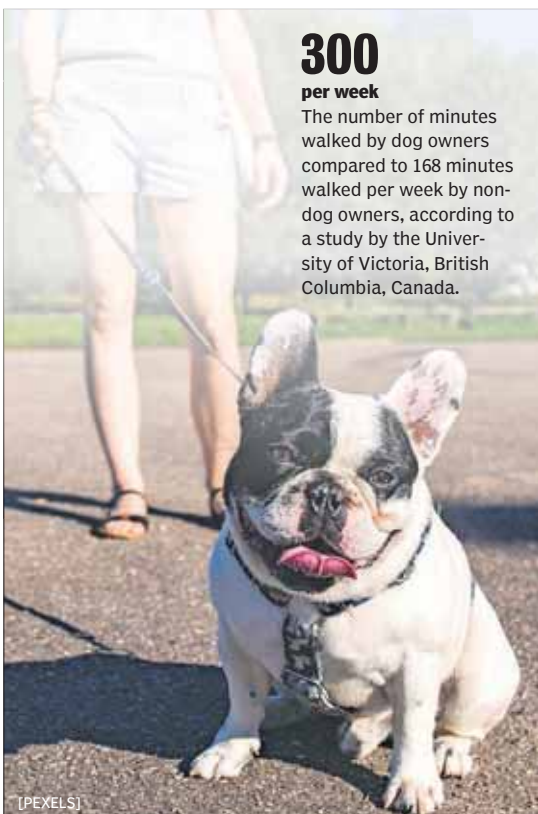


[BIGSTOCK]

• A pet can also help you be more socially connected. People who walk with their dogs report increased interactions — **up to 21 times more often** — especially with strangers, according to a study published in the British Journal of Psychology.

• Four-legged friends can also help improve cardiovascular health, according to the National Institutes of Health. One study looked at **421 adults** who'd suffered heart attacks. A year later, the scientists found, dog owners were significantly more likely to still be alive than were those who did not own dogs, regardless of the severity of the heart attack.

• Children living in homes with dogs are less likely to develop allergies — **by as much as 33 percent** — than kids who don't, according to research from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Children who had a dog at home as newborns were much less likely to have atopic dermatitis, a type of eczema (12 percent versus 27 percent) and wheezing (19 percent versus 36 percent) by their third birthday.



[PEXELS]

**300**

**per week**  
The number of minutes walked by dog owners compared to 168 minutes walked per week by non-dog owners, according to a study by the University of Victoria, British Columbia, Canada.



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**15 minutes**

in a quiet room with your dog can lower blood pressure by 20 percent, according to a study from University of Missouri-Columbia.

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## Pet first-aid kit:

7 items every pet owner should keep at hand

By JoAnne Viviano,  
More Content Now

The key to a healthy pet is to see a veterinarian at least once a year and stay up to date on appropriate vaccinations, including those that protect against rabies for dogs and upper respiratory infections in cats, said Dr. Robert Knapp of Knapp Veterinary Hospital in Clintonville.

**But there are seven things you should keep on hand at home:**

### 1 Prescription heartworm prevention

Protect your pet against this

potentially fatal disease, which is caused by worms in the heart, lungs and certain blood vessels.

### 2 Prescription flea and tick prevention

It's also important for preventing diseases that can be fatal.

### 3 Gauze bandages and adhesive tape

These can cover cuts or wounds until you can get to an veterinary emergency department.

### 4 Milk of magnesia

This can absorb poisons eaten by a pet. Always contact your veterinarian before using.

### 5 Hydrogen peroxide

This can induce vomiting if a pet eats something it shouldn't. Always contact your veterinarian before using

### 6 Over-the-counter eyewash

It's safe to use if your pet is squinting a lot or has dust in his or her eyes.

### 7 Water

Pets should have free access to water at all times, unless there is a medical reason to limit it.

### Exercise and other advice

Remember not to overdo it. Pets might need to get conditioned in

the spring if they've spent most of the winter sitting on the couch.

"Pets have to get acclimated, too. Sometimes we forget pets haven't been as active, and we need to work our way up to that," Knapp said.

Should you use antihistamines and other over-the counter medications? It depends, so you should ask your vet.

Keep in mind that some medications that are safe for humans are not safe for animals. For example, acetaminophen, the drug in Tylenol, can be fatal to cats, Knapp said. And some flavorings and sweeteners can also be toxic to pets.

"Just because it's OK for us doesn't mean it's OK for pets," Knapp said.

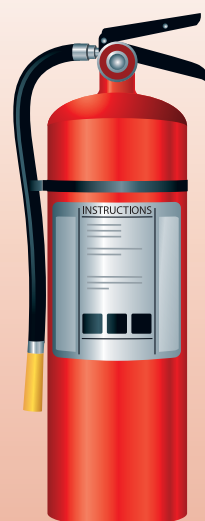
However, being a good pet owner isn't so much a matter of what you have, but what you do, said Dr. Michelle Matusicky, an assistant professor in the College of Veterinary Medicine at Ohio State University.

"The best owners are those who not only provide for their general necessities, but do things for them and with them: they go for walks, they play fetch, they provide enrichment to their pets on a daily basis," she said.

"Those owners are in tune with their pets; they know what their pets need and recognize any changes or concerns quickly should they arise."

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Photo Courtesy of Desert Dogs Pet Store

Courtesy of Desert Dogs Pet Store

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Desert Dog specializes in natural and healthy alternatives for pets, many of these items cannot

be found in supply chains and big-box retailers. Ask them about their natural cat and dog food selection; they'll help you find the best diet for your pet-companions, whether it's wet or dry foods, cooked or raw diets. Have a pet with food allergies? Bring in your vet's allergy panel, they'll help you pick out a limited-ingredient, sensitive diet that will nourish your pet in a healthy way. This family believes in "healthy feeding equals a healthy pet".

Don't let the name fool you, Desert Dog Pet Store is not "just a

dog store". In January 2017, Desert Dog expanded their retail location and began carrying supplies for reptiles, fish, small animals and birds. And they're still growing! Even adding on the live insect feeders and frozen mice and rats, the reptile community in Ridgecrest has really embraced this store. Although, they do not sell live animals, they proudly support adoption through Ridgecrest's Animal Shelter and local rescues. Ask them about their monthly adoption events, and how you can adopt your next pet and support

caring rescues.

Finally, don't forget about Desert Dog Pet Store's spa-like self-serve dog wash! The three tubs are kept clean and inviting for dirty desert dogs, and make bath time much easier for pet-parents. All bathing supplies are included for customer-use, or you can bring your own favorite products. The self-serve stations give ample bonding time between dog and owner, making it less stressful for everyone; plus, you don't have to worry about the mess at home!

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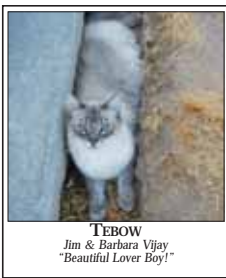
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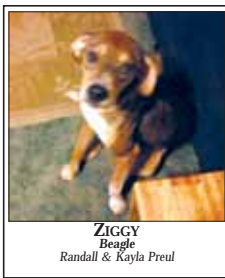
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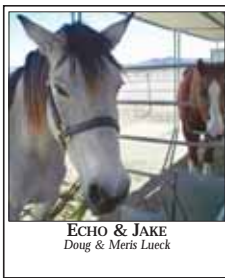
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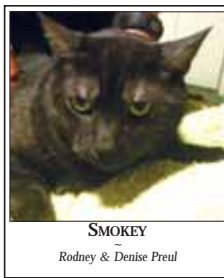
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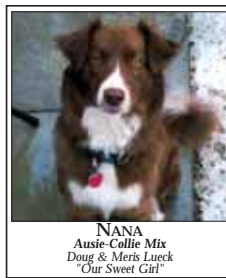
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## How your children can benefit from owning a pet

A dog, cat, guinea pig or iguana can be a child's best friend in ways you might not expect. Research shows how pets can benefit a child's physical and emotional well-being

By Marsha Maxwell,  
*More Content Now*

**I**t's easy to see how pets can teach children responsibility. A child as young as 3 can be responsible for giving pets water, and older children can take on tasks like walking the dog.

"Accomplishing tasks appropriate to their age, when taking care of the pet with their parents, makes a child feel more competent," according to child development experts Nienke Endenburg and Ben Baarda.

In addition to increasing self-efficacy, having pets can develop a child's relationship skills, especially

empathy, The Washington Post reported. "The reason is obvious: Caring for a pet draws a self-absorbed child away from himself or herself."

"Hearing a kitten yowl when it wants to eat or seeing a dog run to the door when it wants to go outside get kids to think, 'What are their needs, and what can I do to help?' " according to the Post.

Pets can also reduce stress, the Post reported. Researchers at the National Childhood Grief Institute studied children playing with therapy dogs. When the children petted the dogs, they visibly relaxed, and their blood pressure dropped. Interestingly,

the dogs' blood pressure was also reduced during these interactions.

Babies who interact with pets, especially dogs, are exposed to beneficial bacteria that reduce the chance of developing allergies, the Dallas Morning News reported. Researchers from the University of California San Francisco tested the gut bacteria of babies with and without dogs at home.

"For infants without pets, the gut's bacterial flora (growth) was linked to allergic disease development at age 2, which differed when compared to the gut flora of infants with canine friends," according to Dr. Susan Lynch.

Children with autism benefit from interactions with pets, according to a study by researchers from the University of Missouri. The study focused on communication, cooperation, responsibility, empathy, engagement, self-control and assertion for children ages 8-18 with autism.

Researchers concluded that "the social skills of children with autism — particularly in the area of assertion — increased over time when there was a companion animal present, while problem behaviors decreased," according to a report by the Mohave Valley Daily News.

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Proceeds will go towards the cost of the new Cat Room expansion project at the Shelter.



Courtesy of the Indian Wells Valley Humane Society

**P**lease consider honoring your favorite pets or expressing support for the Ridgecrest Animal Shelter by purchasing a paving brick engraved with your message. You may also want to express appreciation for Shelter Staff or support for its animal welfare programs. These bricks will be installed in the walkway in front of the new Cat Room expansion project at the Shelter. Proceeds from the sale of bricks will go towards the cost of the expansion. A 4 x 8 inch brick costs \$70 and double sized bricks are available.

Orders will be accepted through October 15, 2017. You may pick up an order form at the Shelter, download the form from the Indian Wells Valley Humane Society website or order bricks on-line through the website: [www.iwvhs.org](http://www.iwvhs.org).



Photo Courtesy of the Indian Wells Valley Humane Society

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## Seven keys to a 'pawfect' pet photo session

By More Content Now

**Y**our pets are part of your family and nothing captures their unconditional love better than the perfect portrait. But securing that photo? It's out there, and the right photographer can help you get it. Below are 7 things you can do to make sure your pet photos come to life in front of your eyes!

**1 Hire A Photographer That Specializes In Pet Photography**  
Pet photographers that are with Professional Photographers of America (PPA) have the training, experience, artistic eye and equipment to produce gallery-quality portraits that will capture the spirit and beauty of your furry pal forever. And once the shoot is done, they'll fine tune your images by removing eye bugs, the leash and unwanted background details from the photo. They'll also enhance fur details and color for the perfect shot.

**2 Plan For Patience**  
The perfect pet picture is rarely captured with a quick point and shoot camera. In fact, sessions can easily last more than two hours if your pet is not being cooperative. Allow time for the photographer to get comfortable with your pet and vice-versa. Also ask if the photographer has a pet-friendly studio or if they are willing to come

to your home or your pet's favorite park. Pick the location where your pets are the most comfortable for the best outcome.

**3 The Puppy/Kitten Window Is As Small As They Are**  
There may not be anything more adorable than a new puppy or kitten, but they don't stay little forever. If you wait too long to schedule your photos, you could miss capturing this precious stage altogether. So start your planning as soon as possible. You'll be glad of your decision every time you see the photos.

**4 Try To Capture Every Stage Of Your Pet's Life**  
No two pet's lives are exactly the same, and the perfect photo can help you chronicle every twist and turn. From your first puppy/kitten photo shoot to "rainbow sessions" for pets nearing the end of their life, and every stage in between, these sessions make for a timeless keepsake.



**5 Plan The Session To Fit Your Pet's Schedule**  
The best photos are captured when the session is scheduled with your pet's personality in mind. If you have an energetic puppy or kitten for example, schedule the session when you know they'll be more tucked out. It's a simple strategy to help you capture your pet at the sweetest moments of their life.

**6 An Illuminated Solution**  
In many cases, the right light makes all the difference and a professional photographer can help you capture it. Whether it's in their

studio or at your pet's favorite park, trust your photographer to find the best solution with a combination of natural light, location flashes and studio strobes.

**7 It's All In The Eyes**  
As they say, "Eyes are the windows to the soul" and a pet's eyes can be full of expression! When looking for your photographer, view their portfolio to see how they've captured the eyes of other pets. If the photos appeal to you, there's a good chance they can do the same with your pet.

For All of  
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- Nail Polish
- Toothbrushing
- Mud Baths
- Facials
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