



# Take Care of YOU

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## More than Just a Pet

### More benefits of pet companionship

- Encourages mindfulness
- Improves heart health
- Enhances immune system function
- Improves pain management
- Supports better sleep
- Provides a sense of safety
- Promotes empathy and compassion
- Increases laughter and joy
- Inspires creativity and expression
- Supports recovery from trauma
- Increases physical activity levels
- Offers neurodevelopmental benefits for children

If you've ever come home to a wagging tail or a soft purr, you know—pets are so much more than just animals we care for. They have a special way of lifting our spirits, easing stress, and alleviating loneliness.

One of the key benefits of having a pet is the comfort they bring. Spending time with a pet—whether it's playing fetch, snuggling on the couch, or simply making eye contact—helps your body release feel-good chemicals like serotonin and dopamine. These natural mood boosters can help reduce stress and leave you feeling calmer and more connected.

For many people, especially those who live alone or struggle with social anxiety, pets are steady companions against loneliness. Pets provide constant, loving company. Walking a dog often leads to casual chats with neighbors or fellow pet owners, making social interaction feel easier and more natural.

Another gift pets offer is structure. Daily routines like feeding, walking, and playtime bring a sense of purpose and rhythm to the day. This can be especially helpful during difficult times, such as periods of depression or anxiety, when motivation is low and engagement in everyday activities is challenging. When life feels uncertain, your pet still needs you—and that dependable bond can be grounding.

Even more, pets don't judge. They don't care about your bad hair day or missed deadline or unfinished to-do list. They don't expect you to explain yourself—they simply offer their presence and loyalty. They love you as you are, in every moment. That kind of unconditional acceptance is rare and healing.

Of course, owning a pet is a responsibility, and it's important to choose one that fits your lifestyle. But when it's the right match, that furry (or feathered or scaly!) friend becomes much more than a pet—they become part of your heart, and a part of your wellness journey.