

Coping Strategies with the Help of a Pet

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The research is in; interacting with pets can help to improve our mental health. During this time of increased stress and uncertainty, the unconditional love and acceptance experienced with a pet can be uplifting.

Plan some time with a pet!

Pet, stroke, scratch, cuddle an animal.

Petting an animal can have a positive physical effect on your body, increasing oxytocin levels and reducing cortisol levels leading to a sense of calm.

Play with your pet.

Be mindful!. Animals are always in the present moment, practice being in the moment with them. Playing with your pet can increase the levels of serotonin, dopamine and beta endorphins in your brain, helping to promote a sense of well-being.

Take your furry friend for a walk, hike, jog or run.

Keep you and your pet active while exploring new scenery.

Create a daily schedule or routine to care for your pet and yourself.

Having a daily schedule or routine can increase predictability, consistency, and productivity.

Teach your pet a new trick or behavior.

Interacting with your pet to achieve a goal can create a sense of accomplishment and success. Enjoy the process!

Watch an animal play or move.

It can be calming and enjoyable to watch an animal play, romp, swim, splash, pounce, catch, scurry, run, climb, hop, forage, or fly. This can be a great distraction from the stress of the times.

Join your family, friends and other pet lovers on the internet to share pictures or videos of your pet.

Spread the joy you feel when interacting with your animal and stay connected while we have to remain physically distant.

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Resources:

Human Animal Bond Research Institute
<https://habri.org/>