

Pets can sometimes reduce stress more than people.

Being around animals can reduce levels of cortisol, which is a stress-related hormone, and lower your blood pressure.

Pets are excellent companions and reduce loneliness.

Animals And Your Mental Health...

People with pets are less likely to suffer from anxiety, depression and bipolar disorder.

Pets can increase your levels of serotonin and dopamine. These are feel-good hormones which help you to feel calm and relaxed.

Petting an animal can increase levels of oxytocin, lowering stress levels.

Animals And Covid 19...



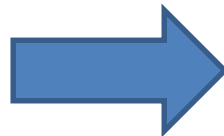
For so many of us, lockdown has had its challenges that we are still trying to recover from now. Many people have lost loved ones due to Covid 19. People have had to experience grief and loneliness whilst being isolated in their houses, and have had to face these struggles with no support. If you feel in need of some company, a dog could be the perfect best friend for you! And a very loyal best friend too – as long as you promise to cuddle them, take them on walks and of course, feed them the odd treat. Training a dog can be a brilliant distraction from the effects of Covid 19 that you may be facing – you will always have them around you to talk to or simply just give them a well deserved stroke for that lovable look in their eyes that is beyond cute. If you are considering getting a dog (or any other pet) to be a companion for you, I can promise that it is definitely worth having a furry friend in your life who is always willing to listen to whatever rubbish you might have to say!



My Experience...

One of the things that kept me sane in lockdown were my own pets: my two rabbits called Digger and Patch. During lockdown, I learnt to love and appreciate them more than I had already done before because they helped to reduce my stress levels and anxiety. Stroking them, talking to them and giving them treats made me feel calm and relaxed in just a couple of minutes. All they had to do was look cute and tolerate a bit of fuss and extra attention which they were always more than happy to have! If there were treats involved of course. Simply petting my rabbits would have decreased the levels of cortisol in my brain and increased the levels of oxytocin, lowering the feelings of stress and anxiety that I had at that specific time. And the best thing was that all they had to do was look cute and tolerate a bit of fuss and extra attention which they were always more than happy to do! (If of course, there were treats involved...)

Here they are!



Being Outside...

However, not everyone can have an animal at home for various reasons. For example, health concerns such as asthma or allergies to pets. For others, they may feel that it is too much of a responsibility as having a pet can be time consuming! (E.g. someone may feel it is unfair to get a dog if they are unable to walk it, or spend time with their pet if they are busy working in the day.) This is why rabbits are good pets as they don't require lots of maintenance – they are quite happy to be have a fellow four-legged friend for company! If you feel that having a pet is too big of a commitment, I would suggest being outside, and appreciating the wildlife that we have around us! Another reason why not everyone can have a pet is because of the cost. Pet supplies and vet bills can be very expensive! However, you can still appreciate seeing animals outdoors. Lockdown walks, bike rides and runs definitely helped my own mental health and so many other people's – just listening to the birdsong, and taking to time to enjoy the beauty that we sometimes take for granted in our world was enough to lift my mood on any grey day!

