

5 Ways the Human-Animal Bond is Improving Lives During the Pandemic

from the
Human Animal Bond Research Institute (HABRI)

More people are looking to the human-animal bond for comfort and support during the pandemic. New research demonstrates the important role of pets during these difficult times.

1 Easing Stress & Anxiety

Living with pets during the coronavirus pandemic has helped ease stress and anxiety. According to a recent survey, 72 percent of pet owners say that spending time with their pet is helping reduce stress and improving wellbeing during the pandemic¹. Another survey of 4,105 dog owners found that over half of respondents reported that their dog is helping reduce feelings of depression and anxiety².

2 Providing a Welcome Distraction

In difficult or uncertain times, it can be tough to stay in the present and engage in day-to-day life without worrying about the future. Research suggests that pets can provide structure, routine³ and a sense of purpose⁴. Many pet owners report that their pets are helping them maintain a regular schedule, cope with uncertainty, and find purpose in their lives². 75 percent of pet owners say they are turning to their pets 3 or more times per day to feel better, with 16 percent turning to their pets 10 or more times per day⁵.

3 Maintaining Physical Health

Approximately 73 percent of pet owners agree that their pet is helping them stay fit and active⁶. While social distancing guidelines limit social activities and travel, many are walking their dogs more frequently and exercising more with their pets in general^{5,8}.

4 Reducing Loneliness & Social Isolation

Pets provide companionship that can lessen the negative effects of loneliness and social isolation. Nearly 70 percent of dog owners report that their pets are helping to decrease feelings of loneliness and social isolation during the pandemic². Similarly, 72 percent of pet owners agree they could not imagine getting through the isolation without the company of their pet⁷.

5 Improving Pet Health

People are recognizing that the human-animal bond has been important to their health and wellness during the pandemic, and in turn, want to take better care of their pets. Three in four pet owners say they intend to reward their pet with better quality care going forward, in return for being there for them during the pandemic⁷. Overall, 84 percent of pet owners report that the pandemic is making them more conscious of their pets' health⁸. The human-animal bond between people and their companion animals remains stronger than ever, with 81 percent of pet owners saying that they feel closer to their pet today⁷.

For more information about the human-animal bond, please visit www.habri.org