



Raquel Wynn is an expert on dog exercise, stretching, nutrition, and alternative health treatments. She is a certified personal trainer and an animal massage therapist. Raquel wrote *Stretch Your Dog Healthy: A Hands-On Approach to Natural Canine Care*. *Stretch Your Dog Healthy*, Raquel provides the latest information on stretching, massage, acupuncture and other techniques to enhance your dog's health, with photos showing how to perform the stretches. She also hosts the show "Wynn with Dogs" on Pet Life Radio.

Ms. Wynn, how did you become interested in animal stretching and other therapies?

RW – I went from humans, to horses, to hounds! My fascination with movement and the body was sparked at an early age. I started competitively swimming at age 6 and spent long hours analyzing how I felt while swimming. I love to sense symmetry in all planes of movement of the body and it has become a sort of obsession, finding balance and symmetry. Professionally, I started working with humans as a personal trainer and neuromuscular therapist. I later branched out and started working with polo and fox hunting horses, and then agility and show dogs. I currently work with dogs and humans, both athletes and non-athletes. I love hands on and naturopathic modalities of all types. Stretching and massage are personal favorites because of the instant benefits and ease of implementation. Every pup parent can effectively stretch and massage their dogs and see fabulous results.

What are the benefits to dogs from getting involved in a stretching program?

RW – Dogs of all ages and fitness levels benefit from stretching! Stretching allows for oxygenation and hydration of a muscle. It flushes toxins, increases blood flow to an area, balances nerve paths, and helps with symmetry. Stretching is a great way to maintain range of motion of the joints, which leads to greater chances of a pain-free life. Stretching is also a great stress reliever. Give the gift of stretching to your furry friend!

For the non-professional, how difficult is doing stretches with your dog?

RW - Range of motion exercises are quite simple to perform. Make sure to follow your dog's lead and be gentle. I like to start by massaging or petting the area that I am about to stretch. Start with small movements and gradually progress to bigger range of motion moves when your pup gives you the go ahead. Start with simple flexion and extension of each joint – the wrist, elbow, shoulder, hip, knee/stifle, and ankle/hock. One thing to remember is that your dog's body is doing the healing, so regardless if you know the name of the muscle you are working on, or not, that muscle will still heal and benefit from the movement.

Are there any restrictions for exercises and stretching with puppies and senior dogs?

RW - The restrictions would be the same as for a human; if there is injury at a site, check with your vet and proceed accordingly. Avoid massage if your pup is pregnant or has a fever. Anytime you are working with a puppy or a senior dog, just slow your approach, get focused and follow your dog's lead. A fabulous session for both you and the dog will be the result.

Are you able to describe a simple stretch or massage that people might try for their dogs at home?

RW - I always recommend that people start with basic extension and flexion of the shoulder and hip joints. That means extending the leg forward and also

backward. Start by massaging and petting the area you intend to work with – to cue your dog’s body. Once your pup is ready and relaxed, start with small pendulum movement of the chosen leg. Gradually increase the range of motion as you go. Don’t worry about intensity. It is consistency that is key. All movement is needed! Pay attention and see if you dog is more flexible on one side versus the other, we want symmetry!

Can you tell us a little about your show, “Wynn with Dogs?”

RW - “Wynn with Dogs” is my free weekly podcast on petliferadio.com. I talk about health and longevity for dogs. I interview various guests, from authors to massage therapists, nutritionists to acupressure experts. My goal is to provide knowledge to pup parents. The best thing we can do is advocate for our pet’s health and knowledge is the way to go. There are so many wonderful modalities available, it’s up to us to see what resonates, and add them to our repertoire. Petliferadio.com is a fabulous site to get some knowledge. There are over 20 pet podcasts to choose from. Tune in!

Do you have a special story about how your life has improved because of your own dogs that you’d like to share?

RW - I could go on and on! Professionally, dogs have helped me hone my skills. A dog will tell you if your approach is working for them or not, often times humans will keep their mouths shut. So, I have become a much more effective therapist because of my work with dogs. Dogs are so tuned into the subtleties of movement and energy, we humans can learn a lot from them. It’s quite fascinating. I also must add, that Angus, my Scottish terrier, was my inspiration to write the book. He blossomed into such a lovely dog after receiving attention that I knew I had to present this hands-on work to the world. Stretching and massage help pups with pain, depression, aggression, and enhances the pup parent bond.

Anything you'd like to add?

RW - Please buy my book and listen to "Wynn with dogs". Get in touch with your pup!

Check out Raquel's program at www.petliferadio.com. And read more about holistic health in *Stretch Your Dog Healthy*.

