The Relationship Between Dogs & Your Mental Health
Placeholder for the "Links" field



The Relationship Between Dogs & Your Mental Health

The Relationship Between Dogs & Your Mental Health

There's no denying that your dog can feel like your best friend. Not only do they offer us unconditional love, but their companionship and affection can do wonders for our mental wellbeing. From helping to reduce stress and anxiety to improving our social lives, dogs enrich our lives in so many ways.

The benefits of having a dog

For many of us, dogs are far more than just pets, they're members of our family that bring us joy and companionship. In fact, dog owners often report lower levels of stress and better connections in their local community, and as our furry friends require lots of attention, they also help create more structure and purpose in day-to-day life. But the benefits don’t end there, as our beloved pooches enhance our lives in so many ways.

Lifestyle

Caring for a dog can encourage you to live a more active lifestyle, as your furry friend needs daily exercise to keep them happy and healthy. A routine of feeding, walking, and playing with your pooch provides purpose and structure in your day, which can be especially helpful for people who struggle with anxiety or depression.

Social

Dogs are social creatures, like humans, and having a furry companion can increase your social circle and help you connect with others. Places like dog parks, obedience classes, and even online communities provide opportunities to meet other dog owners and dog lovers.

Physical

Most dogs love cuddles and affection, and it’s pretty enjoyable for us too! Petting a dog can cause your body to release the "feel-good" hormone, oxytocin, which helps lower your blood pressure and reduce levels of the stress hormone, cortisol. As a result, affectionate interactions with our furry friends can help us relax, and also ease feelings of anxiety.

Specific benefits for elderly people

A furry friend can provide elderly dog parents with a sense of purpose and companionship. As loyal and affectionate creatures, dogs make great sidekicks for those who may be feeling lonely or isolated. Some people also find having a pooch around the home offers them a sense of security.

Specific benefits for children

Not only can dogs act as calming companions by helping children with feelings of anxiety, but they can also provide lessons in responsibility and empathy, teaching kids how to care for another living being. Interestingly, children who grow up with dogs also often have stronger immune systems and are less likely to suffer from allergies, as early exposure to certain bacteria and allergens can boost their immune systems.

Is getting a dog the right choice?

While owning a dog comes with many benefits, it's important that you consider the responsibilities and costs associated with it. Dogs need daily care, including feeding, exercise, grooming, and vet visits, making it a long-term commitment that requires a significant investment of time, money, and energy. Our furry friends rely on us to be around for them and can experience separation anxiety or depression if they’re left alone for long periods. This means it's essential to weigh up the pros and cons before adding a new furry friend to your household. Dogs aren't just like a best friend, they also positively impact our lifestyle, enrich our social lives, and boost our moods. While getting a dog requires a significant commitment, their loving companionship can be a worthwhile investment for both your physical and mental health. For more articles about all things dog ownership, check out our blog.

© 2026 Mars or Affiliate.

Source URL:
https://www.mydog.com.au/article/relationship-between-dogs-your-mental-health