



## Owning a Pet Can Change Your Life

Spending time with your pet can be relaxing, encouraging the release of endorphins, which are brain chemicals that help us de-stress and feel good. And petting a beloved animal can even help lower your blood pressure.

If you don't have a pet in your life, consider adopting or fostering one, especially during American Heart Month. According to the Human Animal Bond Research Institute and Mars Petcare, market research reinforces the social bond between humans and pets. In fact, 80% of pet owners say their pet makes them feel less lonely. Eighty-five percent of pet owners and non-pet-owners believe interacting with a companion animal can help reduce loneliness, while 76% agree human-animal interactions can help address social isolation.\*

So what are you waiting for?

Learn more about heart health — and learn more about shelters near you where you can adopt a pet or ask about fostering. You might just form a healthy bond for life.

Source: [\\*https://habri.org/pressroom/20190507#\\_endref3](https://habri.org/pressroom/20190507#_endref3)

## Enjoy a Day Off From Your Home Office

When the boundaries between work life and home life are blurring, it's more important than ever to take time off.

If you're working from home during the pandemic, you can do wonders for your mental health by spending a day outdoors with your dog and family.

Try these tips to plan your  
fresh-air day-cation:



- Take a day off during the week, when it's likely there will be less traffic, and block your calendars.
- Choose a place that's not too far, so you have plenty of time for walking, hiking, enjoying a picnic and taking selfies along the way. Check whether pets are allowed at the lake, beach or other destination you want to visit. Look online for pet-friendly destinations and hotels.
- You might also find websites about pet-friendly destinations in your area. Bring large old blankets or tablecloths for sitting on the ground and setting out your picnic spread. Consider packing an easy-to-read book of poems or stories your children like to hear — or maybe a book about dogs.
- Bring plenty of water to stay hydrated and the water bowl for your four-legged family member. Don't forget to pack a "doggie waste bag" to clean up after your furry friend, and hand sanitizers for the humans.
- Get some exercise for both a healthy body and mind. You and the family can do stretches and jumping jacks before you begin your picnic and a hike or long walk afterward.
- Relax and have a great time!

# 5 Ways Pets Help Mental Health While Working from Home



Your co-worker at home helps you have a happier, healthier mind. Millions of people around the world love their pets -- they're part of the family! We enjoy their companionship and going for walks, playing with them and even talking and singing to them.

Evidence suggests that attachment to pets is good for human health and even helps build a better community.

It's no secret that pets can contribute to your happiness. Studies show that dogs reduce stress, anxiety and depression; ease loneliness; encourage exercise and improve your overall health. For example, people with dogs tend to have lower blood pressure and are less likely to develop heart disease. Just playing with a dog has been shown to raise levels of the feel-good brain chemicals oxytocin and dopamine, creating positive feelings and bonding for both the person and their pet.

If you're working from home like more than 20% of the U.S. workforce, according to an April 2020 study by Statista®, the camaraderie that comes from seeing people you work with at the office is now coming from online conferencing software! But there are big benefits in working from home. Your non-human co-workers never challenge your thinking and are always there for you — often right by your side.

Up to 30% of the workforce could be working from home multiple days per week by the end of 2021 according to Global Workplace Analytics. This could mean a healthier, happier workforce, especially if there are pets at home.

People enjoy the flexibility of bringing a pet to work, as we found in our Healthy Bond for Life Survey in 2019. Over 50% of those surveyed said they would prefer if they could bring their pet to work.

## 5 ways pets help your mental health while working from home

- Pets can reduce work-related stress. Two out of three employees say work stresses them out and 40% say their job gets in the way of their health. Studies show that pets in the workplace help reduce stress and improve employee satisfaction.
- Pets can help increase productivity, wherever you work. When a dog joins a virtual meeting, group members rank their teammates higher on trust, team cohesion and camaraderie.
- Pets help manage anxiety. Now more than ever, many people are feeling anxious or struggling with mental health. Pets provide companionship and support.
- Pets can help you be more active. While social distancing is keeping many people at home, pets give us a reason to get outside, get some fresh air and get active.
- Pets provide a sense of togetherness. The bond with a pet helps people to not feel alone. When owners see, touch, hear or talk to their companion animals, it brings a sense of goodwill, joy, nurturing and happiness.