



LIFTING STARS
VETERINARY HOMECARE

Assessing Your Pet's Quality of Life:

Putting Your Pet's Needs First and Consideration of Their "Favourite Things"

At Lifting Stars Veterinary Homecare, we recognize and appreciate that no one knows their pet better than their owner does. As your pet's owner and best advocate, taking consideration of your pet's "favourite things" and comparing how they enjoyed them in the past compared to the present day can be a tremendously helpful resource when assessing your pet's quality of life.

Simply put, if we were to ask your pet what the top five things were that they loved to do, what do you think they would tell us? On your pet's behalf, you can create a list of three to five of your pet's "favourite things" and ideally rank them in order of importance. If you're uncertain, you can ask other family members, friends, or caregivers who are familiar with your pet to help you create the list or to make lists of their own.

When making this list, some of the "favourite things" may be easy to decide on, while others may not be as obvious. For example, many of our pets love eating, playing, and getting attention from us. When adding such items to the list, it's helpful to be as specific as you can. Some of our pets "favourite things" may not come to mind initially as they may have negative connotations with their behaviour. For example, if your dog loved to chase the mailman or if your cat loved jumping on the kitchen counters and licking the dirty dishes. In summary, when we make a list of your pet's "favourite things," we want to put their interests first and make sure that the list reflects the "favourite things" they love more than anything.

Now that we have the list of our pet's favourite things, how do we use this in consideration of their quality of life? First, we want to remember how our pets enjoyed these things in the past. It is so wonderful to stop and reflect on the beautiful memories that we've shared. Next, we will reflect on how our pets' enjoyment of their favourite things has slowly changed over time compared to the present. It is normal for their enjoyment of their favourite things to gradually become less intense and less frequent over time. However, the key to remember is that if your pet is still feeling good, they will usually keep doing their favourite things, but in a more scaled-down way. When advanced age or illness begins to impede these enjoyments, it is time to think about your pet's quality of life. Ideally, we do not want to wait until our pets' favourite things cease to offer any pleasure to them.

At Lifting Stars Veterinary Homecare, we advise taking your senior pets to your veterinarian for annual or semi-annual wellness exams, as your veterinarian may recommend. This is the best way to identify changes in their health and then help manage their health concerns as best as possible. If you notice that your pet has decreased interest in any of their favourite things, please bring this to your veterinarian's attention. These changes may suggest an underlying disease or pain that is not being managed appropriately. Our pets are experts at hiding changes in their health or pain from us, and what may be perceived as "slowing down" may be the gradual progression of illness or disease.

Consideration of your pet's "favourite things" provides important information when assessing their quality of life. It also provides pet owners with a "pet's interests first" checklist of things to watch out for as the clock of time gradually ticks by. By using this list, along with the guidance of your regular veterinarian and the team at Lifting Stars Veterinary Homecare, we aim to help your pet's life be as long, comfortable, and fulfilling as it can be.

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List of Favourite Things

Completed By:

Date:

◆ 1

◆ 2

◆ 3

◆ 4

◆ 5

