

Pets reduce stress



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Stress is a normal feeling for every human being. What makes it different is how we control it. Stress can be defined as a feeling of being overwhelmed or unable to cope with mental or emotional pressure. The Ministry of Health (MOH) reveals that most of the Malaysian teenagers aged 13 to 17 suffer from depression, anxiety, and stress.

When thinking of ways to reduce stress in life, usually activities like playing, eating, and sleeping come to our mind. These are considerably good, to be sure. As Muslim, getting closer to Allah is the best way to reduce stress. Additionally, making new friends is also good to relieve stress and that for health benefits. Generally, the new friends that I mean here are pets. There are many factors showing that having pets can reduce stress.



Cats reacted when they saw their master's camera.

Improve Mood

A quote by James Herriot, an English Veterinarian in 2013, “If having a soul means being able to feel love, loyalty and gratitude, then animals are better off than a lot of humans.”

Pets can be there for you in ways that people can't. They can offer love and companionship. For animal lovers, they can't have a bad mood whenever their pets are with them. It is because the pets' simple demeanour makes their master fall in love with their antics, pampering and cuteness easily. Therefore, the chances for getting stress or depression are lesser.

Patricia Pendry, a researcher from Washington State University conducts a study towards 249 students who are given the opportunity to play with dogs and cats during their exam season. The result from the observation shows that there is a positive impact on the participants that their stress is reduced just in 10 minutes. Thus, it is proven that pets can help people to reduce stress.

Encourage Exercise

Islam strongly encourages human to exercise as a way to maintain a good health. Exercise increases our overall health and sense of well-being, which puts more pep in our every day steps. A study from University of Missouri on human walking speed shows that walking with a puppy increasingly leads to 28 percent but only 4 percent increases when walking with human. Necessarily, tidy up pets resting places, clean up sewage waste and feed pets are also light exercises for the pet masters. Doing this exercise regularly will make our daily activities become more stable and can reduce the negative effects of stress.

Provide Social Support

When we take a walk along with our pets, that will make us more approachable and also widen the circle of people we meet. Islam encourages humans to know each other, as mentioned in the Quran,

“O humanity! Indeed, we created you from a male and a female, and made you into peoples and tribes so that you may get to know one another. Surely the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous among you.” (*Al-Hujurat*: verse 13)



Picture for illustration purpose only



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To sum up, stress will always come when we are in trouble. A big effort is needed for us to control it wisely. If you are stressful, you should consider getting a pet. However, if you can't afford to take care of pets, there are a lot of pet stores that you can visit such as *Geli-Geli Kucing* cafe. You can try doing this to reduce your stress. Taking care of stress level is significant for our physical dan mental health.