



No More Homeless Pets Forum
August 8-12, 2005

Help for the Shy Ones

Debby Potts of the Tellington TTouch awareness technique gives us the lowdown on how to increase the confidence of semi-feral, under-socialized or fearful home-seekers.

Introduction from Debby Potts:

Love, attention and training go a long way toward helping those animals who need a little extra assistance to find their future families. Unfortunately, some of them need something more. Tellington TTouch can be the solution for building confidence and trust in semi-feral, undersocialized or fearful animals.

Tellington TTouch is a gentle hands-on technique that combines a specific form of bodywork with movement and learning exercises that work on a cellular level to improve health and behavior. TTouch helps to release tension and increase body awareness, which allows the animal to be handled without provoking typical fear responses. The animal can then more easily learn new and more appropriate behaviors. This approach makes training more effective and builds a deeper connection between humans and animals.

TTouch bodywork looks like massage, but it is very different. TTouch has the effect of releasing fear and trauma from the body and reminding the cells of their potential for perfection. This often translates into permanent changes for the animal – physically, mentally and emotionally.

By using TTouch and a variety of other tools, like the Playground of Higher Learning and body wraps, you can assist the animal in experiencing self-confidence in previously frightening situations. Even the most difficult problems are often eliminated. Tellington TTouch can also help with recovery from illness or injury, stress reduction, or just enhancement of the quality of an animal's life.

Tellington TTouch was developed by internationally recognized animal expert Linda Tellington-Jones. It has been used internationally for more than 30 years by people with pets, trainers, veterinarians, zoo personnel and shelter workers.

Anyone can learn to use Tellington TTouch. This week, I will describe the many ways you can use TTouch to help fearful animals – from those who are afraid to be approached to those who just need a little help in their daily lives.

Debby Potts Bio:

With more than 21 years of experience, Debby Potts is one of the most highly recognized Tellington TTouch instructors in the world. She brings a lifelong love of animals to her work with TTouch. As one of Oregon's first board-certified veterinary technicians, she has always been concerned with animal health and behavior. TTouch has allowed her to extend that care to include improving the lives of animals and their people on physical, spiritual and emotional levels.

Growing up around horses has given Debby an extensive background in working with many different breeds and disciplines. A filly born with severe neurological damage initially brought Debby to TTouch after the veterinarians had done all they could for her. The amazing progress the filly made inspired Debby to make this her life's work.

Also passionate about helping companion animals, Debby has studied with many well-respected dog trainers and has been a speaker at various international dog conferences. Debby travels much of the year teaching workshops and working privately with individuals in the U.S., Europe, Japan and South Africa. She lives near Portland, Oregon, with her human and animal family. She can be reached by e-mail at mttdebby@earthlink.net and her website is www.IntegratedAnimal.com.

FWD: Re: Question #2**Question from Mickey:**

One of the sad sights to see after a cat has been rescued is a wonderful, sweet, loving cat passed over repeatedly because s/he is cowering in the back of the cage, or hiding in the litter box at adoption days. We have had many of these cats over the years, some adopted, some still at our home. Posting signs on the cage that say, "I'm not like this at home," didn't help much. As fosters, we welcome potential adopters to our homes to visit the animals in a "natural" environment. The visitor can sit on the sofa and wait for the fearful cat to come to them. We can talk about what it might be like in the future in their home.

But time and again, these cats who we know may be perfect for a certain home, are passed over because another cat is more outgoing or less fearful. What can we do either at adoption days or even at our home with the potential adopter there, to help reassure the timid hiding cat?

Response from Debby Potts:

We have a great deal of success using Tellington TTouch with these fearful cats. In our two year practitioner training program we always have groups working with animals in shelters and I am so happy

with how well the cats respond to TTouch. It is common to see cats as you describe, under a blanket or in the litter box in the back of the cage.

Frequently when we come back the next day, the cat is rubbing on the front of the cage engaging people who come by. As we all know, these cats will tend to be adopted first.

It is best to work with the cats before the adoption days. If it is difficult or dangerous to touch the cat, begin with the TTouch Wand as described in the previous question. Sometimes a paint brush or feather can also be used as a wand. It's OK to be creative in looking at ways to make a connection with the cat in a non-threatening way. It may also be easiest to begin working with a towel over the cat. Some cats feel safer in what we call the "kitty cave." Having a barrier between your hand and the cat can make it easier for the cat to accept contact.

Tellington TTouch is done with the cat rather than to the cat. That means it is important to listen to the feedback you are getting from the cat and adapt your approach to help her feel comfortable with what you are doing. When the cat knows you are paying attention to her communication, it creates a deeper, more trusting relationship that often carries over to other people.

Some of the TTouches are circular movements, some are lifts or slides and some are combinations of those. All of the circular TTouches follow the same pattern. One circular TTouch that is easy to start with is an Abalone TTouch. It is done with the hand resting lightly on the cat, perhaps near the shoulders. Let your hand conform to the shape of the cat's body, sort of like the foot of an abalone as it conforms to the shape of the rock it is on. Imagine the face of a clock on the cat's body with 6 on the clock toward the cat's tail or toward her feet depending if your hand is on the cat's back or more on the side. Push the skin around the face of the clock for one and a quarter circles. Do not slide your hand over the hair coat as you make the circle. If you are starting where you would imagine 6 is on the clock, lightly push the skin around past 9, 12, 3, past 6 to complete the circle and on to 8 or 9 on the clock. Pause briefly and now slide your hand to another place. When possible, support the body gently with your free hand, putting it in a place to balance your working hand or rest it on the chest to contain the cat. This will encourage the cat to be in balance and will enhance the effect of the TTouches. With very shy cats, the support hand may be too much sensory input and should be added later when the cat is more comfortable. Maintain a steady rhythm and consistent light pressure around the circle and a quarter.

It is best to start in a place that is easier (like the shoulders) and gradually work toward the more difficult areas (like the hindquarters). It is also more comfortable to move with or diagonally across the hair. If the cat is concerned, go back to where she is comfortable or give her a break. More frequent short sessions will result in faster progress than longer sessions, since a cat's nervous system is sensitive and can easily

be overloaded. Five minutes at a time can be enough for many cats and even one or two TTouches can begin to make a difference. You know that by the cats who tolerate a certain amount of contact and then react with biting or scratching.

Many people also use Tellington TTouch to help cats become lap cats. Even the most unlikely felines have decided that a lap is the place to be after a few TTouch sessions. Knowing you can help that shy cat feel comfortable approaching people is the greatest gift you can give them on their way to a new home.

Question #1

Question from Lainey:

We took in a mother cat and kittens. The mother and some of her kittens were placed, and the remaining 3 kittens (now adult cats) live with us. One of the kittens from this litter exhibits feral behavior. He is absolutely terrified of us, runs whenever we come near. It's clear that he desperately wants to be more social with us, he is just terrified. When I took them to be spayed/neutered, he was so frightened he had a bowel movement in the carrier.

The cats have all and always been treated lovingly, were socialized and picked up as kittens. The other two kittens/cats do not exhibit this behavior. My inlaws have 1 from the litter and she too is a little skittish, but not to the degree that this cat is. Is it possible the father was feral and those instincts have been passed on? More importantly, how can we help Curly become more confident and relaxed around us?

Response from Debby Potts:

Tellington TTouch can be an important part of helping Curly overcome his fearfulness. While I don't believe that feral behavior is inherited, I do know that certain tendencies can be passed on through cellular memory from parent to offspring. Using TTouch we can change the information in the cells that influence certain types of behavior.

Is it possible to have Curly in a small room so that you can work with him? I recommend that you start with a stick of some sort to use as an extension of your arm. We use a three foot European horse whip that we call a TTouch Wand. This Wand has the flexibility and balance that makes it the ideal tool. The Wand helps you to be able to make a connection with Curly without having to be so close to him. Maintaining a soft, non-threatening body posture, stroke the air near him as if you were actually touching him. The idea is to be far enough away from him so he doesn't feel that he has to run away. Very short frequent experiences will help him to make faster progress.

Once you are able to stroke him with the Wand you can gradually begin to do the TTouch body work. Start with using the Wand to push the skin (not ruffling the coat) in a clockwise circle and a quarter before moving on to another place and do the same thing again. This pattern of TTouch has an effect on the cellular function to release fear from the cells and build confidence in the individual. It is usually best to start near the shoulders and gradually work toward the hindquarters. Fearful animals often hold tension in their hindquarters and will be reluctant to accept contact there in the beginning. Once you are doing TTouch with the wand, you can begin to move your hand closer to Curly and use the back of your fingers to do the same circular movement. We have given fun animal names to the TTouches to help people learn and remember them. This TTouch with the back of the fingers is called a Llama TTouch. If Curly feels safer hiding under a towel, you can do the TTouches on the towel, gradually progressing to working on his body.

People working regularly with fearful cats often have two Wands, one to distract them or engage them in play and other to stroke them.

For more information about TTouch for cats, read Linda Tellington-Jones' new book, Getting in TTouch with Your Cat available at www.IntegratedAnimal.com or www.TTouch.com

More about TTouch accessories

Question from Estelle:

Can you please talk more about using the wands (which I've checked out at www.TTouch.com, so I know what they look like now) to play with or distract the animals? Is this what's known as play therapy? Are there any videos or demonstrations I can watch or attend?

Response from Debby Potts:

The Wand is an important part of our work with Tellington TTouch. While it is really a European horse whip, we call it a wand because we want to avoid any negative connotation. It also seems to have a unique magical quality that is sometimes a little difficult to explain. Some animals respond to being stroked with the wand more positively than they do to a person's hand. We use the wand as an extension of our arm, to help the animal focus, to build confidence and to engage their attention.

Our TTouch Wand is a wrapped fiberglass stick that has a particular balance and is stiff yet flexible. It is different than the standard horse whips we find in this country. Of course we also use other types of wand substitutes for smaller animals. Feathers, paint brushes, chopsticks, or even pencils (the recipient is touched with the eraser end) can work for smaller animals like rabbits, guinea pigs or birds and reptiles.

For fearful animals, the wand can be a bridge between standing near them and touching them. You don't have to be so close or lean in toward them. Imagine that the wand is really part of your arm and then the animal will feel the connection between you. Stroke with a long, smooth movement, keeping your hand and body soft and standing in balance. The wand can help an animal accept contact on parts of their body where they are fearful, for example the hindquarters or feet. You can then proceed to do TTouches in those areas. Sometimes using the wand to move the skin is also a good intermediate step. At the animal's pace, move your hand further and further down the wand until you are actually touching skin to fur.

Some animals, especially dogs or horses, may be concerned about the wand, especially if they have been mistreated with a stick. A short experience with walking over the wand and a few treats frequently changes that fearful response. When our intent is positive it has a much different feeling for the animal.

While walking a dog on leash, you can guide him with the wand in front of him. This can help keep his focus directed on where you are going rather than distracted by things in the environment. Stroking him on the chest and down the front legs can have a grounding and calming effect.

Using two wands with cats can help you make a connection with feral or fearful cats. Use one to distract them with play while you stroke them with the other one. When they attack the wand stroking them, it frees the other wand to now stroke. Starting with wands for cats in cages can feel easier and safer for both of you until you know that the cat feels okay being touched with your hand.

Use of the Wand is demonstrated with dogs in *Unleash Your Dog's Potential* and *TTouch of Magic for Cats* as well as various horse videos available at www.IntegratedAnimal.com or www.TTouch.com

Hope for a feral dog

Question from Terri:

About two years ago, my family rescued a puppy whose owner deliberately let him run loose in the neighborhood because he didn't want her. Her mother and siblings had all been taken to the pound and killed. Lizzy would wander into our yard daily and finally I was able to close the gate on her when she wandered into our dog run. She would allow us to pet her only when she was backed into a corner, and she wouldn't meet our eyes when we petted her.

She bit my dad when he lifted her to take her to a bigger run (we are a rescue and have multiple runs). She has lived in her run for two years now and we don't know what we can do with her or for her.

She will allow my mom to trim her dew claws and to pet her and she allows me to pet her face or neck. She will not come to us except when we have food and even then it has to be on her terms; if we approach her, she backs away. She panics whenever a leash is attached to her. Even if we let go of the leash and let her run around with it loose, she panics until we take it off. She has been to the vet only once as a puppy and it was a major fiasco to get her there.

I am worried that she is not having any kind of a life with the way things are and she certainly cannot be adopted. We have failed her miserably. There's no way we would even consider getting a trainer in here for fear of making her worse.

Can you offer ideas? We just don't know what to do to help Lizzy. We thought time would take care of it if we persisted, but apparently not.

Thank you for your time.

Response from Debby Potts:

This is certainly not an easy situation with Lizzy. Some dogs will get better with time but many need something more than petting and basic care. This is where Tellington TTouch is an important addition.

Be sure when you are in the run with Lizzy that you are being as non-threatening as possible. If you are not familiar with Calming Signals as described by Turid Rugaas, learn more on her website at www.canis.no/rugaas/onearticle.php?artid=1. Avoiding direct eye contact, looking away, yawning and licking your lips are some of the things that might help her to feel safe with you. Try sitting with your back to Lizzy and see if she comes closer to you.

When you or your mom are with her it is a great opportunity to use some TTouches, along with petting. Remember to breathe and relax while you are with her, it will help her feel calmer. Try Clouded Leopard TTouches by using your finger pads to gently move the skin in a circle and a quarter, then move to another place to start the circle again.

As with any recipient of TTouch, let your thumb rest as a support for your hand to so that your fingers can move easily, curving and flattening your finger joints as you push the skin around an imaginary circle. Imagine the face of a clock on Lizzy's body with 6 on the clock toward the tail or toward her feet depending if your hand is on the Lizzy's back or more on her side. Push the skin around the face of the clock for one and a quarter circles. Do not slide your hand over the hair coat as you make the circle. If you are starting where you would imagine 6 is on the clock, lightly push the skin around past 9, 12, 3,

past 6 to complete the circle and on to 8 or 9 on the clock. Pause briefly and now slide your fingers to another place. Use just the weight of your fingers without pressing into the muscle.

These TTouches have the effect of releasing fear and trauma from the cells and helping Lizzy learn to think, rather than react. The tension patterns Lizzy holds in her body fuel her fear and reactivity. TTouch can let Lizzy's body learn a new way of being. It is likely that you will only be able to do a few TTouches on her in the beginning. Start where it is comfortable for her to be touched and slowly move farther toward her hindquarters in very short sessions. Her cells and nervous system will process the information it receives with the TTouches during the breaks.

We normally recommend having your non-working hand somewhere in contact with the dog for balance and to increase the effect of the TTouch. In Lizzy's case, the supporting hand may be too much sensory input for her to handle. Experiment to see what works best for her.

Since she will allow you to touch her head and neck, TTouches around her face and ears may really help her. There are many connections between the mouth and the emotional areas of the brain. Working the ears with gentle strokes and TTouches can have a very soothing effect and improve her health and well-being.

Perhaps it would be helpful to see if there is a practitioner near you who could help you with Lizzy. Go to www.ttouch.com to find a practitioner in your area.

For more information about TTouch for Dogs get Linda Tellington-Jones' new book, Getting in TTouch with Your Dog and video, Unleash Your Dog's Potential available at www.IntegratedAnimal.com or www.TTouch.com.

Fear of being alone

Question from a member:

I was wondering if there is some way TTouch can address the issue of separation anxiety for a foster dog I have. She is so wonderful, loves people and animals, playful, happy disposition, obedient, sweet, easy keeper, all despite her situation of being given up or lost and ending up in a county shelter.

Her issue is with severe separation anxiety. I cannot get her over it. When I am gone, she has to be crated for her own safety (I have an aggressive dog I would never leave her alone with). She freaks and either become dehydrated panting the entire time, or tries to get out and injures herself in the crate - sometimes badly, to the point that her nose is bleeding.

When I have tried to leave her in the house with my other friendly dog, it does not matter, she would jump through a window to get to me. She becomes destructive and panicked. She cannot handle separation from a person for any stretch of time. I have tried all the tricks in her crate with high end rewards, food, chewies, things to keep her occupied....but nothing helps. I have tried to let her not see me leaving, let her see me leaving, placing another dog or cat with her for company...

This poor baby is so freaked that she accompanies me in the bathroom, and will almost stand in the shower with me every morning. The rest of the time I am working from home or doing something (or simply watching TV), she is sound asleep either beside me or in a 10 foot distance (no more).

I am VERY concerned with this behavior. She is a fantastic dog, really one of a kind..and this is the only thing that makes it hard to have a life because I can't go to the grocery store without worrying about her hurting herself. She is not destructive, seems very happy (does not act nervous as long as she's with someone), plays nice with the other dogs, is good on a leash, acts like a normal, great companion.

What is available under TTouch that could help her let go of being so attached to me? We just can't live like this! Her new, adoptive parents are home four days of the week, so she will be home with another dog crated next to her the rest of the time. I fear that they will not be able to handle her self destructive manners and return her.

HELP!

PS...she also throws up when in the car. I am working on that and taking her to desensitize her to the emotion attached with riding in the car. SO far we are not successful.

Response from Debby Potts:

Separation anxiety is something that many rescued dogs experience. I believe that these dogs truly understand abandonment, so it is no wonder that they consider it vitally important to keep track of the person they believe can take care of them. Unfortunately, understanding the behavior doesn't change the difficulties that can be experienced in having a dog with severe separation issues. Tellington TTouch has helped many of these dogs.

The place to start with any animal is to determine a baseline. Sometimes changes are subtle and you won't notice them if you haven't done a good assessment in the beginning. Put your hands on her body and see if you notice areas that feel hard or soft. Are there places that are warm or cool? Are there places that she would prefer you didn't touch? Check her mouth, ears, feet and tail. Does any of this change

when she is stressed? How does she tend to stand? Does she look like she is balanced over her feet or are they wide, narrow or out away from her body? Does she stand in a confident dog posture or do you see her with her head lowered and tail tucked? It is important to think about her physical, mental and emotional balance. These are all connected and influence each other. It is one of the reasons we can make a difference for dogs and other animals that perhaps haven't been helped with other approaches. We have multiple ways to work with issues depending on the individual. This initial assessment is important because as you work with her I'll ask you to go back and check to see if anything you noticed before has changed.

I have described the TTouch circular movements on the skin with previous questions. The TTouch body work will help to release fear and trauma from the cells and change the tension patterns that so often lead to reactive non-thinking behavior. The TTouches help the animal to learn how to learn. She can learn a calmer, safer response when she is alone that can carry over to different situations.

TTouch mouth work is very useful for animals with emotional issues. There is a connection between the mouth and the emotions. Just think about how many dogs have an oral expression of stress or excitement? They bark, lick, chew, tear things up and even sometimes bite. Mouth work can be an important part of making that change. Sit or stand beside or just behind the dog so that you are both facing the same direction. Use one hand to softly cradle the dog's jaw while you use your other hand to stroke the side of the mouth then do gentle circular TTouches. Remember your thumb connection to keep the pressure of your fingers doing the TTouches light and the circles round. Push the skin in a circle and another quarter of a circle and move to another place. Be sure you are flattening the whiskers rather than pushing them away from the face. If it is comfortable for the dog, you can also gently stretch the lips and do TTouches on the gums. Some dogs will resist having their mouth worked, especially if they are holding a lot of emotional tension there. Be sure you are relaxed and breathing, it will help the dog relax and breathe, too. Start where it is easy to do TTouch, such as near the ears, and gradually work toward the mouth. Even just a few TTouches can begin to make a difference. Frequent short periods of doing mouth work (maybe just a minute) will be more effective than doing it longer. Less is more.

Another great idea for separation anxiety is a T-shirt. Have you ever heard the expression, he was beside himself? A shirt can help the dog "stay in their body" and think. It acts like a little hug that goes with them wherever they go (I know many dogs don't appreciate being hugged like people but the idea of comfort is the same). We often use human t-shirts, just put it on with the chest part on the dog's back (tag at the throat) and tie the extra at the waist up over the back with a hair scruchie or elastic. If you sleep with the shirt before the dog wears it, that might make it even better. Of course, never leave a dog unattended with a shirt on if you believe there is any possibility she would chew it or get it caught or tangled on

anything. Even if you can't leave your dog with the shirt on, it can help in the confidence building process. The shirt might also help with the nausea in the car.

How is she if you are near her but ignoring her? There is physical and emotional separation. It sounds like you may be trying to do both at once. How is she if you are with her but ignoring her? Or if she is in the crate or in a pen but you are right there, perhaps doing TTouches and helping her be in the posture of a calm dog. How can you chunk the process down into smaller pieces where she can be successful?

Look at your dog's life and ask yourself how many opportunities she has to practice confidence and self control. It is important to break this down into smaller pieces so she can build her skills to feel safe being left completely alone. Does she pull on the leash? Learning to walk in physical balance will help her have the emotional balance to feel safe on her own.

This is a complex subject and I don't have space to describe all of the things we might do to help your dog. Keep a positive picture in your mind of her feeling happy and safe. If you want more help check www.ttouch.com/practitioners.shtml to find a practitioner near you.

More information is available at www.IntegratedAnimal.com and www.TTouch.com

Can a 'love biter' learn another way?

Question from Charlotte:

We have an adult cat whom I call a "love biter". She actively seeks attention, but then doesn't know what to do with it. She wants to pet **you** (rubbing around legs) before you pet her, or else we are subjected to a warning nip. In addition, she can take just a few strokes before becoming overstimulated and biting as a message to stop. She does this even to volunteers whom she has known for long periods of time. Can TTouch help her to become more comfortable with the body contact our visitors and potential adopters want to make?

Response from Debby Potts:

Overstimulation is a common problem for cats. We find that cats have a much more sensitive nervous system than most other animals and our Tellington TTouch sessions usually have to be much shorter for cats than for dogs.

All of the body work I have described before will be helpful for this cat. It might be necessary to work through a towel or have a thick sock on your hand. This isn't for protection for you, it is to diffuse the effect

of the contact with the cat until her nervous system can accept the direct contact of your hand. The Touch Wand or other tool might be useful here too.

Another TTouch that might be good for this cat is a Python Lift. It is different from the circular TTouches. The Python Lift is named after Joyce, a gentle 11 foot-long Burmese Python suffering from a recurring respiratory problem. Linda Tellington-Jones worked with her at the San Diego Zoo with amazing results.

The Python Lift is used to relieve and release tension, spasm and sensitivity. It is effective on the shoulders, legs, neck, back and hips of animals, and also feels great on human backs, arms, legs and shoulders. The Python Lift relaxes reactive animals and improves balance. It also helps to bring your animal into a state of mental and emotional stability.

To do the Python Lift, the whole hand (or whatever part can contact the animal) is placed on the body or around the leg with just enough pressure to gently lift the skin and muscle. Lift, pause for several seconds, and then slowly return the skin to the starting point. Remember to breathe with the movement. If you lift too much it causes the animal to tense or move away. Exhale with the return of the skin to the starting point and move to the next place where you can start again.

All of the circular TTouches can have this Lift added to the end of the movement to add a degree of relaxation to the specific effect of the TTouch. Experiment with what the cat likes and remember that shorter, frequent experiences create faster results.

For more information about Joyce the python and other stories about TTouch, see Linda Tellington-Jones' book, *The Tellington-Touch: A Breakthrough Technique to Train & Care for Your Favorite Animal*, available at www.IntegratedAnimal.com or www.TTouch.com.

Diagnoses not necessary for cure!

Question from Kat:

I have a 13 year old, male tabby that I adopted from a humane society when he was about 6 months old. Since the day I brought him home he's done his poo right outside the litter box. Same location for a year or so, then added another location. A while longer and he started using three locations..until eventually he was going everywhere. He would start running and going at the same time, leaving a trail behind him (and you thought you were having fun)!

He gets very itchy and twitchy and then starts running through the house. The vets said they thought it was Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS). We give him Enulose to keep his stool soft, in case it is a pain related issue due to constipation. He gets that med twice a day and hates it, we have to chase him down.

When my mother was in the hospital for 4 days he started going on her bed. He sleeps with her at nap and nighttime. When she came home he'd go on her bed when she was sleeping!!!

We are now closing him in the laundry room with his own litter pan, food and water when we know he's "due," it's hard guessing. When he doesn't go at night and we know he's still "due," we cover her bed with a shower curtain (class act! sigh).

He's always been a loner (we had and have 3 other cats when we adopted him) but now is coming out to visit with us and getting on my lap for a while. Much more affectionate with both my mother and I.

Any ideas for TTouch approach to this problem? He's been this way for 13 years now.... but I hate to see him so stressed. Many thanks for helping us help the animals!!

Response from Debby Potts:

You certainly deserve credit for working all these years to help this guy. One of the things we know about Tellington TTouch is that we don't have to know what the cause of the problem is in order to work with it. TTouch is not energy work and we aren't fixing things as much as we are helping the animal to be the best they can be. Our intent is to activate the function of the cells and awaken cellular intelligence - as Linda Tellington-Jones says, "a little like turning on the electric lights of the body." We often work with animals who have undiagnosable problems and yet we are often able to help them.

There is a good chance that the problem has both physical and emotional components. It sounds like he may not be so aware of when he is going, if he is running and pooping at the same time.

What does this mean for your cat? It means that we would do the TTouch work and watch for changes. Begin by noticing how he feels about having the circular TTouches and lifts (described in previous answers) done on his body. If he objects to the TTouches anywhere, gradually work toward having him accept the work. You may need to frequently go back to areas that he likes, change the type of TTouch you are using (Llama, Clouded Leopard, Abalone, or Python Lift) or work through a towel or with a sock on your hand. Be sure to give him frequent breaks and keep the experiences short, perhaps a minute or two. The TTouches will activate the body's ability to heal itself and release pain and tension that could be contributing to the problem.

I would recommend adding Raccoon TTouches around his hindquarters and the base of his tail. Following the same clockwise circle and a quarter pattern as the other circular TTouches, the Raccoon TTouch is done very lightly with the finger tips (the area just behind the nail). If you have very long finger nails, it isn't possible to do Raccoon, in that case use the Clouded Leopard in the area.

It is important to have realistic expectations for your cat. If this behavior has been going on for 12 1/2 yrs, it may not be something you can change. We have also seen some pretty amazing things in cases where you would never expect results. You cannot do any harm to your cat by doing the Tellington TTouch work with him and it could just be another way to enhance the relationship you have with him through this non-verbal communication with your hands. Just try it and see what happens.

More information is available at www.IntegratedAnimal.com or www.TTouch.com

Helping a biting dog from the inside out

Question from Jean:

A friend recommended that I look into the TTouch program.

I have a dog (named Ollie) whom we adopted from a shelter last September. He was extremely fearful (we were told he was picked up by the SPCA due to neglect and abuse by the owner). He is extremely afraid of anything loud such as motorcycles, pick-up trucks, etc. (although not storms or thunder, interestingly).

I thought he was getting much better--we worked with a trainer--and he is a very good dog in our home. No accidents, little barking, likes to be hugged, to do tricks, etc.

A month or so ago he started "nipping" at people when they'd be entering and leaving our house.

This behavior has progressed to a bite of a friend (puncture with a little blood), which was unprovoked other than that she was walking through our home.

Do you think TTouch would help and if so, where can I learn more? I am located in Northeast PA (18372 Zip). Ollie is a sweet dog (Flat Coated Retriever/Spaniel mix) and I would be heartbroken if we can't solve this problem. Currently we just isolate him from anyone entering our home. Thank you for any help you can give us.

Response from Debby Potts:

While isolating Ollie when anyone comes to your home manages the problem, it doesn't help him learn how to accept people in your home. Our goal with Tellington TTouch would be to help Ollie have more confidence, self control, and to make better choices about people coming and going.

Begin with having a clear picture of what you want from Ollie. It is easy to think, "I don't want him to bite people." What DO you want? Animals can get a great deal of information from the thoughts in our heads, whether there is a telepathic connection or if our thoughts create micro-movements in our bodies that our dogs read, it doesn't really matter. Your expectations do influence Ollie's behavior.

I would start with the general assessment that I described in the question about separation anxiety. Much of the same work described there would be good for Ollie. Doing the TTouch work and checking in consistently to see what has changed is an important piece of making progress. It is also a good idea to keep a journal of what you notice. It is so easy not to notice something that isn't there (do you ever go into a person's house and notice there are no cobwebs?). In other words, his improvements could go undetected unless a specific effort is made to track them.

All of the previously described TTouch body work will be good for Ollie. Be sure and listen to him when he gives you feedback about what you are doing. Watch for Calming Signals (<http://www.canis.no/rugaas/onearticle.php?artid=1>). Help him to be comfortable with TTouces all over his body. Pay particular attention to the mouth and the hindquarters. I mentioned earlier that the mouth is connected to the emotions and the hindquarters is where animals often carry tension related to fearful or aggressive behavior.

TTouch tail work will be good for Ollie to help with his fearfulness about noises and his reactive behavior with people. After you have done some TTouces around the hindquarters and down his tail, gently grasp his tail at the base near his body. Gently move his tail around in a couple of circles in each direction (this is different than the movement of the TTouces when you are sliding the skin in the clockwise circle and a quarter). Notice if it feels tight or moves easily. Now stretch his tail very slightly, putting a very small amount of traction on his tail. Pause and slowly follow the tail back where you started. Don't let it go quickly from the stretched position. TTouch Tail work releases tension through the back and hips and is great for lots of dogs and cats.

A TTouch body wrap can help Ollie's ability to think and act rather than react. It has a similar effect to the t-shirt I previously mentioned. The body wrap is a configuration of 2" or 3" wide Ace bandages we use around a dog's body for many purposes. Building confidence and balance are two reasons I would recommend it for Ollie. The full wrap, depending on the size of the dog, may be two bandages tied, pinned or sewn together. I would start with a half wrap and then go on to a full wrap if he feels

comfortable. The tension should feel comfortable for him, perhaps what comfortable waist band elastic would be like on your sweat pants. Let him wear it for short periods of time when things are calm in the house as well as when you are around the noises he fears or when someone is coming or going in the house. It isn't a judgment about him being good or bad, think of it as a tool he could use as a little extra help to think or feel safe. Never leave him unattended with the wrap as he could chew on it or get it caught on something.

The next piece is important to ensure that we are showing Ollie what we want from him with people in the house and to keep everyone safe. Rather than locking him away, I would recommend using a head collar with the TTouch double leash system. We prefer a comfortable fitting head collar like the Halti. When we are using a head collar, whether it is a Gentle Leader, Halti, Snoot Loop or any other brand, we use a TTouch leash that we have specially made with a clip on either end. One end snaps to the head collar and the other to the dog's flat collar or harness if they are wearing that rather than a collar. The snap attached to the head is light weight to prevent the tension we see in the neck and back with heavier snaps. With two points of contact to the dog, we now have about ten times more ability to give him information. We use the collar attachment as the primary signal and the Halti attachment as a sort of power steering / power brakes addition. We can use the Halti to turn his head away from the person and reinforce behavior we want. The leash signals are gentle without jerking, just making a connection and releasing as soon as you get a response.

Any time you are working with a dog that bites, it is important to consult with a trainer skilled in this area if you aren't completely confident in the training process. Adding TTouch to any training program will enhance the results you get and help the changes be more how the dog feels on the inside, not just what he does on the outside.

More information is available at www.IntegratedAnimal.com and www.TTouch.com. These techniques are very hard to describe with words alone, but they do give an idea of what TTouch is all about and what is possible. Best would be to gain access to the TTouch books, videos, or even to attend a workshop (there's even one coming up in Kanab, UT, where Best Friends is based, more info at <http://ttouch.com/announcettouch.shtml>).

Helping frightened animals adjust to new surroundings

Question from Nancy:

The TTouch method sounds great, except I can't get near the cat! She takes off if I get close to her. I adopted her, she had been feral and was tamed in a shelter. She was very friendly to me there. I brought her home along with another cat and she has regressed back to being feral. Help!

Response from Debby Potts:

Your question is similar to Lainey's question earlier in the week, so please also review that question in the archives. It is important to keep the cat in a small space so you don't have to chase her and to limit how far away from you she can get. I like to keep frightened kittens or cats in the bathroom or another small room where there are few places to hide. A bathroom is nice because they can hide in a cupboard or behind the toilet, where they can feel safe. Here they can't go too far or be out of reach, as when a frightened cat has full run of the house and finds some unreachable spot, such as under the bed or behind the washer/dryer.

You can work with multiple, fearful cats this way, as well. As you work with one, the other has a break to process the information that her nervous system has received. She can also learn from watching your work with the other cats. Another cat loose in the house may or may not be helpful in showing your scared kitty the ropes of becoming a lap cat. If your cat who is comfortable in the house or just wants out, it won't help your fearful cat feel better.

As I said in the previous response, it may be better to help the fearful cat feel more comfortable with you by starting with the wand as an extension of your arm. One wand can be used as a toy-type distraction as you stroke her with the other one. When she attacks the stroking wand, it provides the opportunity to switch and stroke her with the other one. It's a process of switching roles between one wand and the other. Frequent short experiences will create faster results than spending too much time, overwhelming her nervous system and leaving her overstimulated.

As she relaxes more and more when the wands are in play, then you can start moving your hands down the wands, ever so gradually, closer and closer to her body. Watch her body language to discern if she's relaxed enough for your hands to inch down the wand. Eventually you will be touching her directly, and one day the wand ritual will be just taken out for some nostalgic playtime.

You will start with the narrow end of the wand and as you progress toward being closer to the cat you can turn the wand around so that you are using the button end of the wand. It will allow you to begin to do TTouches with a bit more precision with the wand in preparation for your hand to be doing the same movements on the hair and skin. Remember to breathe and relax and maintain a non-threatening body posture. Turning a bit to the side and using peripheral vision rather than staring at the cat will help her feel more comfortable.

As you are able to use the contained environment (i.e. bathroom) and her gaining confidence to make more contact with her (as you could in the shelter) you will create a different habitual response. Progress

to being able to do TTouches (mentioned before) which will help her to feel safer in gradually larger, more open spaces in the house. Giving her the whole house may be overwhelming. Give her gradually larger spaces to see and smell as she progressively builds confidence.

All of the TTouches in the Getting In TTouch with Your Cat book or the video, TTouch of Magic for Cats can help this cat. It is wonderful to know that even if you don't do the TTouches perfectly, you can't do any harm. As long as you are listening to the cat, go ahead and give it a try, at the very least you will still be spending quality time with the cats and you may see results you wouldn't have imagined possible.

For more information or to purchase products see www.IntegratedAnimal.com or www.TTouch.com

Interested in sponsoring a weekend workshop? Contact info@IntegratedAnimal.com for more information

Would you like to be a TTouch practitioner? See www.TTouch.com or call 800-854-8326 for more information.

Frantic dogs who lunge ahead and pull on the leash

Question from Kelly:

Do you have any suggestions for shelter dogs that pull on the leash? It is sometimes difficult for these dogs to be adopted and for volunteers to take them out.

Response from Debby Potts:

We have many ways to help these pully, unfocussed dogs. Our practitioners work with many shelter animals as part of their certification course. Some are obviously excited, you might expect them to be pulling, and there are others who look so calm and quiet until you open the door and let them out. They can suddenly resemble the cartoon character, The Tasmanian Devil. These dogs are all great teachers. Being centered and balanced yourself is an important piece of helping these dogs.

I said in a previous question that it is important to look at a dog's balance. Their physical balance is connected to their mental and emotional balance. Each has an influence on the other. As soon as the dog pulls on the leash, he is physically out of balance which means it isn't as easy for him to think or to feel secure.

One simple technique we use is called the Balance Leash. This isn't a special leash, any leash that is long enough (at least 6 feet) will work. When the dog begins pulling, hold him still with your inside hand (the hand nearest to the dog) on the leash several inches from the snap. Hold on to the handle of the

leash with the outside hand and drape the loop across the dog's chest. Loosen the connection to the collar and use the loop to rebalance the dog with a signal at the dog's chest. Bring his weight back over his feet and release the contact of the loop. The dog understands your intentions more clearly this way than by just pulling back on his collar.

Be sure you are standing near the dog's shoulder when you do this. If you are too far back, you will not be able to give the diagonally up-and-back signal that shifts his weight back into balance. The important part here is the release of contact after the dog's weight is over his feet. If you keep a little bit of connection with the loop at the chest the dog will lean into the contact and won't get the feeling of being in balance.

Another important part of the Tellington TTouch work is our Playground of Higher Learning. We have in the past called it an obstacle course or confidence course because we are working through various obstacles to build balance, focus and confidence but it is so much more than that. I like the idea of the playground because it is fun for people and dogs and the higher learning part because while it looks very simple, a great deal of learning takes place. There is an excellent description of the Playground of Higher Learning for use with dogs and horses at <http://www.ttouch.com/playgroundttouch.shtml>.

The learning exercises we do with movement are a critical part of the Tellington TTouch work. We can use the TTouch body work to help a dog to be relaxed and calm, but if he goes back to all of his old patterns as soon as he moves it isn't useful for real life. These ground exercises complete the picture of a dog with physical, mental and emotional balance that has self control and a clear understanding of what is expected of him. They also help to enhance a relationship of trust and confidence with people that carries over to all people, a vital part of helping our dogs adapt to new families.

You don't have to have a formal TTouch Playground with the types of obstacles shown on the web page. You can be as creative as you'd like with things in the environment. Weave through bushes, step up and down off of a curb, use the slope of a driveway. A practitioner at our local shelter painted a labyrinth on the pavement in the parking lot.

Linda Tellington-Jones' new book, *Getting in TTouch with Your Dog* and video, *Unleash Your Dog's Potential* both show descriptions of various types of equipment and the work with the Playground.

I hope you enjoy the process of integrating Tellington TTouch into your work with animals. It is fun and it works!

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Member Comments

Comment from Mickey about fear of being alone:

We have had good success with trying dogs on melatonin, which we purchase over the counter. It works wonders in some cases, and if it ever doesn't work, at least it's not harmful. Vets are recommending it often for separation anxiety and thunder fear. We also use it for traumatized dogs..we have one that was found in a dumpster and was very shy of all humans; not aggressive , just aloof. He is starting to allow petting after only a few days. Our vet recommended, and we use, 3 mg twice a day for the first couple of weeks then taper to 3 mg after that as needed for dogs larger than 50 pounds. For dogs 25 to 50 pounds, 2 mg (1 mg tabs) twice daily, and from 0-25 pounds, 1 mg twice a day. Usually after 6 wks we wean them off.

Comment from members about hope for a feral dog:

Comment from a member:

For the feral dog who has not yet become tame, perhaps moving the dog to a large run shared with a very tame dog would help. Then, perhaps this dog will see how the other dog safely interacts with people. This has worked for us but we are so busy with the other dogs we never pressured the feral and just let time make a difference. Then it finally happened (our dog will always have some trepidation but at least is more adoptable now than before).

Comment from Deborah:

Many of the dogs that I rescue are shy, but after a few days they recognize that they are in a safe place and their true personality comes out and they are fine. The most frightened dog that I have ever rescued was a 10 mo. old Blue Heeler. I brought him to my farm and he appeared to be afraid of hands coming toward him and for months we could not go to him, he had to come to us, but would not allow us to pet him (he shied away when we tried). Every visitor to our farm was given a treat to give to this dog even if they had to toss the treat his way if he wouldn't come up to them.

After we received his confidence (it took a year) the biggest break-through was agility class. The first two classes were very scary for him, but after that it was smooth sailing. That was three years ago and he has been confident ever since.

Comment from Debbie about helping frightened animals adjust to new surroundings:

Have you tried Feliway (www.feliway.com) on the cages during adoption? I've read that it comforts cats, and relaxes them, and it may help give them a tiny bit more comfort in this situation. There is also an equivalent for dogs called Dog Appeasing Pheromone (DAP) from the same company.

Closing comments from forum moderator:

Thank you to the many members who sent in questions and comments for this week's forum! Please stay posted for a future week on Animal Introductions in the coming months!

Transcripts from this and all other forum weeks are archived for easy reference, and are made available to all at <http://www.bestfriends.com/nomorehomelesspets/weeklyforum/forumarchives.cfm>. Meanwhile, those of you who joined the forum midweek can view the complete transcripts right away at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/NMHP/>.

Frequently, members contact us asking for permission to share the information posted through this forum. **The answer is always yes.** We just ask that the source is acknowledged (No More Homeless Pets online forum, hosted by Best Friends Animal Society) and that the web page for the forum is provided (<http://www.bestfriends.com/nomorehomelesspets/weeklyforum/>). That way they know where to go to find out more!

As always, thank you for being part of the forum, and for everything you do for the animals!

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Kindness to animals builds a better world for all of us.