

# Reiki for Animals

## A brief overview of Reiki and its use to support animal care and well-being



This document has been produced to provide helpful information about the complementary and relaxing therapy of Reiki, explaining it simply, and indicating how Reiki may be offered to animals to benefit not only them but their owners, veterinary practices and rescue centres too.

Accepted benefits are detailed as are the veterinary requirements supported and adopted by Reiki practitioners. The views of a veterinary surgeon and nurse who have found Reiki to be a valuable asset to their work are shared as is feedback from very grateful owners of animals who have enjoyed and benefited from one or more sessions.

Finally, recognising the demand from veterinary professionals for scientific evidence, reference is made to the growing support for Reiki in human medicine, backed by a significant number of published studies, Government endorsed National Occupational Standards and the formal agreement for GPs to now refer patients to approved Reiki practitioners.

*Reiki*

靈  
氣

*Rei* = Universal

*Ki* = Life Force Energy . Ki is also known as 'chi' life force energy in acupuncture and Tai Chi or 'prana' in yoga

Produced by Sue Malcolm (Master Reiki Practitioner Teacher)  
For the UK Reiki Federation (UKRF)  
The UK's largest professional Reiki Association [www.reikifed.co.uk](http://www.reikifed.co.uk)



## What is Reiki?

Definitions of Reiki may vary but in essence they describe its holistic complementary nature, supporting and not replacing orthodox medical or veterinary treatment. Reiki is a form of 'energy healing' or transfer of energy between a practitioner and the recipient with origins that date back thousands of years.



### Definition of Reiki from the UK Reiki Federation

Reiki as defined by the Oxford English dictionary is: *“A healing technique based on the principle that the therapist can channel energy into the patient by means of touch, to activate the natural healing processes of the patient’s body and restore physical and emotional well-being”.*

It is however, also widely accepted that Reiki can be given and received equally effectively hands-off or via distant healing.

The Japanese word 'Reiki' literally translates as universal life force energy. This system of healing was developed by Mikao Usui in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. It is a non-invasive complementary therapy that has been taught and used in the UK since the late 1900s, but Eastern medicine has for thousands of years worked with this energy, recognising its flow through all living things. Reiki supports orthodox medicine or can be used alone but is not a replacement for traditional medication or treatments. It is not based on any belief, faith or suggestion, and scientific research using quantum physics is starting to help us to understand how Reiki may work to benefit the individual. It has been suggested that in years to come it may be known as energy medicine based on scientifically measurable energy emitted from the healer’s hands.

Reiki is given fully clothed in a quiet environment and is safe for adults, children, mothers-to-be, babies and animals. However, in the case of animals with health issues, owners should confirm that the animal has been seen by a veterinary surgeon to obtain a veterinary diagnosis. Reiki Practitioners must not diagnose the health problem.

It is highly recommended that practitioners are members of a recognised professional organisation with strict Codes of Ethics and hold Practitioner insurance

Ki energy flows through every living thing and when the channels through which it flows are blocked we suffer from imbalances which, if not removed could lead to dis-ease. Offering Reiki helps to unblock the channels allowing a free flow and improved sense of self and feeling of wellbeing.

## Veterinary legalities of offering Reiki to Animals



Reiki is not a defined act of veterinary surgery. This means that Reiki is not restricted to veterinary surgeons provided there is no element of diagnosis. Whether a veterinary surgeon or not, anyone offering a complementary therapy must ensure they are adequately trained in its application.

In accordance with Section 27 of the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966 and Chapter 19 of the Supporting Guidance for the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) Code of Professional Conduct for Veterinary Surgeons, Reiki Practitioners **MUST NOT** :-

- a) Make a diagnosis of disease in, or injuries to, animals including tests performed on animals for diagnostic purposes
- b) Give advice based on such a diagnosis
- c) Give any medical or surgical treatment to animals
- d) Perform surgical operations on animals

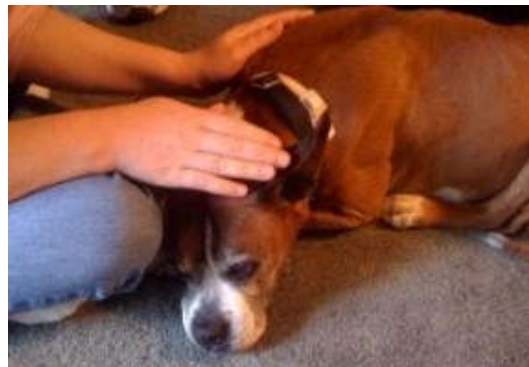
On this basis a veterinary surgeon does not need to be asked for permission in order for Reiki to be offered to animals. However, in the event of either the animal's owner/ carer or the Reiki practitioner suspecting anything physically wrong with any animal, then a vet should be consulted prior to Reiki being offered so that an official diagnosis can be made first. [Exception: Reiki may be offered as first aid in an emergency situation purely for the purpose of calming an animal until the vet arrives].

Reiki practitioners must also be careful not to make comments that could be easily misinterpreted as a diagnosis.

In the event of an owner requesting Reiki for their animal's overall well-being that is not suspected to relate to an undiagnosed physical issue/ medical condition; eg for an emotional or behavioural issue; the vet need not be consulted.

Reiki can be used to support veterinary medicine/ treatments or other complementary therapies.

Ideally Reiki practitioners would work alongside vets, building good working relations with local veterinary practices to optimally benefit animals.



## The use of Reiki with Animals

Practical reasons for offering Reiki to animals	Accepted benefits for animals receiving Reiki
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Non- invasive</li> <li>• Can be given anywhere at any time               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- hands-on, hands-off or distantly</li> <li>- vets practice, hospital or home</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Requires no equipment</li> <li>• No need to move or disrupt an animal</li> <li>• Complements orthodox veterinary care</li> <li>• The animal is in control – Reiki can't be forced</li> <li>• Relaxing, so may help pre-treatment /post-op</li> <li>• Always works for an animal's highest good</li> <li>• Depending on the situation and individual, one session may be all that is required</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greater comfort</li> <li>• Improved feeling of wellbeing</li> <li>• Promotion of relaxation which sometimes can lead to sleep</li> <li>• Greater sense of self</li> <li>• Peaceful transition for animals ready to pass over</li> </ul>

Other point to note

- Reiki practitioners working with animals should have certificates to a minimum of level 2 Reiki qualification and be insured. Exception: Reiki level I trained individuals offering Reiki to their own pet.

### Two animal studies

“Personal interaction with a Reiki practitioner decreases noise-induced microvascular damage in an animal model in the *Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine* 2006 Jan-Feb;12(1):15-22.

“Reiki Improves Heart Rate Homeostasis in Laboratory Rats” in the *Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine* (14(4): 417-422, 2008)

### **Examples of Reiki's increasing use/ development :**

- A small number of veterinary nurses and surgeons offer Reiki as a paid service or work in conjunction with local Reiki practitioners
- Reiki practitioners are also working to a limited but growing extent with horse racing yards, stables and horse sanctuaries
- Major rescue centres overseas (US/ Canada/ Australia) value Reiki for helping their animals. Staff and volunteer Reiki training programmes exist for the most progressive centres (see case study page 7)
- Branches of well known UK rescue centres are also using Reiki as well as many smaller independent rescue centres.



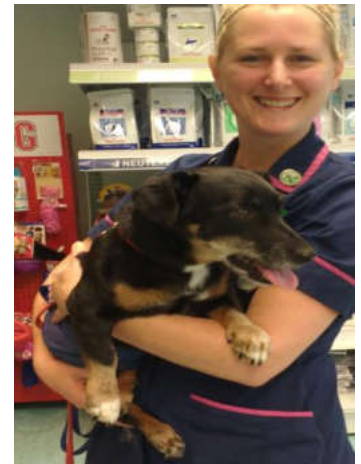
## Feedback from Veterinary Professionals & Rescue Owners

Owners and staff at veterinary practices, rescue centres and animal sanctuaries hold differing opinions of Reiki, from massive support to rejection based on a number of factors. However a common concern appears to be the lack of animal clinical trials to provide science based evidence. Whilst the science is developing and human medicine is increasingly supporting Reiki based on its successful trials and studies; where it is offered to animals, benefits are regularly being observed as animals enjoy, relax and appear to understand this therapy. See pages 7-8 for testimonials and words of gratitude from animal's owners.

### RW Veterinary Nurse B.A (Hons) RVN Cert CAB MBVNA , Reiki Master Practitioner

***"We need to be improving the lives of each and every pet we meet and that of their owners and sometimes medicine needs a 'complementary' helping hand. I have seen Reiki work wonders on a daily basis".***

Photo shows Rebecca with rescue dog Saffi, who was nervous of strangers and new situations and was reluctant to engage with Rebecca on first meeting her at the vets. After 3 Reiki sessions Saffi happily comes into the consulting room, loves her Reiki and is becoming a generally more relaxed dog out and about too.



### AV BVMS MRCVS veterinary surgeon, and recently attuned Reiki Practitioner

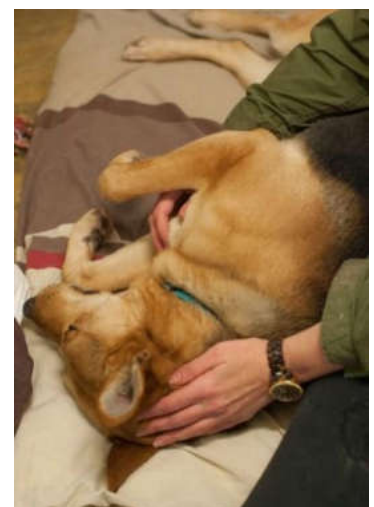
***"I think Reiki could benefit some of these animals to feel safer and therefore overall benefit the veterinary practice by showing the owners that the animals are calmer at their practice***

*I know that veterinarians are under a time restraint with their consultations but on a few occasions when I've had the time to perform Reiki on the animals, I've had positive feedback from both the animals and owners noticing the difference in their animals. Animals are very sensitive, and pick up energy all around them. For many, going to the veterinarian is a terrifying experience".*

### GA, owner of Glendee Dog Rescue and Re-homing Centre

***"Since Reiki has been offered at Glendee Rescue, we have noticed a huge difference. Suddenly, dogs who had been with us for a long time with no interest started to respond to human touch and begin to embark upon their recovery journey in order to find new homes. They started to change and they became more relaxed - which allowed them to respond more effectively to the training skills that they so desperately needed in order to find their new homes.***

*A lot of our dogs had come to us with traumatic backgrounds and some could not even be approached. Reiki made a huge impact on their association with human contact and allowed them to let people into their lives again. Many dogs have now come through our doors, and I have no doubt that Reiki has enabled them to move on at a faster pace to their new lives, becoming more relaxed, well-rounded and trainable".*



## Reiki in Human Medicine

Reiki studies are not easy to conduct with animals and more Reiki practitioners work in human medicine than with animals, however a number of peer reviewed published studies exist. It is on the back of these, practical trials and observation of patient benefits in medical and care establishments that Reiki is now, from a small base, increasingly offered in or by a wide range of medical, care and rehabilitation establishments/ services.

### Example publications for Reiki studies/ articles:



General  
Medical  
Council  
April 2015  
Guidance

The GMP confirmed in April 2015 that doctors may refer patients to Reiki practitioners listed on the Complementary & Natural Healthcare Council's (CNHC's) UK voluntary register for complementary therapists. This list is approved by the Professional Standards Authority for Health and Social Care responsible for overseeing the UK's nine health and care professional regulatory bodies.

The CNHC developed National Occupational Standards for Reiki training and works with 50 organisations in the verifying process of CNHC registration to confirm entry criteria have been met, including training, insurance and at least 3 years experience. All registrants must demonstrate that they meet UK standards.

### Where is Reiki offered in the UK?

This is generally on a private or voluntary basis but an NHS funded Reiki/ spiritual healer has recently been advertised

University, NHS and other hospitals incl. Great Ormond St

On wards and in clinics, centres & support groups, mental health units, medical centres, occupational health & physiotherapy departments, maternity units

Hospices

GP & dental practices

Medical & paramedical services

HM prisons

Residential care & nursing homes

Holistic health and healing centres

Carers associations

Social services day care centres

Rehabilitation centres

Special needs services

HIV/AIDS organisations

Family support networks

eg abuse/addiction programmes

### Reiki In US Hospitals

In hospitals and clinics across America, Reiki is reported as beginning to gain acceptance as a meaningful and cost-effective way to improve patient care, including the relaxation and well-being of patients pre and post surgical treatments. See the article by William Lee Rand :

[http://www.Reiki.org/Reikinews/Reiki\\_in\\_hospitals.html](http://www.Reiki.org/Reikinews/Reiki_in_hospitals.html)

Science is also giving us a few possible clues as to how Reiki might work. Many more studies are required but the findings to date provide interesting reading.

## Reiki Case Study and Testimonials

### Inspiring case study from a US rescue centre that teaches Reiki



**Reiki Program at Ann Arbor, Michigan animal shelter, Humane Society Huron Valley**  
Reiki therapist: DMD. <http://Reikiinmedicine.org/Reiki-for-animals/Reiki-program-animal-shelter/>

#### **Background/ reason for Reiki at the shelter**

More than 10,000 animals; mainly dogs; pass through the shelter annually and the behavioural department generates a list of animals they feel will immediately benefit the most from Reiki - mostly dogs and cats, but also an occasional rabbit or ferret.

The shelter has 800 volunteers and all are trained. After a certain number of hours they can learn to become Reiki practitioners too. To be a Reiki practitioner at the rescue, the individual must be a shelter volunteer.

The shelter considers Reiki an adjunct to the conventional medical, emotional and behavioural care offered by staff. The observed benefits have been significant enough that several staff approached me about training and registered for Reiki classes.

#### **Reiki sessions**

Reiki sessions are usually half an hour per animal but can last as long as 90 minutes. All are recorded and details given to adopters, with changes noted post Reiki. There is no limit to how much Reiki an animal receives.

### Reiki testimonials from animal owners/ carers – a few examples

#### **Reiki Practitioner – AS**

*"I first met Avis when out walking my 4-year-old cocker spaniel Sam. When she first told me about animal communication and Reiki I did think she was slightly mad, but the changes in Sam have been phenomenal. He now loves his walks and he appears to be a happy content dog. Walking him is becoming a pleasure" JM*

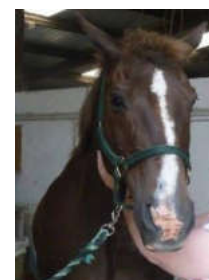


#### **Reiki Practitioner – RW**

*"Teddy became very stressed and scared when we moved into our new house and also introduced a new puppy. He started to bark at everything that moved especially cars, people and dogs which made walking him a nightmare. He also started licking excessively. I saw at the vets that they did Reiki sessions and the results have been amazing! He goes every 4-8 weeks. I couldn't believe how quickly we could see a change in him. He loves going to Reiki and he's so much more relaxed in his own home. I can't thank Rebecca enough" JC*

#### **Reiki Practitioner – LM**

*"Mojo was really quite amazing to watch as he received his Reiki. The second that Lorna laid hands on him he visibly relaxed, dropped his head and started licking and chewing. He had been in a bad field accident and had lost some self confidence. It was incredible to see Mojo relax into it like I can hardly even describe" SP*





#### Reiki Practitioner – KS

*“Bertie, a rescue staffie cross with issues, was in foster care. After the 1st Reiki session Bertie was really tired all day and on his walk he was calmer than usual. He seemed much more relaxed and his body almost looked looser if that makes sense. Following 2 more sessions he was so at ease it was unreal, as though he was a different dog and after 5 sessions in total Bertie slept well again. He didn't move and didn't scratch for the first time since I've had him in over a year and a few months, thank you Kat he is so calm” SB*

#### Reiki Practitioner – SM

*“We had a visit from a British Gas engineer today and usually Dexter (cat) wouldn't come down if we had visitors even if his food was due but he wandered down looking relaxed. He went right up to let a complete stranger stroke him, then ran after him. We couldn't believe how he was totally un-phased by the engineer and approached him allowing physical contact. All this has only happened since Sue's Reiki. Beforehand he wouldn't let anyone near him. Now he's transformed” JW*

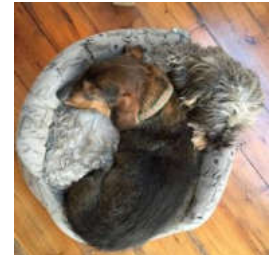


#### Reiki Practitioner – VL

*“Theo came to us from a professional show jumping yard but he was no longer comfortable competing at big shows. Vivien asked if she might offer him some Reiki and Theo obviously enjoyed it. Soon after we started Reiki I did a dressage competition and without doubt it was the best test I have ever ridden. He was so relaxed and easy to ride. After 5 sessions in what was basically a mild hurricane we cleared 26 fences without much drama, something I could not have done with him a while back. Theo now seems to be a happy horse and willing to work without stress “ EK*

#### Reiki Practitioner – HL

*“My wirehaired dachshund, Poldi, slipped a disc and lost the use of his back legs. My vet suggested maybe Reiki would help his general well being and comfort if nothing else. He relaxed and responded really well. His mobility didn't return but his last months were much less stressful than they would have been otherwise. Since then my next two dachshunds, Tattie and Rudi slipped discs last year. They positively welcomed Hilary's arrival and seemed to literally demand their Reiki. We also tried acupuncture in tandem and it took the healing process to another level. Reiki is now an absolute integral part of my dog care” TS*



#### Reiki Practitioner – AC

*“Our anxious foster cat Josie disliked other cats and so we kept her isolated, but she was unhappy. Ali was wonderful with Josie, who was in a very agitated state, and was very patient, caring and understanding. After a half hour session, Josie was lying down, almost asleep, and more relaxed than I had ever seen her. We noticed a change in Josie's behaviour straight away. Three weeks and four treatments later, she was a different cat - happy and playful, always purring and her extremes of behaviour had disappeared” SH*

#### Reiki Practitioner – DOH

*“Our 4 year old Black Cocker Spaniel who has the sweetest laid back nature began to display signs of grumpiness towards our other dog and cat for no apparent reason other than they were in the same room as him. His hostility was baffling as there were no signs of any physical illness. We reasoned that he was maturing and was deciding to be the dominant dog. On one of Debbie's visits she called him over beside her on the couch and gently stroked him and told us about how Reiki may help animals. She has offered him Reiki twice now and he is much calmer towards the other animals” JG*

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