



Thirty signs your dog may be in need of physical support

By

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I have listed some signs that might indicate a dog has tension, stiffness and/or discomfort in his body. Many of the behaviours described are displayed by other animals that are wary of contact for a variety of reasons but for ease I am only referencing dogs.

These are all behaviours that have been displayed by client dogs of mine that significantly diminished or disappeared all together once the dog was relaxed and/or supported by appropriate veterinary care alongside TTouch, physiotherapy, acupuncture, hydrotherapy etc.

Growling is an obvious sign of worry and concern but many other clues that a dog might benefit from some physical support are often over looked because they are so subtle, or so overt that they have become a 'normal' part of a dog's character and behaviour. For example (in my experience) a high proportion of dogs that might be described as being boisterous and/or overly friendly and throw themselves enthusiastically at people when greeting strangers or humans that are more familiar to them, do not like being touched.

This list is by no means exhaustive but if you recognise some of these signs, it is well worth taking the dog to a vet for a thorough check up. If the dog in your care is anxious at the vets or does not show the behaviours in the clinic that you have observed in a more relaxed environment, take a video or series of stills to show your vet.

1. He moves away, turns his head, rolls over or keeps swinging his body round so you only stroke him on a specific part of his body when you try to touch him or initiate contact
2. He stops blinking or blinks quickly, holds his breath or pants, wags his tail quickly or holds his tail still etc when you touch him
3. He keeps a little distance between you and him when you call him or when he comes to sit near you
4. He repeatedly licks you when you stroke him
5. He seems easily distracted and struggles to learn new skills
6. He is an enthusiastic greeter and becomes more 'excited' when he is touched
7. He freezes when you put on his collar/harness/coat and/or bend down to attach or remove his lead
8. He struggles to walk in balance on the lead and pulls or is reluctant to walk

9. He does not like being towel dried, having his nails clipped or being groomed
10. He has stopped playing physical games that he used to enjoy
11. If he does play games they only last for a few minutes
12. There are areas of raised hair, dead hair that doesn't shed, dandruff, changes in shading/colour, and/or excessive swirls and whirls in his coat
13. He grumbles, air snaps or nips, or jumps up if you sit next to him on the sofa or approach him when he is resting
14. He is reluctant to move from his resting place when asked
15. He sits down on walks at regular intervals
16. He seems depressed or withdrawn
17. He cannot jump into or out of the car or onto or off a raised surface with ease
18. He panics when picked up or lifted
19. He does not shake off or only shakes his head after a game, after contact or when concerned
20. He has become less tolerant of other dogs and/or people in his space
21. He has a consistent hot spot in the middle of his back (around T11 where the natural dip occurs) or other areas in his body that feel excessively and consistently cool or warm
22. He is worried about walking on slippery surfaces such as laminate floors or up or down steps
23. His sensitivity to noise has increased
24. He repeatedly chews or licks a specific part of his body such as a wrist, a back leg, his flanks or his paws
25. He struggles to turn either left or right and muscle development is uneven through his neck, back, hindquarters and fore and hind limbs.
26. There are subtle or more obvious changes in his gait
27. He cannot maintain a stand and repeatedly shifts his weight from side to side or front to back
28. He rags or grabs the lead and this behaviour increases when he feels pressure on his neck
29. He doesn't sleep deeply and dream
30. He habitually stands/sits/lies down with a leg out to the side, or with one limb placed in front or behind