

## Good for you, good for your pet

All the love and attention you lavish on your Havanese offers numerous rewards to you both. Your Havanese enjoys all the caresses, revels in the one-on-one time, and relishes each interactive game you play. Time spent together strengthens the human/animal bond. The nurturing is not all one sided. Studies abound extolling the virtues of animal companionship; it is well documented that stroking a pet, or even just watching one at rest or play, can help lower blood pressure, decrease heart rate, soothe anxiety, and reduce stress levels. Pets of all kinds can do wonders for mental and physical well-being.

- Acceptance and love: Havanese provide unconditional love and loyalty. They are non-judgmental and accept you the way you are. Pets do not care about age, race, disease, ability, or disability.
- Stress relief: Stroking an animal is soothing and relaxing. Havanese love to be cuddled and petted; their silky fur just begs to be stroked. Reducing stress helps your body maintain a better balance.
- Mood enhancement: Relating to pets can raise your spirits. Silly antics are entertaining and distracting. Havanese are funny little clowns that love to do tricks and be the center of attention; they are an unending source of entertainment. When around animals, people tend to be more relaxed, smile often, and laugh more. This boosts the "feel-good" chemicals produced by the brain (endorphins, serotonin, and dopamine) which can leave you feeling healthier and happier.
- Focus: Individuals who have health conditions, physical limitations, disabilities or personal problems have a tendency to focus inwardly on themselves. The outside focus provided by pets may help you to develop a more positive perspective on your life. Havanese do not like to be ignored. Their need for time and attention helps to refocus living on your family, home, friends, and life rather than on maladies or other stresses.
- Purpose: Pet ownership gives a sense of purpose and a reason to take care of yourself. If you don't take care of yourself, who will take care of feeding, grooming, and exercising your Havanese?
- Social Interaction: Dogs are a shared interest for many people. Sharing pictures and stories and talking about your Havanese is a marvelous outlet of thoughts and conversation.
- Exercise: Playing with and/or walking your Havanese regularly will do wonders for you both. While providing physical and mental stimulation for your pet, you are also working towards improved health for yourself. Exercise strengthens the cardiovascular system and aids in weight loss. Even brief 15-20 minute exercise sessions several times a week can positively impact your health and wellbeing.
- Self-image: Your Havanese is always delighted to see you. Your every arrival is greeted with excitement and an enthusiastically wagging tail, whether you have been apart for five minutes, five hours, or five days. What a positive boost to your self-esteem to know that you are so special as to be worthy of such an exuberant greeting.
- Back to basics: Havanese have mastered the art of relaxation and enjoyment of all the small things in life. Every outing is an adventure, and every discovery is a new and exciting wonder to explore. Learn from your Havanese and take the time to enjoy life.
- Isn't it nice to know that Havanese companions can provide benefits in many ways, physically and emotionally, and help you achieve a healthier life? Havanese are good for your health. Hugging a Havanese is always good for what ails you!



*Figure 7-19: Havanese – Good for you, good for your health  
\*Photo by Karen Moe Photography*