



Nose to Tail Assessment with **Aaron's Positive Coaching and Pet First Aid & CPR**

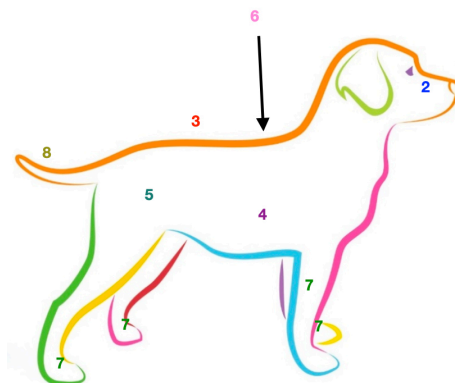


Dogs and cats come in all sizes, ages and attitudes. Your pet is unique! You need to play pet detective and identify any “clues” that may indicate your pet is not 100-percent healthy.

Once a week, invest about 10 minutes and perform a thorough nose-to-tail wellness assessment of your dog or cat. Tap all your senses. By looking, listening, smelling and safely touching, you can often catch early signs of illness or injury.

Step 1. Time the session. Select a time and place where you and your pet are relaxed and can be together free of any distractions.

Step 2. Start at the head. Examine the nose. It should be slightly moist or dry, not having any discharge or cracks. Use a small treat and test if your pet moves their eyes with the treat. The pupils should be symmetrical and the eyes should be clear and free of any discharge. Check the ears, inside and out and sniff. Ear infections often smell like dirty socks! Gently rub the sides of the muzzle and top of the head to check for any suspicious lumps, cuts or bumps. Look and smell inside the mouth. The breath should not be foul and there should be no signs of swollen or bleeding gums or other dental issues.



Step 3. Assess the neck and spine. With your pet in a sit, gently take your open hands and rotate their neck left and right. Then place one hand on his neck and glide the other hand down their spine all the way to the base of the tail. Note if they wince or if you spot any cuts, bumps or masses.

Step 4. Check the chest area. Make sure your pet's breathing is smooth, rhythmic and easy.

Step 5. Palpate the abdomen. Gently press with your open palms on your pet's abdominal area for any signs of pain or sensitivity. Also examine the genitals and make sure the anal area is free of any feces, dirt or hair.

Step 6. Survey the coat. Your pet's coat should be shiny and clean, and not show any excessive shedding, odor or bald patches.

Step 7. Look at the legs and paws. Support your standing pet with one hand as you gently take your other hand and move each leg back and forth to test their range of motion. Then examine each paw – especially between the toes – for any signs of ticks, foxtails or other foreign bodies. Also check the paw pads to make sure they are not cut or torn and that the claws are not too long or curled back.

Step 8. End with the tail. Some pets have long tails; others have bushy tails, but all tails contain small bones. Use your hand to glide down the tail and look for any pain, limited range of use or cuts.

Final step: Reward your pet with their favorite treat! This will motivate them to be cooperative during your weekly wellness exams. This should be a fun, bonding time for you both!

ADDED BONUS! Your pet becomes more comfortable when being touched during these weekly wellness checks. This is apt to make him more cooperative with veterinarians, pet sitters, dog walkers, groomers and other pet professionals.