

Wilmette Pet Center

"the place for people who love pets"

In this fourth article on caring for aging pets, we're going to focus on some of the signs that are easier for us to see.

Skin and coat: As they age, a cat or dog's skin and coat can begin to get dry. This can lead to itching, irritations, abrasions and hair loss. Fish oils, with their Omega 3 fatty acids, are your best friend here. Besides being very tasty, fish oils such

as [Grizzley's salmon oil](#) and [Nature's Logic North Atlantic sardine oil](#) add these important compounds, and within 3 - 4 weeks you'll begin to see big changes in their coat and skin. It's also recommended that you rotate the source of your fish oil; it helps cover the range of micronutrients and minimizes any chance of pollutants. Coconut oil is gaining in popularity for its soothing effect on the skin. Bathe your pet with a gentle and moisturizing cleanser, such as [EarthBath's Oatmeal & Aloe](#) or Tea Tree shampoos to help soothe irritated skin, or consider using a waterless shampoo for pets that are difficult to bathe.



Muscles, bones, and nerves: All of these body systems suffer deterioration due to aging. A lot of this is oxidative damage, where free oxygen causes breakdowns in cellular structure and function. Nervous system issues can display as tremors, loss of integrated movement, stumbling, incontinence, and slipping and falling. Antioxidants, such as vitamin E and C, added to the diet are helpful in preventing this type of damage.

[Pet Apawthecary's Tinkle Tonic](#) is formulated for dogs that are having problems with incontinence. It offers natural support for dogs and cats that need it.

Joints: Joints are often one of the first signs of aging in our pets. We all know the signs, from slowing down, to groaning when they get up, to not wanting to jump in your lap anymore. Bad joints can also lead to a host of other problems, from injuries as the body compensates to weight gain from decreased exercise. But we have some great solutions when your cat or dog starts slowing down!



[Wholistic Pet Complete](#) - Joint Mobility and Run free are a great way to get glucosamine and MSM, two of the best supplements for arthritic joints, into your pet's diet.

[Hyalogic](#) supplements - Made with human grade hyaluronic acid, these are the highest quality and most effective joint supplement we carry. It comes in 4 different formulas, so you can find the right one for your pet's needs.

It's thought that the earlier you begin joint therapy, the more effective it is and the longer problems can be delayed. Many people begin preventative treatments, such as vitamin C, glucosamine, and MSM, for their large breed dogs, who are more susceptible to joint problems, when they're puppies!

There comes a time when the stairs or the jump into the car have become impossible. Consider the use of ramps and lift harnesses, like Guardian Gear's 4-in1 Lift and Lead, to help them maneuver around.

A lot of older animals suddenly begin to get thin, the exact opposite problem other animals have!

Their metabolism changes and their body eventually begins to utilize the protein in their muscles. Help them keep the weight on by increasing the amount you feed. Go for really high protein; raw is one of the best ways to give them that. Raw diets will also help with that "disconnect" that some animals get between their nose and their brains and help keep them eating. Offer an extra meal during the day of some high protein, high fat kibble, maybe with a nice dose of salmon oil on top.



As with any animal, your pet's best ally in staying healthy, besides you, is your vet. Call them when you notice any changes in your aging cat or dog's body or behavior.