

Puppy Pinches (Good for adult dogs too)



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The bones, muscles and neurological connections of young puppies are growing by the minute. They need lots of sleep, nourishing, healthy food and positive reward based training.

As Amy Snow and Nancy Zidonis, authors of [*The Well-Connected Dog: A Guide to Canine Acupressure*](#), [Tallgrass Publications](#), [Animal Acupressure](#) share “the essential concept underlying TCM (traditional Chinese medicine) is that health is based on a dynamic balance between Yin and Yang. The high-energy and impetus (of boundless energy) is *Yang*. The rest, nutrients and essence used to make that growth (and boundless energy) is considered *Yin*.”

Puppies are supposed to be out-of-balance at different times because of their high-growth periods. There are times they have to be very Yang, and then balance once again with Yin. Their growing bodies have their own form of balance.

A lovely way to bond and desensitize your pup, while balancing out boundless energy is with “Puppy Pinches”. Most dogs (of all ages) seem to enjoy this and it is easy to do. There aren’t any contra-indications, but many benefits, such as getting pups use to having someone kneel behind them, touch them and their toenails, which will need trimming.

Be mindful that this does not have to be accepted or done on the first try. Some pups may start to fidget or play. Older dogs that have not been touched in this way may seem stressed at first. This is something new. Be calm, be gentle and go slow. It benefits you as well by lowering your blood pressure. It helps you become aware of your dog’s body and the changes it is going through, whether young or older!

Puppy Pinches

1. Pick a time when you and your dog are relatively calm. Find a location with few distractions. Take three deep 3-part-belly breaths, inhaling to the count of 4, holding for 4, and exhaling slowly for 4. That’s only 12 seconds to get centered. Be mindful if you are calm, your puppy/dog will be too. Focus for a minute on your adoration of this young pup and how you want to contribute to his/her healthy growth or that older companion dog who shares his/her life with you.
2. Sit on the floor comfortably (pillow/blanket) behind your dog, facing his/her back. Starting just behind or below his shoulder blades on each side of the spine (not on the spine), use your thumb and index fingers on both hands to very gently pinch the skin. Then move your hand approximately one inch (about half an inch for very small dogs) in the direction of the tail and repeat the gentle pinching. Continue to move your hands down one inch at a time, softly pinching the skin as you go, until you reach the base of the tail. It is like rolling the skin, in waves, with gentle little pinches. It feels good on humans too.
3. Start again, just below the scapula (shoulder blade) and repeat the pinches on each side of the spine and down to the tail two or more times.
4. When you have completed three cycles of gentle pinches, go back to below the scapula, with your fingers together and flat, one hand on each side of the spine, sweep down the dog’s back. This is similar to how you would brush out the wrinkles on your bed cover. Repeat this sweeping motion three times, releasing tension.
5. Relax! Take three deeper belly breaths, breathing in to the count of 4, holding for 4, exhaling slowly for 4. Snuggle with your dog for a moment. Tell s/he how much you love him/her.

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