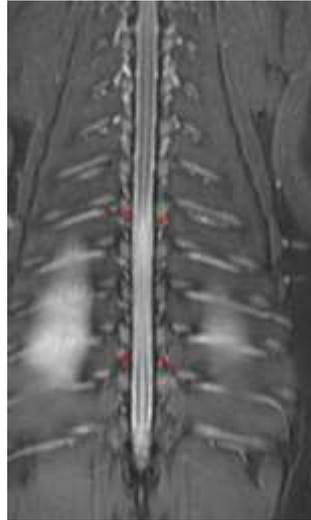


Case study of a dog with a spinal condition

I've recently been working with a canine client, Willow, who has been experiencing loss of strength and sensitivity in her hind legs. The vet diagnosed a lesion, within her spinal canal but outside of the spinal cord, causing compression at the T7 vertebra and resulting in weakness and loss of sensation.



In this article I'll describe how Willow's owner, another therapist and I have worked together to support Willow and I'll also share how she's doing now.

I began by taking a history of Willow's condition and reading the vet report. Having done a basic [META-Health analysis](#) I felt that, in addition to the Reiki that I would be offering, she would benefit from a zoopharmacognosy (self selection) session and so I recommended Rachel Windsor-Knott of [My Animal Matters](#), particularly as she now offers [consultations via Skype](#).

Willow's owner went ahead with this straight away, contacting Rachel, filling in the consultation form and booking in a session, which I was also able to attend.

Rachel had put together a box of oil and herb samples that, having read the vet report and Willow's information, she thought Willow might find helpful. She started by asking the owner to offer the **Ginger** essential oil (warming, soothing and analgesic). Willow sniffed and accepted the oil - a gentle 'yes'.



Rachel then moved on to **Peppermint** and **Birch** (on cloths) both of which Willow sniffed, seeming to favour the Peppermint. (**Peppermint** is an anti-inflammatory, a digestive stimulant - often selected by animals taking strong painkillers - and helps in cases of nerve damage as it is clarifying and stimulating. **Birch** is good for inflammatory pain, muscular aches and trapped nerves.)

Having offered some essential oils, we then moved on to the 2 macerates that Rachel had thought would help Willow: **Comfrey** and **Arnica**. Willow devoured these, lapping up all that Rachel had sent. (**Comfrey** - also known as 'knit bone' - is good for fractures and also helps in cases of soft tissue damage. It eases inflammation of the stomach, too, so can be helpful in easing the side effects of pain killing medication. **Arnica** helps with bruising, muscular injury and inflammatory pain. It is also an immune system stimulant.)



Rachel then suggested offering the **Rose** and **Valerian Root** waters. Willow licked and chewed at the bottles so her owner poured some out and again she lapped these up and wanted more. She seemed to have a slight preference for the **Rose** water. (**Rose** is used in cases of anger and resentment, hormone balancing, feelings of rejection and emotional wounds, trauma and unwanted memories. **Valerian** root is a muscle relaxant and sedative which helps in cases of anxious behaviours.)



We then moved on to **Marjoram Sweet**. This was on a cloth and again Willow showed interest. Her energy come up and she appeared quite playful. She approached her owner which made Rachel think she might want to have the oil applied. Rachel gave instructions for Willow's owner to rub the cloth on her hands and offer these to Willow. Willow accepted this so her owner gently rubbed her hands first on Willow's chest, then her neck and shoulders and on down to her back. Willow then turned round and presented her rump and back for the oil to be applied there too! (This oil is an antispasmodic, helps to ease stiffness in the muscles and is also very comforting in cases of grief.)

Lastly there was a cloth with **Violet Leaf** oil. Willow showed great interest in this, chewing at the cloth. (This oil is very supportive when there is anticipation of pain. It is comforting to the heart and helps those of a nervous disposition.)

Having offered all of the remedies that Rachel had sent - of which Willow accepted every single one - we then put each remedy on the floor and watched to see what she would do. She lay down with her jaw parallel to the **Peppermint** oil. Throughout she had kept returning to this cloth and Rachel suspected that, as she was inhaling rather than licking, she was using it for it's clearing properties, more than as a pain killer.



As Willow was lying there she began to twitch gently, as if she was dreaming, and she did appear to be asleep. (During the session she had also shown blinks, yawns, licking, chewing and stretches as she worked with the oils, processing and

releasing).

Rachel recommended continuing to offer this selection to Willow, particularly the **Peppermint**, **Marjoram Sweet** and **Violet Leaf** oils, the **Comfrey** and **Arnica** macerates and the **Rose water**. She also suggested adding **rice bran oil** and / or **coconut oil*** to Willow's diet to ensure that when she chooses the macerates this is done solely for the herb content rather than the fat. (Fat is essential for nerves so she might be choosing these remedies for this as well, particularly as she's on a dry food diet which can result in low levels of healthy fats.

Coconut oil is also antibacterial, antifungal and antiviral so helps with infections. The vet had said that this is a possible cause for the lesion in Willow's spine so this oil might be beneficial in this way too. It is also good for the skin and coat, and supports the thyroid.)



The day after the session Willow's owner posted this message:

Hey! Just wanted to say - Wow!! Willow's legs have improved dramatically! After only one session! So I'm very hopeful and can't wait to continue on with it.

Less collapsing ... she also seems more relaxed and affectionate and her muscles are softer. She is always tense and alert being the alpha dog and protects the house... this morning seems a bit tense/back to normal but no collapsing yet, plus she told us she needed to go outside for a poo (she has been having a lot of accidents so we have to make sure she goes out regularly) so she is definitely feeling her back end and legs again.

Thanks again!

Rachel replied:

That's amazing. Which makes total sense with the peppermint in particular as it's able to stimulate new nerve pathways 😊

Rachel also recommended that Willow's owner offer her Coconut oil in addition to the remedies to make sure that she was choosing the macerates for their herb content, rather than for fats. Willow proved to be very keen on this and her owner realised that it has also been helping her skin. (Willow had had a tendency to lick at her paws causing redness and broken skin but this has now cleared up.)

Rachel added Spirulina to Willow's selection of remedies. This is helpful in cases of anxious behaviours and joint problems. It is detoxifying and helps to stimulate the immune system. It's also a great supplement for senior dogs or those who are a little run-down as it is rich in protein and nutrients. Willow proved to be very fond of this too!



Following the initial session, Willow's owner continued to offer the remedies, particularly the **Peppermint**, **Marjoram Sweet** and **Violet Leaf** oils, the **Comfrey** and **Arnica** macerates and the **Rose water**. To these she then added the Coconut Oil and Spirulina. She shared this message with us when her box of remedies arrived:

Willow was so excited when your parcel arrived and was ripping off the bubble wrap with me! She's loving the arnica, comfrey, violet leaf (rubs on side of head with it and mouthing/chewing the cloth) and marjoram on her back, more than the others... She is much more relaxed and softer...

Rachel had included small sachets of **Devil's Claw** and **Barley Grass** which Willow took for a few days. (**Devils Claw** is good for arthritis, inflammatory pain and musculoskeletal issues. **Barley Grass** supports animals with anxious and hyperactive behaviours and those with skin conditions. It is rich in nutrients, particularly magnesium). Her owner then sent us this message:

Not keen on devils claw today so offered barley wheat grass ... then offered spirulina... Lucky I put a towel down, specks of green everywhere!

... Still wanting marjoram on her back and generally sleeps with either violet leaf/peppermint.

Willow is twitching now, she hasn't done that for a while.



Throughout this whole process I was also offering Reiki to Willow to help her body enter into it's Rest and Repair mode. She can tend to be an anxious dog who is always on the alert so the Reiki helped her to relax so that her body could heal and so that the oils and other remedies could work effectively. Several of the remedies she chose were also supporting her on this emotional level. This is a picture of Willow after one of our Reiki sessions:



In our fifth session, Willow's owner said that had she not seen it for herself she would not have believed the change in her dog over the last month.! From having been very wobbly on her back legs and walking with a rather odd, wide-legged gait, scuffing her toes, Willow now almost looks normal when she walks. She had lost some muscle tone but is slowly building this up again as she regains strength and feeling. She now knows when she needs to go outside for toileting

and so there have been no further accidents in the house. Her owner is overjoyed! When she'd first been given the diagnosis from the vet she had thought she might soon have to say goodbye to her beloved dog whereas now it seems that Willow has been given a new lease of life!

If you'd like to know more about how these therapies could be used to support an animal in your life please get in touch:

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For Reiki and META-Health information you can see my website:

www.equenergy.com

For information on Zoopharmacognosy (self selection) see:

www.myanimalmatters.co.uk

**Please note that fats should not be offered to dogs who suffer from pancreatitis*