



## **Disability and Animals**

There are many animals that can help people with a disability live their day-to-day lives to the fullest. The relationships between people and animals can have profound benefits whether done on their own or as part of a wider treatment programme. Here are a few of them!

### **Horse Riding**

Did you know that 4,000 children and adults helped by 3000+ volunteers have an unforgettable experience through their local [Riding for the Disabled centre](#). A worthwhile site to visit.

### **Cats**

Many studies have shown that having a cat can calm nerves, lower blood pressure, help prevent and treat cardiovascular disease, cancer and chronic pain, strengthen the immune system and even help you live longer.

It is undeniable that animals have, for many years, provided great companionship to humans. But the reality is that they do so much more!

## Dogs

Dogs trained to help disabled people can assist with everyday tasks while offering companionship and helping the individual live a full and satisfied life.

Therapy dogs come in all shapes and sizes and there are many worthwhile sites to visit. A service dog is trained to assist individuals with disabilities so that they are more able to participate in day to day activities. Service dogs can bring a sense of freedom to their partners 24 hours per day, 365 days per year. [Service Dogs](#), [Guide Dogs Australia](#)

## Birds

Parrots and some other species of birds are known to be extremely empathetic and tuned into the emotional environment around them. They can sense stress and tension, anger and distress in their owners, before these bubbling feelings break the surface.

For children with autism, studies have found that when animals such as dogs, cats, and even guinea pigs are present, they can experience less anxiety. Part of this lies in the fact that animals are non-judgmental, accept us for the way we are, and provide unconditional love. Children are also less likely to withdraw from social situations when their companion animal is with them.

For adults who have autism, animals can also provide similar benefits and can often help calm someone in moments of anxiety – petting, hugging, or having a dog put pressure on the person by using their paw or lying on them creates a calming effect.

