



Guinea Pig Helpline Factsheet

Reiki (Energy Healing) & Guinea Pigs

Reiki (pronounced ray-key) is most commonly seen as a form of "**energy healing**". The Japanese symbols which make up the word 'Reiki' are most commonly translated to mean "*universal life energy*". You do not need to be religious or spiritual in order to send or receive Reiki, and there are no special skills required - simply an open mind and the intention that the energy benefits the recipient. The practitioner does nothing more than act as a channel for the energy, directing it to the areas most in need of "healing" and to benefit the physical, emotional and spiritual levels of the recipient.

There is more to Reiki than healing others though; indeed when it was founded it was originally intended to be taught as a personal spiritual path, a path to enlightenment, and a self-healing method.

What can Reiki do?

Reiki can help to balance the body and mind, and reduce physical, emotional and spiritual distress. While Reiki has helped many animals and humans deal with and overcome all manner of physical and emotional illnesses, the closest thing to a guarantee that it will work, is an assurance that Reiki energy will comfort and calm the recipient. In itself, this comfort and calming reassurance is often the most basic need in times of illness or stress.

However it must be stressed that:

- a) It does not replace qualified veterinary advice;
- b) It is not a miracle cure;
- c) It is a complementary therapy only;
- d) You should not expect it to have obvious physical effect all the time - Reiki does what is needed whether it can be seen physically or not.

What happens during a Reiki treatment?

Reiki is a non-invasive practice. Often the practitioner will rest their hands on appropriate areas of the recipients body, obviously excluding private areas; sometimes the practitioner will work in a set sequence, sometimes in seemingly random order (if they choose to heal intuitively and pick up on the areas most in need of Reiki energy).

Much of the time though, quite notably with animals, they may not wish to have a treatment involving direct contact, so healings are done without any physical contact at all. Reiki energy works outside of time and space, so it is possible to send Reiki any distance across the world, and to send it with the intention that the recipient accepts the energy at a time that suits them.

However Reiki is practised, intention is the key. The practitioner can do a fancy ritual taking up an hour of their time, or they can just sit quietly for a while with their hands in their lap. As long as they focus on the recipient, and they intend, want and direct the energy to them, the recipient will receive the energy.

In distance healings the practitioner works in much the same way, by focusing on the recipient - often by viewing a photo or recalling their name - and directing the energy towards the recipient.

What do I need to know about Reiki?

The first thing that must be stressed is that Reiki is **not a miracle cure**. Reiki can and often does heal in many ways, but you cannot expect this to happen as standard for every animal. Reiki energy does what it needs to; just because you can't see how it has helped doesn't mean the energy is not helping them. Reiki can help ease physical, mental, emotional and spiritual problems, but it doesn't work magic. For this reason, Reiki must be understood as a **complementary therapy only**.

In the case of animals, the question can arise of whether it is legal to use Reiki on an animal that belongs to someone else. Legally nobody other than the owner and a registered veterinary surgeon is allowed to treat an animal, but as Reiki is a complementary therapy that is not at all invasive, it is legal so long as the owner thoroughly understands and accepts that it does not replace the advice of a registered veterinary surgeon.

Another point to mention is that the practitioner has to make sure the recipient is willing to accept Reiki energy. With hands-on treatments, if an animal wants Reiki then they may position themselves closer to the practitioner, investigate their hands, or make eye contact. Obviously this is not possible with distance healings, so the practitioner must decide whether the animal is open to receiving the energy based on how well the energy is flowing to the recipient. If the animal should seem not to accept the energy, the practitioner may decide to send Reiki and intend that it helps the recipient whenever they are ready (at a time that suits them).

Are there any "side-effects" of Reiki?

The first one or two sessions of Reiki can occasionally bring about a mild "worsening" of symptoms. This is known as a healing crisis, and is the reason a full course of healings is important. The healing crisis can be thought of as "bringing out the bad" energy, making room for the positive Reiki energy to flow in and replace it. The feelings brought about by a healing crisis are not severe and tend to fade very quickly, and can be overcome quicker by the first three sessions of Reiki being given closer together than subsequent healings. Healing crises are not harmful and do not occur with every recipient.

Reiki & Me, and how Reiki can help animals

Reiki was not something I was interested in, or even something I had really heard of, until one of my guinea pigs became terminally ill. At the end of June 2007 Charlie was diagnosed with an inoperable kidney tumour, approximately the size of a small peach. The vet recommended euthanasia. Aside from his condition, Charlie was very fit and healthy, so it was agreed that we would bring him home to live out his days, with pain meds to help him manage when the tumour started causing him discomfort.

Upon telling my Grandmother the news, she told me she was a Reiki Master/Teacher, and advised I try some basic energy healing techniques on Charlie. Given that I could do nothing else for my beloved pig, I felt it was worth a try – and since then I haven't looked back. A few days later I started the proper First Degree Reiki course, and qualified at that in December 2007. Sadly Charlie passed

away on 29th March 2008, nine months after his tumour was diagnosed. Physically he had been in poor condition for a little while, but he loved his life and he never wanted to give up. He received Reiki daily at first, then once or twice a week, and then daily again in his final weeks. He managed with no pain meds at all for three months after his tumour was discovered, and even when he did need them he was perfectly fine at a quarter of the dose once every few days. It wasn't until two months before his death that he required the full dose each day. Given the size of his tumour and the discomfort it must surely have given him over the months, I feel Reiki played a large part in helping him cope with his condition.

Soon after Charlie's death I studied Reiki at Second Degree level, and qualified in September 2008. After qualifying at Second Degree, I offered Reiki to a few forum friends whose guinea pigs were having a difficult time. A couple of my case studies are included below.

Cheese - Nothing more could be done, and Cheese's owners were told to give him a week then make a decision about whether it would be fairer to euthanise him than let him suffer any longer. Cheese had been ill for 5 months with loose stools and dental problems. The dental issues were corrected early on, but an abscess soon formed. This was lanced and healed well, but it recurred a couple of months later. An x-ray was taken of Cheese's teeth, and it was found that one of his molars was growing downwards causing the abscess to form. Since the tooth was so firmly set in the jaw, extraction was not a safe option due to the risk of fracturing the jaw. Cheese's owners were heartbroken. I received an email from them asking if I could do anything to help.

After just one week of daily healings (with four weekly ones yet to follow), Cheese was just about back to his old self, ordering his cagemates around, eating more, vocalising and even popcorning. He produced a perfectly formed poop after many months with abnormal stools. The vet was impressed with how well he was at his check-up just a couple of weeks after the verdict was given, and she was informed about his Reiki healings. Cheese had surgery to remove the problem tooth a few months later; the odds were not good but it had become necessary to try to remove the molar. As it happened, the tooth came out without any problems and Cheese was able to get back on the road to recovery, with the comfort of another short course of Reiki.

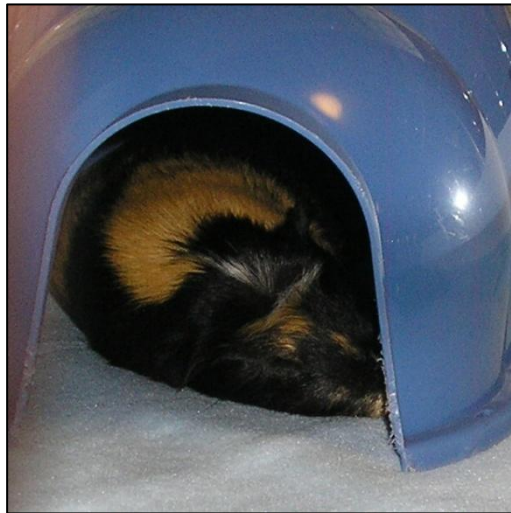
Boris - Boris was a guinea pig in Australia. Early in 2009 he fractured a vertebrae and, after more than 6 weeks in a full body splint, he was allowed to have it removed and to recover some of his strength and mobility again. Unfortunately he also developed a number of other serious medical conditions. He scratched himself raw and lost almost all of his hair due to a severe fungal infection, his back legs were so weak he could barely walk, and his front legs ballooned to twice their size due to pododermatitis (bumblefoot) brought on by his weeks of inactivity. He also began suffering seizures in his final weeks. I offered to send Reiki to him for a time. Both myself and Boris' owner felt the healings made a considerable difference to him; his seizures became less frequent, and he regained some of his appetite. Sadly he was too ill to overcome his conditions and he was put to sleep to prevent further suffering. Before I knew he had passed away, I sent him a Reiki healing and felt that it was a much gentler, slower, closer healing than usual, very different to all his previous treatments which felt much stronger - I got the feeling he was at peace, and was saddened, although not entirely surprised, to learn some time later that he was gone.

Although the following case is not a guinea pig, I feel it sums up how special Reiki can be, and what an impact it can have on animals with multiple difficulties:

Sheba - Sheba was my own 15 yr old Collie Cross. She usually accepted healings from a short distance, though she did sometimes accept a hands-on healing. She had chronic arthritis, collapsed joints and a degree of incontinence, and as a rescue she had a bad start in life being fed junk food and takeaways by two young Cypriot boys who then abandoned her. She was so overweight when she was rescued that she could not stand up. After a spell in another home, Sheba was put up for adoption again just at the time we were looking for a companion for our other elderly, recently bereaved dog. It is no wonder, given her history, that she had such issues with trust and allowing herself to get her hopes up about people.

When I offered her Reiki healings, she usually got so overexcited I had to specifically send a calming, emotional energy to her before I could focus on starting the main healing. When she eventually sat down and settled into each session, she looked into my eyes with such love and trust, proving that our Reiki time was truly special, and was incredibly precious to both her and me.

No matter what the species, or where they are in the world, it is a true joy, a beautiful experience and a wonderful feeling to help animals in such a special way. Reiki is one of a few things I chose to do to help animals, and the hard work paid off in the end - I wouldn't lose this skill for the world.



Dexter in a Reiki-induced slumber! 2007