DOG WELFARE ASSESSMENT

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This welfare assessment helps you evaluate your dog's well-being across different areas of their life!

A dog's species-specific behavioural needs, as well as animal welfare legislation, form the foundation of good dog welfare and responsible ownership. The purpose of this assessment is to help you identify whether there are areas in your dog's life where their welfare and quality of life could be further improved.

How true are the following statements about dog well-being for your dog? Please select the most appropriate option:
1 – Does not apply at all
2 – Applies partly
3 – Applies fully

HEALTH

1. My dog's ears are clean, odourless, and not red or itchy.

   1 2 3

2. My dog's eyes are clear and free from discharge.

   1 2 3

3. My dog has a normal scissor bite.

   1 2 3

4. My dog's teeth are free from fractures and excessive tartar.

   1 2 3

5. All of my dog's puppy teeth have fallen out.

   1 2 3

6. My dog's breath is odourless.

   1 2 3

7. My dog breathes normally and does not become excessively short of breath during exercise.

1 2 3

8. My dog's coat is clean, free of mats, and without bald patches.

1 2 3

9. My dog's skin is healthy and my dog does not scratch excessively.

1 2 3

10. My dog's nails are short (do not constantly click on the floor) and intact.

1 2 3

11. My dog's paw pads are supple, smooth, and soft.

1 2 3

12. The skin between my dog's toes is healthy.

1 2 3

13. My dog does not suffer from anal gland issues (e.g. scooting or excessive licking).

1 2 3

14. My dog is at a healthy weight.

1 2 3

15. My dog's stools are firm.

1 2 3

16. My dog eats 1–3 meals per day and is not overly picky.

1 2 3

17. I've studied my dog's nutritional needs and their diet meets them. If needed, my dog is provided with nutritional supplements. (e.g. fish oil, vitamins, amino acids).

1 2 3

18. My dog drinks an average of 0.5 dl of water per kilogram of body weight per day.

1 2 3

19. My dog does not vomit regularly.

1 2 3

20. My dog shows no signs of pain e.g. limping, stereotypic behaviours, excessive interest in some specific body part or sudden mood swings.

1 2 3

21. My dog has no chronic medical conditions (e.g. epilepsy, hypothyroidism, heart disease).

1 2 3

22. My female dog has a regular heat cycle. (Spayed female → 3, male → leave blank)

1 2 3

23. My female dog does not show signs of discomfort during heat.
(Spayed female → 3, male → leave blank)

1 2 3

24. My female dog does not experience severe false pregnancies.
(Spayed female → 3, male → leave blank)

1 2 3

25. My male dog does not react excessively to females in heat.
(Neutered male → 3, female → leave blank)

1 2 3

26. Both of my male dog's testicles have descended normally (or had descended prior to neutering). (Female → leave blank)

1 2 3

27. My male dog's genital health is good and free from recurrent issues such as prostate problem or foreskin inflammation. (Female → leave blank)

1 2 3

28. My dog's vaccinations are up to date and in accordance with the official recommendations of the Finnish Kennel Club. My dog has regular health checks, at least every time it is vaccinated.

1 2 3

29. My dog changes resting positions freely.

1 2 3

30. My dog does not always seek the coolest resting place.

1 2 3

31. My dog does not always seek the warmest resting place.

1 2 3

32. Routine care procedures are easy to perform.

1 2 3

SOCIAL LIFE & DAILY ROUTINE

33. My dog gets along well with other household animals. (No other pets → leave blank)

1 2 3

34. My dog is curious and open or calmly indifferent towards other dogs.

1 2 3

35. My dog does not show excessive aggression towards unfamiliar dogs.

1 2 3

36. My dog is curious and open or calmly indifferent towards new people.

1 2 3

37. My dog does not show excessive aggression towards unfamiliar people.

1 2 3

38. My dog has the ability to use calming signals (e.g., lip smacking, yawning, looking away/ heading away, lying down) and can use them to communicate with people and other dogs in everyday life.

1 2 3

39. My dog has dog friends outside the household.

1 2 3

40. My dog lives in an environment that is suitable for them and where they does not behave in an anxious, agitated or fearful manner.

1 2 3

41. My dog has a predictable daily routine.

1 2 3

42. My communication with my dog is more positively than negatively framed (more praise and reinforcement than correction).

1 2 3

43. I train my dog using reinforcement-based methods.

1 2 3

44. My dog can retreat and rest when needed.

1 2 3

45. My dog’s sleeping area is calm and clean.

1 2 3

46. My dog is generally calm at home.

1 2 3

EXERCISE

47. My dog goes outside at least three times per day.

1 2 3

48. My dog has at least one longer (>30 min.) brisk walk daily.

1 2 3

49. My dog moves on a variety of surfaces.

1 2 3

50. My dog regularly gets off-leash exercise.

1 2 3

51. My dog gets physical exercise beyond walking (e.g. running, trick training, DOBO, agility, swimming).

1 2 3

52. My dog does not constantly pull on the leash.

1 2 3

53. My dog does not get excessively cold in winter.

1 2 3

54. My dog does not suffer excessively from heat.

1 2 3

55. My dog likes to go outside.

1 2 3

56. My dog likes to jump into the car (medium / large dog) and they doesn't shiver or arch their back except when they is cold / excited.

1 2 3

57. My dog sits symmetrically.

1 2 3

58. I regularly care for my dog’s physical well-being (e.g. physiotherapy, massage osteopathy).

1 2 3

ACTIVITIES & ENRICHMENT

59. My dog can fulfil breed-typical behavioural needs.
    (mixed-breed dogs → best possible estimate).

1 2 3

60. I provide my dog daily feeding enrichment.

1 2 3

61. My dog gets to experience activities outside daily routines, such as visiting friends, new places or attending a training class.

1 2 3

62. My dog is playful and entertains itself by playing also alone.

1 2 3

STRESS

63. My dog does not wander restlessly at night.

1 2 3

64. My dog has the opportunity to sleep according to their natural sleep rhythm, taking naps evenly throughout the day.

1 2 3

65. My dog travels calmly in car and/or public transportation.

1 2 3

66. My dog is not excessively noise-sensitive.

1 2 3

67. My dog does not become excessively aroused in social situations.

1 2 3

68. My dog does not mirror household stress excessively (e.g. unusual behaviour, barking at nothing, physical symptoms).

1 2 3

69. My dog tolerates occasional changes in routine well, such as being in care or a family member being away for an extended period of time.

1 2 3

70. My dog is not a rescue or rehomed dog.

1 2 3

71. My dog is house-trained.

1 2 3

72. My dog does not destroy property.

1 2 3

73. I have checked by video what my dog does when they is home alone and I know that they is calm the entire time when being by itself.

1 2 3

You can gain an indicative overall picture of your dog's welfare by looking at which answers occur most frequently across the different sections of this assessment. Areas with a higher number of responses rated 1 and 2 are worth paying particular attention to and considering how your dog's quality of life could be improved.

If needed, you may seek advice from a qualified dog trainer, veterinarian, animal physiotherapist, or another trained professional within their specific field of expertise.

After making the necessary changes, you can return to this welfare assessment for example after six months and complete it again. By comparing the results, you will be able to see whether your dog's quality of life has genuinely improved or whether further changes are still required.

Wishing you many joyful moments with your well-balanced best friend!

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