

## Just Another Member of the Family

Bella. Coco. Charlie. Lucy. Max. No matter the name, many pets are considered to be members of the family, providing companionship, protection, and unconditional love. The pet-owner relationship has some powerful benefits, which may explain why pet ownership has been on the rise in the United States and around the world. Thirty years ago, just about one-half of American households owned pets. Last year, almost 70 percent did.<sup>1, 2</sup>

The prevalence of pets is not the only thing that's changed in the United States (and elsewhere). People are spending a lot of money to provide their pets with exceptional levels of care. James Tozer of *1843 Magazine* reported, "Owners can now buy beer for their dogs in Melbourne, send their cats to a luxury five-star hotel in Kuala Lumpur, and indulge their guinea pigs with a spa weekend in the English countryside...But most of the increased spending has been on food and vets..."<sup>1</sup>

Ironically, many pets don't need much. They're happy and loyal companions, and the benefits their owners experience are priceless. These benefits include:

- **Unlimited love and emotional support.** Life is stressful and pets offer loyalty and unconditional love. They help us cope by reducing depression, offering companionship, and minimizing anxiety. It's called the 'Pet Effect.' The *Human Animal Bond Research Institute (HABRI)* described it like this, "Pets change people – this is something we all understand on an emotional level. But is it possible that having a pet could change our health in other ways? A growing body of research says 'yes.'"<sup>3</sup>
- **Support for physical, emotional, and mental ailments.** Therapy animals have become an important part of daily life for people suffering from physical, emotional, and psychological issues. For example, veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) experience more feelings of love and less anxiety with the support of a service dog. Doctors have begun prescribing animal-assisted therapy and pet ownership in some cases.<sup>4, 5</sup>
- **Improve your health.** A study by the *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)* determined, "...the bond between people and their pets can increase fitness, lower stress, and bring happiness to their owners." The benefits included lower blood pressure, cholesterol and triglyceride levels, and fewer feelings of loneliness. In addition, having a pet created more opportunities for exercise and outdoor activities.<sup>6</sup>

Whether you are a dog person, a cat person, a rabbit, fish, or pig person, owning a pet can bring you joy and comfort when you need it the most. If you're not ready for the full-time responsibility of a pet, consider fostering an animal or volunteering at your local animal shelter. Interacting with animals may provide some wonderful benefits.

## **Holiday Recovery Recipe**

Holidays are filled with delicious food, office treats, holiday parties, and dinners with family and friends. If your clothes are fitting a little bit tighter, try this healthy holiday-recovery recipe from *FoodNetwork.com*.<sup>7</sup>

### **Almond Chicken Cutlets with Tangy Cilantro Slaw**

1 large egg white  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
1/4 teaspoon ancho chile powder  
3/4 cup whole wheat panko  
1/4 cup almonds, finely chopped  
4-1/4 pounds chicken breast cutlets, thinly sliced  
2 teaspoons olive oil  
2 teaspoons unsalted butter  
3 tablespoons lime juice  
1/4 teaspoon black pepper  
4 cups red cabbage, shredded  
1/2 cup fresh cilantro, chopped

Whisk together egg white, 1/4 teaspoon salt, and chile powder in a shallow dish. Mix together panko and almonds on a sheet of wax paper. Dip chicken cutlets, one at a time, in egg white mixture, then coat with panko mixture.

Heat oil and butter in a large heavy nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Add chicken and cook, turning once, until browned and cooked through – about 6 minutes.

Meanwhile, stir lime juice, 1/4 teaspoon salt, and pepper together in a medium bowl. Add cabbage and cilantro; toss to coat. Serve chicken with the cabbage mixture.

## How Do You Respond to Stress?

*Everyday Health* asked thousands of Americans how they respond to stressful situations. The goal was to help people identify the ways they respond to stress and form habits that improve stress management. Answer these questions from the 'This or That' quiz to see how your responses compare to those of other Americans.<sup>8</sup>

1. If stressed, I'm more likely to:
  - a. Crave a good workout
  - b. Crave a good wine
2. If stressed, I'm more likely to:
  - a. Walk in the woods
  - b. Binge on movies
3. If stressed, I'm more likely to:
  - a. Gain weight
  - b. Lose weight
4. If stressed, I'm more likely to:
  - a. Put my needs first
  - b. Put my needs last
5. If stressed, I'm more likely to:
  - a. Say things I regret
  - b. Email or text things I regret

## 4 Tips to Keep Your Home Safe

Burglary has become less prevalent during the last decade. During 2017, there were about 1.4 million burglaries across the United States. It was a 7.6 percent decline from 2016 and a 37.1 percent drop from 2008, reported the *Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)*. Needless to say, it's a trend everyone would like to see continue.<sup>9</sup>

In the interest of further reducing home intrusions, here are four ways to protect your home and the homes of those you love:

1. **Install good locks.** Most burglars walk right up to the front door and let themselves in, according to *Consumer Reports*. Consequently, a good first step in preventing burglary is to install pick-resistant, brass or steel reinforced deadbolts. (It's critical the lock strike plates attach with long screws.) You may want to explore pairing deadbolts with smart locks. Some smart locks will lock and unlock based on proximity to your smartphone.<sup>10</sup>

2. **Always, always lock your doors.** No matter how good your locks are, they only work if you use them. Be fastidious about locking your doors and windows.
3. **Install a home security system or app.** Most burglaries occur during the day when homeowners are away at work. Having an alarm system that is monitored by a security company with a fast response time is one way to deter burglars. Home security apps are another option. Some apps make it possible for neighborhoods to share security camera live feeds.<sup>10, 11, 12</sup>
4. **Consider a security camera.** An Oregon news team interviewed burglars and all of them said they knocked on doors to confirm whether anyone was home before breaking in. A security camera can help deter burglars and capture crime in progress. You may want to try a peephole or doorbell video camera, or indoor and outdoor lights with integrated security cameras. Make sure the camera has night vision and a hard drive that can store several days of videos.<sup>10, 12, 13</sup>

Protect yourself, your loved ones, and your property by securing your home to the best of your ability.

Quiz Answers:

1. 52 percent said they crave wine; however, exercise is one of the best ways to manage stress.
2. 59 percent said they binge on movies. If you're in this group, choose something funny to lower stress.
3. 59 percent said they gain weight. Chronic stress can lead to hormonal changes that increase appetite and cause food cravings.<sup>14</sup>
4. 65 percent of women and 49 percent of men put their needs last when stressed. That can create additional stress.
5. 76 percent said they are more likely to say things they regret.

Sources:

- <sup>1</sup> <https://www.1843magazine.com/data-graphic/what-the-numbers-say/a-debt-to-pets>
- <sup>2</sup> <https://www.statista.com/statistics/198086/us-household-penetration-rates-for-pet-owning-since-2007/>
- <sup>3</sup> <https://veterinarian.thepeteffect.org/about>
- <sup>4</sup> <https://www.avma.org/KB/Resources/Reference/AnimalWelfare/Pages/Service-Emotional-Support-Therapy-Animals.aspx>
- <sup>5</sup> <https://www.purdue.edu/newsroom/releases/2018/Q4/research-shows-how-service-dogs-can-help-veterans-with-ptsd.html>
- <sup>6</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/healthypets/health-benefits/index.html>
- <sup>7</sup> <https://www.foodnetwork.ca/recipe/almond-chicken-cutlets-with-tangy-cilantro-slaw/14219/>
- <sup>8</sup> <https://assessment.everydayhealth.com/how-you-handle-stress-quiz/>
- <sup>9</sup> <https://ucr.fbi.gov/crime-in-the-u.s/2017/crime-in-the-u.s.-2017/topic-pages/burglary>
- <sup>10</sup> <https://www.consumerreports.org/door-locks/door-locks-that-keep-you-safe/>
- <sup>11</sup> <https://ucr.fbi.gov/crime-in-the-u.s/2017/crime-in-the-u.s.-2017/tables/table-23>
- <sup>12</sup> <https://www.safety.com/8-burglar-deterrents-to-consider-and-5-to-avoid/#gref>
- <sup>13</sup> <https://www.ktvb.com/article/news/crime/we-asked-86-burglars-how-they-broke-into-homes/277-344333696>
- <sup>14</sup> <https://www.everydayhealth.com/wellness/united-states-of-stress/how-stress-can-lead-weight-gain-how-fight-it/>

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