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How therapy dogs help stroke survivors

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Benny and stroke recovery

EJ

The [Love Dog Adventures](#) animal therapy program partners with rehabilitation centers and one of the most rewarding elements of what we do is working with people who have had strokes. Benny is a specialist in this area and has earned so many behaviors that aid in stroke recovery. Sometimes he works with people ;learning to stand up, balance and even walk.

He is the perfect walking dog and we have a unique method of using leashes so that both the patient and the dog is safe, safe, safe. Benny will stride at any pace and stop when he needs to stop and sit or lay down, waiting for the person to resume moving again.

He is also extremely proficient at staying still on a table or lap still for long periods of time so hand-over-hand assisted petting, brushing, stroking can be achieved. He will stay in place forever while we wait for an open palm to be positioned. His favorite task is showing how he can stretch his whole body thus encouraging someone to stretch their limbs. And when he works with young people, they love working with the dog and never miss a therapy day when Benny will be their gym partner.

Sometimes we don't have a specific client we are paired with so Benny just says hello in the gym and everyone gets a much needed break from the hard work of recovery.

And never forget that therapy animals are there for the staff and family members as well. One time we sat the whole hour with a parent watching their child struggle through a difficult session. Perhaps this was the most worthwhile hour spent.

For more information about Love Dog Adventures, visit www.lovedogadventures.org.

Love Dog Adventures is a registered tax deductible 501c3 public charity.