I am sure the thought has crossed your mind if you are new to Essential Oils – “Just what IS a Raindrop?” And, if you are already experienced in this human application of oils – you have probably wondered – “How in the world would I do this to my dog?” To me, the Raindrop Technique is one of the most powerful and helpful, broad spectrum application of oils. When in doubt, I will reach for a Raindrop Technique as a first line application for my patients. It is highly beneficial in many areas, due to the high number and variety of oils being applied that all stimulate to balance the immune system and remove inflammation and pain. Basically, there may be a benefit for almost every condition within the Raindrop Technique.

The Raindrop Technique is a special way of applying several (often 8-9) different oils topically over the spinal area. This technique was created by the founder of Young Living, Gary Young. The technique he created combined the therapeutic use of essential oils with several ancient modalities; from Native American rituals to Tibetan Reflexology.

In the application, the chosen oils are dripped from the bottles beginning at the base of the tail up to the head, from a distance of about 3-6 inches above the spine. Combined with specialized strokes and reflexology techniques (called VitaFlex), Raindrop Technique can be a powerful tool that anyone can use.

For dogs – Raindrop application is fairly straightforward. The following will be generic guidelines, but the individual dog must always be considered when doing the application. Most of the applications vary the amount of drops applied, based on the size of the dog. For small dogs less than 20 pounds, often only 2-3 drops each of undiluted oil. Medium dogs, 20-50 pounds, 3-5 drops. Large dogs over 50 pounds, 6-8 drops of each oil. For cats – the Raindrop becomes a completely different “animal”. Please do not apply a Raindrop Technique to your feline friend without the supervision and advice of an experienced animal aromatherapist.

The technique of applying a Raindrop is basically always the same. However, it is a pleasure to know, that you really can’t do it wrong. As long as the fundamentals are in place, many variations of the technique are perfectly acceptable. For me, this is extremely helpful – as
my dog patients often decide on how, when, where – and for how long a Raindrop application will last. Some dogs are quite content to sit for hours being stroked and massaged, and love every minute of it. With other dogs, I am working on a moving target, and I am lucky if I get to stroke the dogs back three times.

When I use the Raindrop Technique for a medical concern – I often choose to apply the oils neat (or undiluted) – however, if you are new to using powerful essential oils it is fine to pre-mix the oils in V6 about 50/50 before applying them.

Here is the basic sequence that I follow when applying a Raindrop to a dog. This sequence will outline the neat, or undiluted, version that I use. If you use pre-diluted essential oils, you may not need to use the additional step of “dilution with V6”. Remember, there are basic steps that are always followed – however, there is no right or wrong. If someone likes to apply one oil prior to another, this in general is just fine. This is only my version that I have used personally. Do not fret if you have a different version, or learn other techniques. I have found many ways presented on Raindrop Technique for animals – they are all right, and they are all good. Please pick one that feels good to you.

These are the basic steps that I always try to include (I say try, because sometimes even the basics get an overhaul):
This application protocol is basically for an *average/medium sized dog in the 40 to 60 pound range*:

1. The dog can be sitting, lying down, or standing. Whatever is comfortable for the dog and the human.

2. Drop 2-3 drops of Valor essential oil blend to your palms – you may quickly rub your palms together to get the oil on both palms but this is not necessary, you may just place your hands with the small puddle of oils in your palms directly unto the dog. Place each of your hands on the dog - one over the shoulders and one over the rump area.  
   3. Hold this position, while you breathe deeply and relax yourself. This will relax your dog, as well as balance both your and your dog’s energy. 
   If you do any energy work such as prayer or Reiki – please feel free to apply it at this time. Hold the position until your hands feel balanced – sometimes you may feel a hot or cold feeling, or a pulsing. Just continue to hold your hands in position, until these sensations become equal. Some dogs do not allow you to do this for very long, and that is also okay. 
   With animals, the application will not always be perfect, nor textbook. 

4. Now, with Oregano – drip 4-6 drops from the tail to the base of the skull. Hold the bottle about 3-6 inches from the back while dripping. Space the drops as evenly as possible. Some oils are thicker than others – some will come out very quickly and others you may have to tap or shake the bottle. Oregano is a "hot" oil, and can be very uncomfortable if gotten into the eyes or in contact with other sensitive areas. Be very aware of where this oil is applied.  

5. With any of the oils – do not worry if a few more drops are applied than you planned on.
6. With the back of your finger nails – drag your fingers up the dogs back in 3 inch strokes. Centered on the spine, brushing the fur backwards, towards the head. (I recommend watching the human rain drop technique DVD that comes with the kit - it will show you how feathering and other movements are made) Do one hand, and then another. Repeat this stroking or feathering, going from tail to head, three full times. Basically, you are doing the same feather strokes that you would in a human application.

7. If the dog and time allows, I may add 6 inch strokes, 9 inch strokes, 12 inch strokes, side strokes, and even “angel wing” strokes into each application of an oil. Many times, multiple strokes are not possible as the dog is moving or we do not have enough time to sit and stroke each dog for 45 minutes. This is okay – do what time allows.

8. Next, apply Thyme (also a “hot” oil) – 4-6 drops, staggered from the Oregano drop sites if possible. Apply the feather strokes after this oil is dripped on.

9. Next I apply V6 oil up the spine. Enough oil is applied to make them look like a slightly “greasy skunk”. This oil is not applied in small drops, but rather in a streaky squirt of oil all the way up the spine. Massage this oil into the area, either with feather strokes or a basic massage. This acts to dilute the first two “hot” oils, and causes them to be absorbed a little slower. It will also tend to calm any skin “heat” that may be produced. Monitor the pet for discomfort or pinkness to the skin. Apply more V6 as needed and dictated by the pet. Never wash your pet off with water if the oils become uncomfortable. Dilute the area with more V6 oil or olive oil. As oils and water don’t mix and water will not dilute the oils correctly.

10. Then apply Basil oil – 6 drops up the spine. Feather in three times with each stroke style and oil. Continue this same way for Cypress, Wintergreen, Marjoram, and Peppermint. (Some techniques contain the sequence of Oregano, Thyme, Basil, Marjoram, Cypress, Wintergreen, Peppermint – this is fine as well. An easy way to remember the oils in this sequence is: “Only The Best Mom’s Can Win Popcorn”). Remember other oils can be added or exchanged. Aroma Seiz is also sometimes used in the Raindrop Technique when the animal is in pain – follow the human recommendations for use on other oils.

11. Vitaflex massage three times up the back, next to the spine. You will likely need a demonstration for this technique, or consult a reference of your choice. There are many DVD’s and books that will cover this technique of reflexology.

12. For a basic application of therapeutic oils you are now done! There are Raindrop Techniques for animals that also apply oils to the feet, or follow the spinal application with a wet, warm towel. Again, if you and your pet are so inclined, these can be great additions to the complete Raindrop experience.

Seeing the technique makes it much easier to understand. Abundant Health (http://www.abundanthealth4u.com/Video_Training_s/10.htm) also has DVD’s available demonstrating various techniques of Raindrop in animals, just scroll down the page to find dogs and pets. Although it may sound difficult in writing – it is truly an easy technique with huge benefits.

I often use and recommend the Raindrop application of oils to detoxify animals when switching to a raw diet, after anesthesia or surgery, as a replacement for steroid use or to help clear emotional “baggage” in rescued or abused dogs, for conditions that have very poor traditional treatment options, and for almost any other situation where the need for a broad approach to a complicated problem is needed.
I hope you will personally experience a Raindrop Technique for yourself if you haven’t already. Learn with a friend or partner to perform on each other. Or, massage therapists are offering this technique more and more commonly, try to find one in your area and pamper yourself. Once you have had a Raindrop, you will be hooked – and as you lean over your beloved best friend to administer his Raindrop – and your back begins to cramp up ever so slightly – you will remember the wonderful feeling the Raindrop gave to you – and you will be able to endure and give back unconditional love… to your canine companion.

Article and photos by Dr. Melissa Shelton
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Disclaimer: All of the information provided here is intended for educational purposes only. The information is not intended to diagnose, treat, or prescribe for any illness. Please seek the advice of a qualified, animal naturopath, natural animal health coach or natural health care professional in your area of concern if you or your pets have a health challenge.

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