

Physiotherapy for Neurological Conditions Information Sheet

Animals can suffer from a variety of neurological conditions and referral to physiotherapy means your pet will receive the same standard of care that any other member of your family would receive in a human hospital.

This sheet aims to give you some general information about common aspects of neurological physiotherapy. Please feel welcome to contact our team of qualified physiotherapists on info@k9physio.com or ph/fax 4739 4557 for more specific information for your pet's condition.

How does neurological physiotherapy work?

Although neurological conditions can affect several different body regions and therefore require individualised treatment, on the whole they can be thought of as somewhat like a traffic jam on the freeway.



Initially the cars on the freeway can't get between North and South, and so our physiotherapists must work on setting up a detour along an alternate route, whilst simultaneously trying to clear the crashed cars from the freeway.



Studies examining the effectiveness of physiotherapy have been performed on people and on cats and reveal that indeed a mixed proportion of signals (cars) travel along new pathways (the detour) and along repaired existing pathways (the freeway) as a result of prompt, conscientious physiotherapy exercises.



Some of these exercises work on getting traffic flowing from North to South (brain to feet) whilst others work on the traffic from South to North (feet to brain).

Research shows that it is vital that physiotherapy is commenced as soon after injury as possible, and that the exercises are performed correctly and frequently enough to have the desired effect. Depending on the severity of your pet's condition, you may need to do between one and four batches of physiotherapy 'homework' a day to ensure the best possible results.

We base all of our neurological treatments on scientific evidence, namely the Motor Relearning Program research developed in Australia, as well as techniques from Canada and the UK. Where possible, we encourage your pet to be an active participant in their rehabilitation, utilising food rewards for exercises whenever possible. Regardless of the specific location of the neurological problem, our physiotherapists work to compare your pet's movements with normal movements and develop exercises that help to normalise your pet's movements as much as possible as quickly as possible.

In cases where pets have had surgery for their neurological condition, we also work to ensure their post-operative pain is minimised and their scar heals optimally.

But most importantly, research on cats clearly shows that physiotherapy gives a better outcome than allowing the animal to recover spontaneously, and that if physiotherapy is ceased, patients can show deteriorations in balance, step length and other important safety considerations – researchers therefore recommend continuing exercises to maintain the improvements made with physiotherapy and you will therefore be given a 'maintenance homework plan' to work on upon discharge from regular physiotherapy appointments. But don't panic! Five or 10 minutes incorporated into your daily interactions with your pet (for example, some balance exercises for food rewards at dinner time, once or twice a week) will seem like a breeze compared to the hard work you now face. We promise to do everything we can to support you during this difficult time and look forward to working with you.

Wishing your pet the best possible quality of life.