

ANIMAL Physiotherapy Services

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Physiotherapy for Orthopaedic Conditions Information Sheet

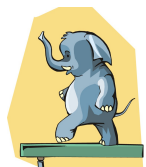
Animals can suffer from many of the same orthopaedic conditions that people can and referral to physiotherapy means your pet will receive the same standard of care that any other member of your family would receive in a human hospital. For example, both humans and pets can injure their cruciate ligaments, have luxating patellae, develop arthritis, or have any other of a number of common or rare orthopaedic problems. We therefore develop individual programs for each pet, and this sheet aims to give you some general information about common aspects of orthopaedic 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.

In general, orthopaedic conditions require a multifaceted treatment approach, with the aim of reducing pain; maximising comfortable range of motion; promoting repair of damaged tissue where possible; and improving balance, co-ordination and strength to maximise quality of life. Where pets have had surgery, we also aim to maximize the healing process and scar quality.



Research shows that reducing weight by 11-18% can significantly improve lameness, but it's hard to lose weight when it hurts to move! If required, we can help through controlled exercise programs that address the physical requirements of your pet because a typical cardio-vascular program is inadequate for an orthopaedic pet's needs.

Correctly done, weight-bearing physiotherapy exercises also help stimulate cartilage and joint nutrition whilst protecting the joint from overload. We design exercises to increase the strength of the muscles that support the joints, improving the balance between these and the muscles that move the joints, which reduces pain and improves function. Specific exercises to improve balance and co-ordination also help your pet learn when and how much to contract their muscles to help protect their joints from injury.



The appropriate use of warmth (e.g. for pain or spasm) or cold (e.g. for pain or swelling) can also be very beneficial to orthopaedic patients and our physiotherapists have been carefully trained in the safe, effective use of these modalities. Additionally, special machines such as TENS units or muscle stimulators can be safely employed to relieve pain or improve muscle strength.

Massage can be very beneficial to orthopaedic patients, but it must be done gently and to the right body parts. Properly done, it can relieve pain, improve circulation and prevent delayed onset muscle soreness after activity (that feeling of "muscles you never knew you had" which in turn leads to stiffness and weakness).



Additionally, physiotherapists are well trained in movement analysis and in suggesting alternative ways of performing tasks to reduce pain and strain for owner and pet alike. Sometimes an orthotic or aide can also be used to make your pet's movement more comfortable and safer. We have extensive experience in modifying 'homework' programs to help owners with physical limitations more comfortable, too.

Research shows that it is vital that physiotherapy is commenced as soon after diagnosis 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 initially do between one and three batches of physiotherapy "homework" a day to ensure the best possible results.

But most importantly, the latest human research shows that patients can continue to have deficits for up to 2 years after some injuries, and that these deficits actually occur in both limbs, not just the injured side. This leaves the patient at increased risk of injuring the other limb, too. Researchers therefore recommend that even when patients appear to be doing well after injury, that they are rehabilitated properly through the correct progression of exercises to ensure optimum long-term success and to minimise the risk of further injury. But don't panic! Five or 10 minutes incorporated into your daily interactions with your pet (for example, some stretches 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 wish your pet a speedy recovery.

Wishing your pet comfort and happiness.