

## Physical Therapy

### After Cruciate Ligament Injury or Surgery

### After Tibial Crest Transposition Surgery

For at least 3 weeks following surgery you should restrict your pet from jumping on/off the bed, couch, and yourself. You should also be sure your pet can avoid slippery surfaces like wood floors, tile, and linoleum. To help with these surfaces you could use throw rugs with rubber backing when possible.

### Week One

The pain will be at its worst for the first few days. Icing the incision area and giving pain medications are THE most important things to do to keep your pet comfortable.

If tolerated, do the following exercises 3 times daily in the following order:

1. Do **GENTLE MASSAGE** of the quadriceps (thigh muscle in front of the leg, above the knee) for 5 minutes. Avoiding any warm, tender areas.
2. **STRETCH** the quadriceps to the point of first resistance and hold at that point for 10 seconds, then relax.  
REPEAT 5 TIMES.
3. Perform **PASSIVE RANGE OF MOTION** to the knee joint and then to the hock (ankle) joint on the same leg.  
Do 10 slow repetitions.
4. **ICE** for 10-15 Minutes. Be sure to wrap the ice pack in a towel before applying to the leg or place a towel on the leg before applying the ice pack.
5. As long as the incision area is still warm and/or red, continue the ice packs. \*Do NOT use heat in the first week.
6. Do slow/tight leash walks for 5 minutes—3 or 4 times daily for eliminations.
7. Avoid using stairs OR you must use a sling/altered shopping bag (see helpful tips) to assist your pet.



**Please be sure you understand these instructions before you take your pet home. Have the technician watch you do the exercises to be sure they are done correctly and to avoid further injury or pain.**

**If your pet indicates that the exercises are painful, you should stop. For your safety you may want to muzzle your pet.**

**Pain Management is imperative. Please follow the Doctors recommendations for all medications.**

### Pliant Ice Packs

You can make your own pliant ice packs at home with 1 part Isopropyl Alcohol to 2 parts water sealed in a plastic Ziploc bag. For larger dogs use a gallon size bag and smaller dogs a quart size bag.

You can also use frozen vegetables or gel packs.

Set a timer to avoid frost bite.

Do not ice for more than 15 minutes at a time.

## Weeks Two and Three

1. Before walks or range of motion exercises, apply a warm pack to knee and thigh muscles for 5-10 minutes.  
\*Test the pack on yourself before applying to the dog.
2. After applying heat, continue to do the massage, stretching of the quadriceps, passive range of motion and the ice packs (in that order, as directed for week one)  
Do this 3 times daily.
3. Do slow controlled leash walks for 5-10 minutes 3 times daily for eliminations. Continue to avoid stairs OR you must use a sling to assist your pet.
4. As tolerated, slowly increase the leash walks from 10 to 30 minutes 3 times daily. The leash can be less tightly controlled, unless an exciting situation occurs.
5. On week 3, begin to perform SIT to STAND exercises; have pet sit, then stand up. Do this 5-10 times, 3 times daily.

## Weeks Four to Eight

If your pet is NOT using the leg, return for an examination.

Heat and Ice can be discontinued at this point unless needed. Massage and stretching is still good if your pet tolerates it. The following exercise program should be started doing 3 times daily of each:

1. Lift the good hind leg off of the ground and force your pet to stand on the opposite leg for 5 seconds. Do 10 reps.
2. Have pet perform SIT to STAND exercise. Do 10 repetitions.
3. Have pet do figure 8 walks, circling right, then left. When circling, the inside leg bears the most weight, so adjust the walks accordingly. Do 10 repetitions.
4. Walking up hills should be encouraged, as this puts more weight on the back legs.
5. Walking in water would be beneficial at this point. Do not allow your dog to jump into the water. Lift it in or go slowly down the steps.  
\*Active swimming should NOT be done until after 8 weeks.  
\*A referral can be written for hydrotherapy to be given at a rehabilitation facility at owner's request.
6. Walk up stairs at a controlled speed.

***At any point in recovery, your dog could re-injure the leg or over work it. If this occurs, drop back a week or two in the therapy plan and gradually increase again. If there is any questions about re-injury, please contact us to schedule a recheck exam.***

## HELPFUL TIPS:

- Anytime your dog shows signs of pain or if it overexerts or reinjures the leg, ice is a good modality to reduce pain.
- Weight management throughout your pet's life is as important as any of the exercises recommended.
- You can use a sling to help support your dog. A cloth shopping bag with handles can make a good sling if you cut down the sides. You can also use towels. You can also google \*Senior Pet Aids\* to find slings online. Follow each products recommended measuring instructions to find the correct fit.

## Weeks Eight to Twelve

If your pet is not walking normally, another Veterinary Exam should be done.

1. Take on faster walks for 30-40 minutes.
2. Running in straight lines for 10-15 minutes, 2 times daily is allowed. AVOID sharp turns.

## Weeks 12+

Return to Normal Activity!