



POSTOPERATIVE PHYSICAL REHABILITATION FOR CRUCIATE PATIENTS THAT HAVE UNDERGONE EXTRACAPSULAR REPAIR

Before attempting any physical therapy, use caution. Muzzle your dog for your own safety if needed.

Week 1 & 2

- A progress examination at 14 days post surgery will be scheduled at time of patient discharge. If external sutures were used, then they will be removed at that time.
- A chiropractic adjustment will be done on your pet as part of the rehabilitation at the 14 day progress exam.
- Apply an ice pack to the stifle for 10-15 minutes, two to four times each day for the first 24-36 hours after discharge.
- After 72 hours, apply a hot pack to the knee area for 10-15 minutes two to three times each day, prior to the passive range of motion exercises.
- 3-5 days post operatively begin passive range of motion exercises: 15 slow repetitions 2-3 times daily. See provided brochure on proper technique.
- Give analgesics as prescribed.
- Perform deep massage for 5-10 minutes, two times per day as directed in the passive range of motion handout.

Week 3

- Perform hip sway exercises, 3 times daily for 30 second periods.
- Continue passive range of motion exercises until the patient is using the leg regularly.
- Start slow leash walks for 5 minutes twice daily
- Stop passive range of motion exercise when the patient is using its leg regularly.

Week 4

- Slow leash walks 10 minutes, two times daily.

Week 5

- Schedule an appointment for a progress examination and chiropractic adjustment.

- Increase the slow leash walks to 15 minutes, two to three times daily.
- Start 3-legged standing exercises, 10-15 repetitions twice daily
- Have the patient perform 10 repetitions of sit-stand exercises three times daily.

Week 6

- Increase the slow leash walks to 20-30 minutes, two to three times daily.
- Have the patient perform 10-15 repetitions of figure 8 walks two or three time daily.
- Have the patient sit against a side wall and perform 10-15 sit/stand repetitions, keeping the affected knee next to the wall.

Week 7

- Increase leash walks to 30-40 minutes once daily – slow enough to ensure that the patient is weight-bearing on the limb.
- Take the patient on incline walks on hills or ramps for 5-10 minutes once or twice daily.
- Have the patient go up a flight of stairs 5-10 times slowly, twice daily, under leash control.
- Schedule an appointment for a progress examination and chiropractic adjustment.

Week 8

- Schedule appointment for progress examination and chiropractic adjustment

Weeks 8 – 24

At this point, your pet's surgical healing should be complete, but full rehabilitation of your pet's muscular strength will not be complete. It may take up to 4 to 6 months post surgery for full strength to return.

- Continue leash controlled activity.
- Take the patient on faster 30-40 minute walks once or twice daily.
- Take your dog for a run – straight only, no turns, for 10-15 minutes twice daily.
- Free running off leash is discouraged until 4 to 6 months post surgery
- It may take a year or more for your pet to become strong enough for full activity without lameness.
- Remember that return to full activity should be done gradually.