

## Canine/Dog Physiotherapy

### Conditions treated

- **Congenital and Orthopaedic conditions:** Many dogs suffer from congenital conditions such as hip and elbow dysplasia. Physiotherapy can help with pain relief and provide exercise and rehabilitation programmes to restore and maintain normal movement and function. Physiotherapy can greatly enhance recovery from common orthopaedic conditions such as cranial cruciate ligament rupture.
- **Neurological Problems:** Physiotherapy can help in the rehabilitation of animals with neurological problems such as disc disease, whether a conservative or surgical approach is decided on. Treatment protocols include the management of pain, prevention of muscle atrophy and the restoration of normal gait patterns and exercise programmes.
- **After surgery:** Early physiotherapy intervention following orthopaedic or neurological surgery in the dog is indicated to enhance recovery. Ongoing rehabilitation following surgery has been shown to be beneficial to restore normal function.
- **The injured dog:** Many dogs suffer from fractures, soft tissue and other injuries following car accidents, falls and other traumas. Physiotherapy is used to reduce pain, enhance healing and restore the dog's normal movement and function following injury.
- **The older dog:** Arthritis is a very common condition in dogs. Physiotherapy can help with pain relief, joint stiffness and muscle wasting to improve movement and quality of life in the older dog.
- **The elite athlete:** Through prevention and treatment of pain and injury, physiotherapy can help achieve and maintain optimal performance in these animals.

### What to expect:

Again for each appointment Veterinary Permission is gained before seeing the animal as this is a legal requirement as stated by the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966. The initial session usually takes 1 hour (at least) to assess and treat the animal.

### During the assessment we shall:

- Take a full subjective history collecting information on what problems your dog is having.
- Your dog will then be observed at stance to assess symmetry and to observe any uncharacteristic findings.
- An assessment of your dog's gait is then carried out which may include assessing them at a variety of paces, on and off the lead.
- It may also be required to assess how your dog carries out certain activities e.g. sit to stand, stairs, getting in and out of the car and getting up and down from a lying position.
- The physiotherapist will then palpate the muscles to identify any alterations in muscle tone, muscle spasm or trigger points before assessing joint range of movement.
- The physiotherapist may also carry out a range of assessment to ascertain the dog's awareness for its position in space (proprioception), reflex response and response to pain in neurological cases.
- From this assessment your dog's problems will be identified and then an individual treatment programme will be planned accordingly.

### Treatment

This will again consist of a combination of "hands on" techniques, electrotherapy, and rehabilitative exercises such as:

- Calming techniques: Massage and T Touch. (I am keen to ensure each dog has a positive experience, dog owners may wish to provide their animals favourite treat, toy or blanket during the treatment session).
- Soft tissue release techniques using deep massage, myofascial release, trigger point release and acupressure.
- Stretches
- Joint manipulations and mobilisations techniques

- Strengthening programmes using functional movement (sit to stands), supported walking and lead walk programmes
- Cryotherapy (Cold), Thermotherapy (Hot) to assist with swelling and spasm respectively
- Electrotherapy- Ultrasound, Laser, TENS (Transcutaneous Electrical Nerve Stimulation), Electro-magnetic therapy and NMES (Neuromuscular electrical stimulation), to alleviate swelling, muscle spasm and pain and to prevent/restore muscle wasting
- Rehabilitation programmes such as proprioceptive re-training programmes involving poles, gradients, altered surfaces and sensory input. Hydrotherapy programmes where appropriate
- Advice and education regarding the condition, treatment protocol, exercise environment and rehabilitation programme