



*The Canine Fitness Centre Ltd.*  
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## **POST OPERATIVE REHAB INSTRUCTION SHEET**

Any orthopedic surgical procedure does best when followed by specific postoperative rehabilitation. The following instructions serve as suggestions for home use. For more specific treatments or options for your animal please call the Canine Fitness Centre to discuss.

### **Day 2 – Day 14:**

- RICE:
  - Rest: Keep your dog quiet. Disallow playing with other pets or small children. Keep the dog on leash while allowed out for toileting purposes, however you can choose different neighborhood bushes to visit each time. Stairs should also be avoided, gaited off or supervised and assisted when their use is necessary. When away from home keep your animal confined in a crate or a separate room.
  - Ice: Icing can be done 2 – 3 x a day. Ice for no more than 10 – 20 minutes per session. If needed, you can safely ice once an hour. (Frozen peas wrapped in a wet dish cloth works best...do not eat the peas)
  - Compression and Elevation and not applicable in the animal patient.
  
- Massage:
  - Some gentle and light stroking techniques can be utilized to help reduce swelling and aid in pain relief. Aim your strokes upward and towards the lymph nodes or blood vessels in either the back of the knee and groin area or alternately the front of the elbow and axilla (armpit) region. 5 – 10 minutes, once or twice a day, can be very effective.
  
- Joint Compressions:
  - Place one hand above the affected joint or nearest joint) and the other hand below the next joint down the limb; Without moving the leg at all, compress the joints together via the long bone between your two hands. You are simply creating a gentle squishing force through the joint. This aids in joint nutrition, swelling, pain relief and awareness of the leg. Do small oscillating compressions for up to 5 minutes per session, 2 – 3 times a day.

- Range Of Motion:
  - Bend and straighten the affected joint. Be sure to do all of the joints on the affected limb. Be aware that when bending the hock (ankle) joint, you need to allow the knee (stifle) to bend as much as it can in order to get proper movement. At this stage, only move the limb within the animal's comfort. Do not push into discomfort until after 2 weeks. Move each joint 10 – 20 repetitions, 2 – 3 times a day.
- Lifestyle Management:
  - It is important for the prevention of injuries as well as to help normalize limb use for the animal to have safe non-slip footing. If your home has linoleum, hardwood or tile, you should get some rubber backed mats / runners to create a pathway for your dog to safely walk indoors.
- Physical Rehabilitation Treatments:
  - There are other treatments that can be applied by physical therapists trained in canine rehabilitation. Ultrasound can be helpful to reduce swelling and stimulate healing, LASER is good for this purpose as well, but also aids in pain relief and cellular regeneration and Pulsed Electromagnetic Field Therapy can help with tissue oxygenation and healing. Electrical Muscle Stimulation can help to prevent atrophy, remind the surrounding muscles of their actions and aid in pain relief and reduction of swelling. As well, trained staff can assess and treat secondary problems in the spine or pelvis that may be causing additional discomfort for your animal.

**Beyond 2 weeks:**

- Encouraging normal use and weight bearing
- Strengthening muscles for gross motor strength, stabilization & motor control & timing
- Gait Retraining
- Advanced proprioception / co-ordination training
  
- The Canine Fitness Centre can establish a post-op rehab program that will optimize your dog's healing. In addition to manual (hands on) therapies, state of the art physical therapy treatment modalities, we also Canada's first canine underwater treadmill. This piece of equipment has proven itself to be an instrumental part in post-operative recovery.