

ARTHRITIS

Sage Canine Rehabilitation Center



UNDERSTANDING ARTHRITIS

Arthritis is not limited to humans; it can also affect our canine companions. Dogs, like us, can experience joint pain, stiffness, and decreased mobility as they age. Canine arthritis, also known as osteoarthritis or degenerative joint disease (DJD), is a chronic condition that impacts the joints' cartilage, causing discomfort and pain.

MANAGING ARTHRITIS IN DOGS

Once diagnosed, your veterinarian will work with you to create a tailored treatment plan. Here are some common strategies for managing canine arthritis:

- 1. Medications:** Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) can help reduce pain and inflammation. Your veterinarian will prescribe the appropriate medication and dosage.
- 2. Weight Management:** Maintaining a healthy weight is essential for arthritic dogs. Excess weight puts added stress on their joints, exacerbating their discomfort.
- 3. Physical Therapy:** Physical therapy and rehabilitation exercises can help improve joint function and mobility.
- 4. Nutrition:** Specialized diets and supplements rich in omega-3 fatty acids and joint-supporting ingredients can aid in managing arthritis.
- 5. Comfortable Living:** Make your home arthritis-friendly by providing soft bedding, non-slip surfaces, and ramps or steps for easy access to elevated areas.

EARLY DETECTION IS KEY TO MANAGING ARTHRITIS EFFECTIVELY. KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR THESE COMMON SIGNS:

- **Limping or Lameness:** If your dog starts limping or favoring a particular leg, it could be a sign of joint pain.
- **Stiffness:** Difficulty in getting up, lying down, or climbing stairs can indicate joint problems.
- **Reduced Activity:** A noticeable decrease in your dog's activity level or reluctance to play may be arthritis-related.
- **Changes in Behavior:** Dogs in pain may become irritable, anxious, or even aggressive.





WHEN TO SEEK PROFESSIONAL HELP

If you notice any of the signs of arthritis in your dog, it's crucial to consult your veterinarian promptly. They can diagnose arthritis through a physical exam, X-rays, or other diagnostic tests. An early diagnosis allows for better management of the condition, which can significantly improve your dog's quality of life.

Physical therapy for dogs with arthritis is customized to each individual dog's needs, taking into account their specific condition, age, and overall health. It is essential to work closely with a veterinarian and a certified canine rehabilitation therapist to develop a tailored plan that maximizes your dog's comfort and quality of life.

Physical Therapy Treatment for Arthritis:

Range of Motion (ROM) Exercises: These exercises involve gently moving and manipulating your dog's joints to maintain or improve their flexibility. Passive ROM exercises may require a therapist's assistance, while active ROM exercises involve encouraging your dog to move their joints on their own.

Strength Training: Building muscle strength around arthritic joints can help support and stabilize them. Therapists may use resistance bands, balance exercises, or underwater treadmill sessions for this purpose.

Balance and Coordination Exercises: These exercises help dogs regain and maintain their balance, which is crucial for preventing falls and further joint damage.

Pain Management: modalities such as LASER, electrical stimulation, PEMF, and manual therapy can help alleviate pain and reduce inflammation in the arthritic joint.

If you have questions or any concerns about your pet's joint health, please do not hesitate to contact our clinic!



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