

SYDNEY ANIMAL PHYSIOTHERAPY

Physiotherapy ~ Hydrotherapy ~ Acupuncture

Kristine Edwards

Masters in Animal Studies (physiotherapy)
B.App.Sc. (Physio) Dip. Acupuncture

t: (02) 95609262

f: (02) 95609161

m: 0408 229 341

www.sydneyanimalphysiotherapy.com

kristine@sydneyanimalphysiotherapy.com

56a Moore St Leichhardt NSW 2040

Post Operative Protocol for Cranial Cruciate Repairs

Kristine is a physiotherapist, acupuncturist and qualified yoga and pilates teacher. She has been in practice for over 20 years and has had two physiotherapy practices in Sydney. For the past 12 years she has been treating animal patients as well as humans. In 2004 Kristine completed a Masters degree in animal physiotherapy from Queensland University.

In 2007 she opened Sydney Animal Physiotherapy, specializing in physiotherapy and rehabilitation for animals. The centre contains the only underwater treadmill in Sydney, an excellent modality for treating many conditions. Advice on correct exercise is an important part of any treatment; Kristine believes we should all, humans and animals, be active, healthy and moving as well as possible well into old age.

The following notes describe an ideal programme for cruciate rehabilitation.

Don't be discouraged if it looks complicated or lengthy; each programme can be modified to suit you and your dog's circumstances. The programme is straight forward and quick once you know how.

You will ideally have 2 to 3 visits for a few weeks with your physiotherapist. She will teach you the correct techniques, stretches, pressure, massage etc, so that you become skilled at handling your dog and helping with his rehabilitation.

Until the dog is able to weight-bear somewhat equally (perhaps for the first few days), you will need to support her under abdomen with towel, held from above, for toileting in the squat position.



hands on care for animal wellbeing

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Day 1- Day 10

- Icing, i.e. applying cold packs, if necessary.
- Passive range of movement (PROM) 2-3 times daily.

Stifle (knee): flexion and extension within the available range and slowly increasing as tolerated.

Tarsus (ankle): flex by pushing up paw, keeping knee in neutral. This joint often becomes stiff following surgery, due to nonweightbearing.

Hip: extension. Slowly extend leg backwards, keeping knee comfortably straight, and as tolerated by your dog.

N.B. no rotations, as they may aggravate knee.

Please make sure the physiotherapist shows you how to safely do the exercises and apply the ice pack.

- Short leash walks for toileting only. (few minutes)
- Confinement to crate while owner is away, or if dog is hyperexcitable, as necessary
- Disallow running, jumping, playing, stairs for at least 6 weeks (check with your vet). Leash walks only.
If floors in your house are slippery, put down non-slip rugs, old carpet throws etc. for at least 8 weeks.



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Modalities such as ultra sound, laser, acupuncture may be used to enhance healing, reduce pain, stiffness and inflammation ; your physiotherapist will discuss these options.

10 Days to 4 weeks

- Leash walks 5 minutes at first, gradually building to 10. Walks on flat only, no hills or difficult terrain (sand or mud). Monitor your dog for signs of pain, fatigue, look at quality of movement. If not moving well, you may need to decrease exercise a little.
- Initiate weightbearing, if not already happening. Encourage gentle increase in weight bearing.

Techniques to encourage weightbearing:

3-leg stand

Taking food from opposite hip

Lifting front legs and chest slightly off ground.

Please talk to your physio or vet if you need help with this.

The Underwater Treadmill is excellent for rehabilitation at this stage. It supports the dog's body weight while she walks through warm water, thus encouraging pain free muscle development. The sooner the dog builds up muscle, walks normally and regains fitness, the better results post surgery. Dogs ideally start 10-14 days post surgery, the sooner the better, providing there are no complications or infections. You will need to check with your vet for start time.



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4-6 Weeks post surgery

Continue as above, increasing walks to 10-15 minutes twice per day.

6-7 Weeks post surgery

As above, increase to 20 minute walks, watch for signs of lameness, fatigue.

Add small hills, obstacle courses (walking over obstacles, figure of eights, zigzagging).

5-10 minutes swimming under observation.

N.B. Swimming and use of underwater treadmill, which is controlled wading through warm water, are NOT the same exercise! Please do not take your dog swimming until you have checked with vet/physio.

8 weeks post surgery

All dogs recover at different speeds so please consult with your vet or physiotherapist about the next phase e.g. how much off lead activity, return to agility, any further rehab required etc



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