



PHYSIOTHERAPY MANAGEMENT OF: CRANIAL CRUCIATE LIGAMENT INJURY

A rupture of the cranial cruciate ligament is one of the most common injuries in the dog. This ligament is vital for the stability of the knee/stifle joint. Interestingly for me as a human Physiotherapist first, the anatomy of the knee is almost exactly the same in a human as a dog. Cruciate ligament injury is also a very common condition in humans, but the reason why it happens is very different in a dog. In humans, the cruciate ligament ruptures acutely, but in dogs this cause only accounts for about 3% of injuries. It is thought to be more of a disease/degenerative process occurring over time. In fact, there are many reasons this process might occur - biomechanical and biologic issues (in other words a weak ligament is under strain, breaks down and degenerates).

Therefore, surgical treatment is often preferred to limit secondary complications such as further degradation to the joint (especially with meniscal/cartilage tears and therefore arthritic changes.) Concurrently there is a very high risk of the other knee to have the same injury within 2 years, especially without effective rehabilitation. Whether your dog is being managed conservatively or post-surgery, Physiotherapy is critical to maximise your dog's overall recovery. Physiotherapists are movement experts. We are trained to examine every aspect of the movement system and maximise the recovery process (including addressing secondary issues due to your dog limping).

PHYSIOTHERAPY BENEFITS:

- **Reduce pain/muscle spasm**
- **Facilitate healing**
- **Restore normal passive range of movement**
- **Muscle re-education – normalise muscle tone and balance**
- **Assist functional return to activities**
- **Prevent or minimise complications**
- **Improve proprioception (joint position sense)**
- **Improve core stability**
- **Increase strength in a controlled manner**
- **Gait re-education**
- **Improve your pet's overall condition**
- **Education to manage at home and maximise recovery**

WHEN?

Treatment should begin as soon as possible after an injury, preferably in early stages (even prior to surgery) to minimise secondary complications, aid healing, and maximise recovery. Generally, 10-14 days is the best time to start with our initial consultation (your Veterinarian will advise also).

Early intervention can help to reduce pain, improve range of motion, limit progression of arthritis, and most importantly build stability and strength of the knee joint. Physiotherapy is not just about exercise – we are experts at acute management of injuries also. Therefore, it is vital to maximise the speed of your dog's recovery to make sure he/she safely gets back to appropriate exercises and therefore limit any secondary complications.

An extensive home program will be given to help maximise your dog's recovery and this must be performed PAINFREE. Every dog is unique and should be treated as such when designing a program – **there is no formula!**

WHEN?

Treatment should begin as soon as possible after an injury/surgery, and may be introduced as an inpatient whilst recovering as an inpatient. This will be provided to reduce pain, facilitate healing, reduce swelling and assist in transfers.

Physiotherapy is not just about exercise – we are experts at acute management of injuries also. Therefore, it is vital to maximise the speed of your dog's recovery to make sure he/she safely gets back to appropriate exercises and therefore limit any secondary complications.

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CONSULTATION

At Holistic Animal Physiotherapy we provide a thorough assessment (1-1.5 hr), including hands-on/manual assessment and treatment from nose to tail, acupuncture, advice and provision of home program (including provision of appropriate stability exercises). We can also provide advice to help manage your animal at home with confinement, (as this can be stressful for the human and dog) and tailor your program to your needs. We are available for advice for ongoing management at any stage. Following consultations are 30 mins-45 mins or packages of underwater treadmill and laser may be included.

LOOKING FOR FURTHER INFORMATION?

Please visit www.holisticanimalphysio.com.au / Facebook (holistic animal physiotherapy)/Instagram (brookeanimalphysio). Call Brooke (0408 022 660) to make an appointment or ask any questions you may have.

Kind regards,

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