



Referral Animal Hospital, P.A.

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STIFLE REHABILITATION REGIME

During this time period the patient's activities are gradually increased in order to stretch the surgery scar tissue and rebuild muscles. The degree of activity should progress with the patient remaining comfortable. Since increasing duration and not intensity is the goal, explosive activities such as **running, jumping, playing, frolicking, furniture or stairs are not allowed** during the rehabilitation period. Remember that your pet already has degenerative joint disease ("arthritis") and our goal is to make him/her as comfortable as we can for as long as we can.

Throughout the rehabilitation process the dog is allowed to go as far as he/she is able while remaining comfortable. To judge the dog's comfort, watch the dog when he/she gets up from following exercise and rest. If invigorated and excited about more activity, the dog is comfortable. If the dog gets up with stiffness and complaint, then the amount of activity should be reduced.

Weeks 1-3:

The first three to four weeks of activity are comprised of progressively longer walks with the animal on a short lead. Begin with short walks of one block (or equivalent) and see how the dog responds. Continue at this distance for a few days. If the dog remains comfortable, double the distance of the walk. Continue doubling the distance of the walks every few days as the dog's comfort level permits. If the animal appears uncomfortable with the increased distance, cut the length of the walk back to the last distance that the animal was comfortable at. Your pet will benefit more from several short walks in one day rather than a single long walk.

Weeks 4-6:

During this time period, the walks are continued with the animal on a long lead. This allows the dog freedom to trot back and forth, increasing the usage of the leg. As distances are more difficult to judge at this point, it is important to monitor the dog's comfort level closely during this stage of the rehabilitation.

Weeks 7-12:

At this time the dog is allowed mild activity off lead. The area should have no other animals or distractions around. The dog should remain under the voice control of the owner. No jumping, chasing a ball or frisbee, or playing with other dogs or cats is permitted. Avoid any other activities where the dog's full concentration is thrown into the activity without any regard to his/her body.

A final recheck at the WCVS office at the end of the rehabilitation process may be needed before full activity may be resumed.