

# Canine Hock Injuries

## Physiotherapy Treatment for Your Dog

The dog's hock (tarsus) is a complex series of joints and can be damaged by trauma and over extension.

Areas particularly at risk include the achilles tendon, gastrocnemius muscle, ligaments and displacement of the superficial digital flexor tendon elongation. Additionally the hock joint can be affected by orthopaedic conditions such as OCD (osteochondritis dissecans) and osteoarthritis.

Physiotherapy can play an integral part in treating, rehabilitation and long term management of this joint, related muscles, tendons and ligaments.

Where physiotherapy has been recommended, either as a conservative treatment or to provide post-operative care, at SmartPaws we will work with your veterinary to provide the best treatment plans. This will aid healing as well as treating potential secondary issues such muscle atrophy or excessive tension.

Every dog is different, so the actual treatment plan will be tailored to your dog and its particular condition.



### Benefits of Physiotherapy Treatments:

- Control pain, inflammation and swelling
- Reduce time to normalise weight bearing and range-of-movement
- Prevent further joint deterioration and maintain strength in supporting tissues
- Reduce the potential and progression of osteoarthritis

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### Treatment Options

Injured Area	Treatment Outline
<b>Achilles Tendon</b>	The achilles tendon is composed of three tendinous structures and can be injured by laceration. Chronic (longer term) damage can also occur. Whether treated with surgery or conservatively, the use of therapeutic ultrasound reduces pain / adhesions and <b>enhances tendon healing</b> .
<b>Gastrocnemius (Calf) Muscle</b>	Strains of this muscle can result in lack of weight bearing (on that limb) and hyper flexing of the hock joint. Conservative management with LASER can help <b>stimulate the healing process</b> and enhance muscle repair.
<b>Ligament Sprains</b>	Ligaments stabilise the joints. They have a limited blood supply and therefore take longer to heal than muscles. Therapeutic ultrasound is beneficial for the treatment of ligaments as it increases the local blood supply and <b>improves collagen extensibility</b> .
<b>Osteoarthritis (OA)</b>	OA is a low-grade inflammation process. This can result in pain, muscle wastage and reduced range-of-motion. <b>PEMF is particularly effective</b> in relieving OA pain and inflammation. Additionally it affords chondroprotection and helps in bone remodelling. Vetspec Mobility joint supplement is also recommended.
<b>Osteochondritis Dissecans (OCD)</b>	Dogs with OCD (tarsus) will demonstrate obvious lameness and a fixed position of the hock joint. They will probably hold the affected limb straight and have constrained movement. Conservative treatment may be possible, however research indicates surgery is the most successful option. Post-surgery physiotherapy will help <b>reduce pain, prevent muscle wastage</b> and restore range-of-movement.
<b>Superficial digital flexor tendon (SFDFT)</b>	Trauma of the hock joint can cause displacement of this tendon. Research shows that shelties and collies are most commonly affected, although all breeds can suffer from SFDFT luxation. If surgery is carried out, <b>NMES will be beneficial</b> in relieving pain and preventing muscle atrophy on the affected limb.

### Treadmill Walking

After treatments have restored mobilisation, a treadmill program is recommended.

Treadmill facilitates improvement of joint extension / flexion and building of limb muscle mass. An additional 5 sessions are proposed, building from 5 to 15 minute periods.

### Hiring Units

PEMF and NMES are suitable for home use and it is possible to hire these machines.

Typically home treatments can begin after the 3<sup>rd</sup> visit so we can monitor the dog's response to treatment and demonstrate how to use the equipment. For more details and pricing please visit <http://goo.g/JuiMdZ>

*Note: Symptoms may worsen slightly after initial treatments due to the initiation of the healing process and is perfectly normal. Information given is for reference purposes and is not indicative of any particular treatment or outcome. Before any advice, treatment or consultation is entered into, you must agree to our terms and conditions of practice. Hiring an electrotherapy unit will require a refundable deposit.*