

Canine Neck Muscle Strains

Physiotherapy Treatment for Your Dog

The dog's neck contains 5 primary muscles and the nuchal ligament. Combined, these are responsible for the extensive movement of the head and maintaining posture.

The actual conformation of the neck will depend on the breed and their specific function. For example, in many hunting breeds the neck is hard muscled, powerful and strong. In comparison, slender build sighthounds will have longer and smoother muscles to stoop while catching prey.

Soft tissue injuries in this part of the dog's anatomy include strains to the brachiocephalicus, rhomboids and serratus ventralis.



Your dog may demonstrate these symptoms as a stiff neck (or unwillingness to turn / raise the head), extreme sensitivity to the touch, and difficulty in normal extension of the shoulder joint or even an abnormal spine alignment. Alternatively a working dog may be unwilling to carry out activities such as fully extending when running, jumping, retrieving, pulling (in a harness) or carrying the head high in the obedience or show ring.

A full veterinary assessment and diagnosis is essential in suspected injury of the sensitive neck area. Primarily any trauma or disease to the vertebrae and intervertebral discs must be investigated before carrying out any soft tissue physiotherapy.

Benefits of Physiotherapy Treatments:

- Reduce muscular tension
- Restore flexibility and the natural range-of-movement
- Aid investigation of potential causes of muscle strain
- Reduction of the time to start working again

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Physiotherapy Treatment Options for Your Dog

Before commencing any treatment it is critical that neurological or orthopaedic conditions* are discounted by your veterinary as potential causes of your dog's discomfort. Following diagnosis and referral from your veterinary, we propose an initial review of your dog's history, working discipline and an agreement of rehabilitation aims. It should also be noted that tension in the neck and thoracic areas may be a secondary issue caused by an injury or trauma elsewhere.

Initial treatment will concentrate on relieving tightness of the muscles using multi-frequency pulse LASER. We use the MKW system with the patented 'comb' which reduces the reflection of the dog's coat. This is particularly important in the neck area, where many dogs have a lot of extra hair. Benefits of LASER include pain relief and a reduction of muscular tension.



Follow up sessions are recommended which will include targeted massage, manipulation and stretching. Additionally owners can also choose to hire a PEMF unit for home use to supplement the LASER treatment (see below).

Hiring Units

PEMF (Pulsed Magnetic Field Therapy) promotes tissue repair by subjecting ligaments and muscles to controlled electromagnetic fields. This improves the local blood supply / oxygen pressure thus stimulating repair. Electromagnetic fields have excellent penetration and are unaffected by heavy coats. PEMF is suitable for home use and it is possible to hire the machine. For more details and pricing please visit <http://goo.gl/JuiMdZ>.

**Not limited to these conditions. 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.*