

Canine Carpal Injuries

Physiotherapy Treatment for Your Dog

The dog's carpal (wrist) is a complex joint designed to absorb concussive stresses. Injuries and arthritis commonly affect this joint. Drug-free physiotherapy can play an integral part in treating, rehabilitation and long term management of this area.

Carpal strains and tears will be classed as either acute (recent) or chronic (long term). Damage can be caused by factors such as trauma and over extension. Areas particularly at risk include the carpal flexor muscles, superficial digital flexor tendon elongation, strains of the collateral ligaments, abductor pollicis longus tenosynovitis, palmar ligament hyperextension injury, and carpal bone fractures.

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 as compensatory muscle tension and osteoarthritis.

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
- Support post-operative rehabilitation (where applicable)

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Treatment Options

The following table outlines common carpal injuries which may be treated with physiotherapy, either conservatively or following surgery.

Injured Area	Treatment Outline
Abductor Pollicus Longus Tenosynovitis	LASER treatment can reduce the negative effects of this painful inflammation of the tendon sheath. Benefits of LASER include pain relief, a reduction of inflammation / swelling and improved joint mobility.
Carpal Bone Fractures	Bone undergoes a similar healing process to soft tissue. After surgery and limb immobilisation, physiotherapy aids pain reduction and prevention of muscle atrophy (wastage). Pulsed Magnetic Field Therapy (PEMF) has been proven to positively influence fracture repairs and reduce pain. Regular sessions of at least twice a day are recommended.
Carpal Flexor Muscles	These superficial muscles flex your dog's paw during movement. Tight muscles will limit flexion of the forelimb and limit potential to absorb the concussive forces. Application of LASER and manual manipulation will release the muscle tension and normalise stride pattern. Compensatory issues may also affect shoulder muscles.
Ligament Strains	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 improves collagen extensibility .
Palmar ligament hyperextension	Following partial or complete arthrodesis (joint fixation) PEMF is used to reduce pain and manual manipulation recommended to restore range of movement and muscle tone.
Superficial Digital Flexor Tendon	If the affected limb is immobilised, muscle atrophy or contracture can quickly develop. Therapeutic Ultrasound and manual manipulation can be used to restore range of movement and muscle tone.

Treadmill Walking

After treatments have restored mobilisation, a treadmill program is recommended. Treadmill work allows refinement of the rehabilitation program under controlled conditions. An additional 5 sessions are proposed, building from 5 to 15 minute periods.

Hiring Units

PEMF is suitable for home use, it is possible to hire the machine. Typically home treatments can begin after the 3rd 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.gl/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.