

# Canine Shoulder Injuries

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## Physiotherapy Treatment for Your Dog

Having no bony attachment, the canine shoulder is an extremely mobile joint. Its stability is ensured by ligaments, tendons and the joint capsule. These factors mean that the forelimb area is pre-disposed to several types of athletic injury. Physiotherapy can play an integral part in treating, rehabilitation and long term management of shoulder conditions.

Primarily the shoulder joint facilitates both extension and flexion of the forelimb. Additionally it allows abduction and adduction as well as internal / external rotation. Excessive movement or repetitive use may result in sprains or strains of all supporting structures.

Where a dog is showing forelimb lameness, your veterinary may diagnose conditions such as bicipital tenosynovitis, infraspinatus muscle contracture, pectoral strains, supraspinatus tendinopathy, teres major and triceps strain.

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. 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 in acute injuries and post-operation
- Reduce time to normalise weight bearing and range-of-movement
- Targeted stretching and strengthening to reduce potential of re-injury
- Improve range-of-movement in long standing conditions

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### Treatment Options

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

Injured Area	Treatment Outline
<b>Bicipital Tenosynovitis</b>	The biceps flexes the elbow and extends and stabilizes the shoulder joint, injury may be caused by repetitive strain. Acute injuries can be treated with LASER to reduce inflammation. Chronic injuries are treated with Ultrasound and Deep Friction Massage (DFM). <b>Rehabilitation</b> involves range-of-movement, strengthening and stretching exercises.
<b>Infraspinatus Muscle Contracture</b>	Usually treated by surgery, physiotherapy for this condition will typically focus on post-operation reduction of swelling / muscle atrophy and limb rehabilitation. <b>NMES is particularly effective</b> for the former, while range-of-motion and stretching exercises will help in the medium to longer term.
<b>Pectoral Strains</b>	The pectoral muscles facilitate flexion / extension of the shoulder and aid stabilisation of the forelimbs in standing. Strains can occur when a forelimb over extends, possibly from slipping. This large muscle group can be effectively treated with <b>LASER to reduce pain / inflammation</b> and then to aid the healing process. These sessions can be complemented with home treatments of PEMF.
<b>Supraspinatus Tendinopathy</b>	The supraspinatus muscle is active > 65% of the time when the dog is standing. Injury, typically due to overuse, is unresponsive to rest and worse after exercise. <b>Conservative treatments</b> are similar to bicipital tenosynovitis, outlined above.
<b>Teres Major Strain</b>	Generally injured during rapid over-stretching, symptoms of a teres major strain includes forelimb lameness that improves with rest but returns with activity. If the tendon is primarily affected, treatments will be similar to bicipital tenosynovitis. Reduction of inflammation with <b>LASER and PEMF</b> followed by strength and proprioception training are indicated for muscular strains
<b>Triceps Strain</b>	The triceps muscle maintains the elbow in an extended position while the dog stands, supporting its weight against the pull of gravity. If these muscles are injured or tight the dog may be unable to fully put weight on that limb. NMES, massage and stretching can help to <b>reduce muscle tension</b> and restore flexibility.

### 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

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