

Please circulate to  
vets in your practice

## Physiotherapy Newsletter

See webpages  
especially for vets

### Physiotherapy for Osteoarthritis in dogs and cats

Osteoarthritis is managed in a multi-model approach that includes: pain control, weight management, exercise management and home environment management.

As an adjunct to veterinary management physiotherapy can help with all of the above.

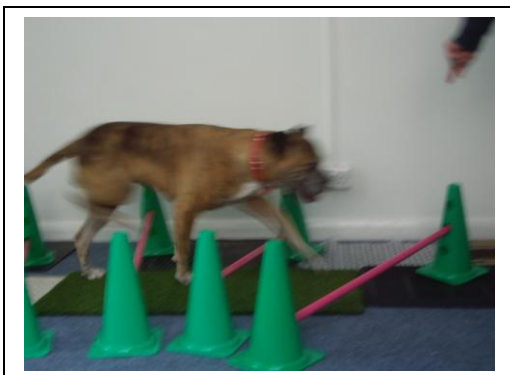
On a new referral for a dog or cat with osteoarthritis I will visit the animal at home for an assessment.

See next column for how physiotherapy aids pain control.

Home management is a big part of the quality of life of the animal and assessment of the areas of the house the animal accesses, food and water provision height, surfaces, step and stairs, Bed options, car access are all assessed by the physiotherapist and advice and suggestions given for any relevant improvements.

Therapeutic exercise benefits OA joints. Providing a home exercises program that focus' on strengthening the muscles that support the affected joints alleviates discomfort and improves function. Also showing the animal how to use all of it's body to spread the load reduces issues arising in overloaded compensated areas of the skeleton.

For the elderly dog a hands on massage of all the muscles makes them feel good (and the owners too).



Slow  
therapeutic  
exercises  
for joint-  
control  
muscles

### Physiotherapy helps control pain

To reduce pain requires a multi-model approach and even a multi-disciplinary approach.

Physiotherapists work alongside vets and nurses to provide input to pain relief.

The tools to hand for a physiotherapist to use to address pain include electrotherapies (laser, tens, pulsed magnetic therapy); hands on physiotherapy such as massage, myofascial release and gentle joint movements, and appropriate therapeutic exercises.

Exercise when in pain – no ? – well actually there is much research in people that shows that therapeutic exercises reduce pain. We also know that strengthening of muscle fibres close to a painful joint alleviates pain related to that joint. The right exercise produces endorphins. Of course the pain has to be controlled enough so that these therapeutic exercises can be achieved and the right exercises have to be selected so that they can be achieved without aggravating the issue.

The physiotherapist uses clinical reasoning following assessment to select the right course of treatment to address the pain for that specific animal.

Pain causes the dog to move differently and this contributes to sore and tense muscles in hips, back, scapulae and pectoral region. This in turn makes it uncomfortable to move. Hands on Physiotherapy will treat this soreness and encourage the dog to move more effectively to reduce the pain.

So a dog in pain can benefit from Chartered Veterinary Physiotherapist assessment and treatment.

Pulsed magnetic  
therapy to ease  
muscle soreness

