



THE PROVEN LEADER IN PET MOBILITY

A close-up photograph of a white dog with black spots resting its head on a person's lap. The person is wearing a blue and orange plaid shirt. The background is a soft-focus outdoor setting with green grass and flowers.

HOW TO HELP YOUR AGING PET

WalkinPets.com | (866) 578-2926



WALKIN' PETS by HandicappedPets.com has been an incredible 20-year journey for all of us. We began with the mission to show the pet-care professional community that a mobility problem doesn't necessarily need to be an end-of-life crisis. Since then, we've helped over a million dogs, cats, rabbits, ducks, chickens, and other pet family members live happy healthy lives. What a privilege that has been!

We've accomplished that and now have the support of veterinarians, animal rehab therapists, and pet care professionals around the world. Pet care-takers are no longer routinely advised to put their animals to sleep simply because they can't walk well.

Now, our mission is education. Sometimes I tell someone about my company and they say "I had no idea these devices existed. I wish I had known about you when my best friend was sick." That's my cue that I need to do better job spreading out message that "our pets are family and aging, injured, and disabled pets deserve to live happy, healthy lives."

I'm Mark C. Robinson, president and founder of Walkin' Pets, and inventor of the Walkin' Wheels dog wheelchair. I want to thank Jennifer Pratt for creating this brilliantly crafted booklet and Dan Rodd for his creative work on the graphics and design. But mostly, I want to thank you for doing your part to make life better for the animals we love.

Warmly,

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WHAT TO EXPECT AS YOUR DOG AGES

There are many changes that you can expect in your dog as they age. Most dogs become seniors around the age of seven years old, larger breeds may age a little faster. As your pet gets older, they begin to get white around the muzzle, walks may become shorter, and naps more frequent. As a pet parent, it's important to know when these changes are a natural part of the aging process and when they may be signs of a more serious condition.

6 SIGNS OF AGING IN SENIOR DOGS

1. Age Related Diseases

Degenerative diseases commonly occur among older pets. Age related diseases can affect your dog's cognitive or neural functions as well as affect your pet's mobility. Depending on the condition your pet's symptoms can be managed but may not be cured. Risks of cancer, heart, kidney and liver problems are also higher in senior pets. Any changes or noticeable declines in your pet's abilities or behavior should be taken seriously. Always consult with your Vet, early detection and treatment are vital.

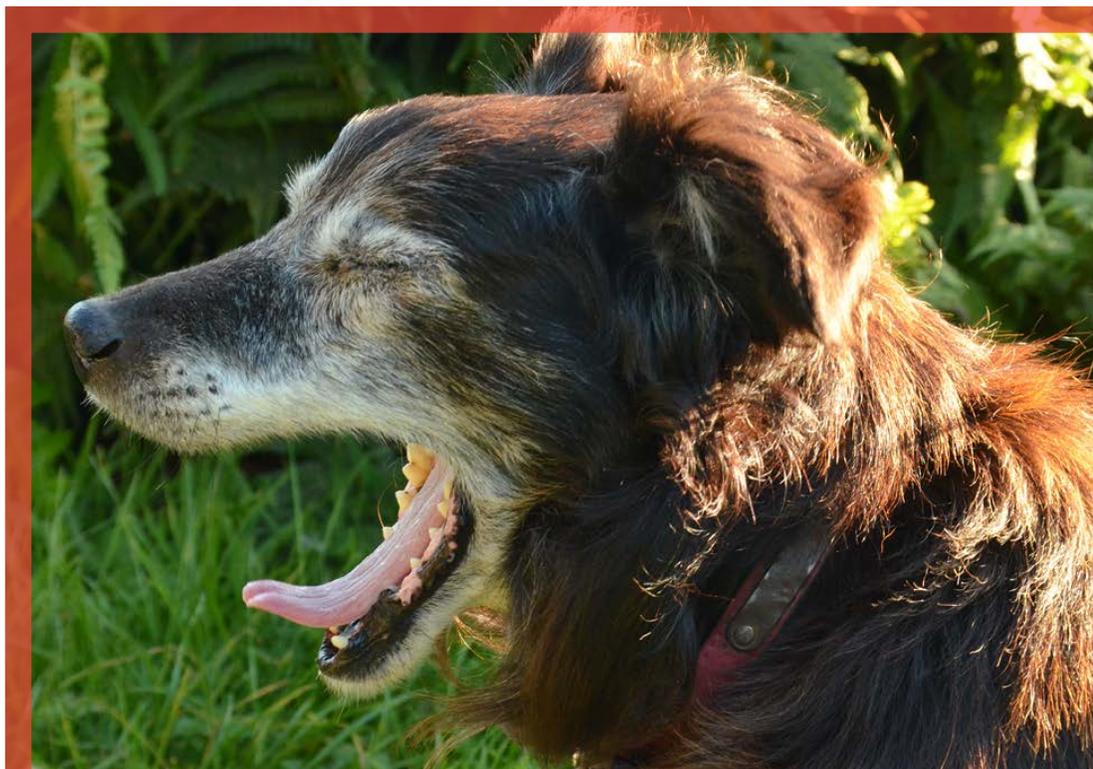
2. Canine Arthritis and Joint Pain

Arthritis is the most common condition affecting senior pets.

Just like in humans, dog's joints will stiffen and ache as they age. Dogs excel at hiding pain symptoms and the only noticeable changes may be slowing down or tiring more quickly. On rainy or cold days joint pain may worsen or become more noticeable. Behavioral changes, like aggression, unprovoked growling or reluctance to play may be signs of pain.

3. Loss of Strength

You may notice physical changes in your dog's body and mobility as they age. Visible muscle loss and hind end atrophy may be noticeable. Lower activity levels, moving slower and with more difficulty are all common in senior pets.



6 SIGNS OF AGING IN SENIOR DOGS Continued

4. Changes in Your Dog's Senses

Aging pets may even show signs of vision and hearing loss. Eyesight and hearing can slowly degrade, changes may be barely noticeable while other pets may become blind or deaf seemingly overnight. You may notice a slower response rate when you call your dog's name, signs of confusion or becoming easily startled. If these changes in behavior become noticeable, speak with your Veterinarian about a treatment plan. In many cases pet's experiencing vision and hearing loss adjust very easily and need only a little help from you to live a completely normal life.

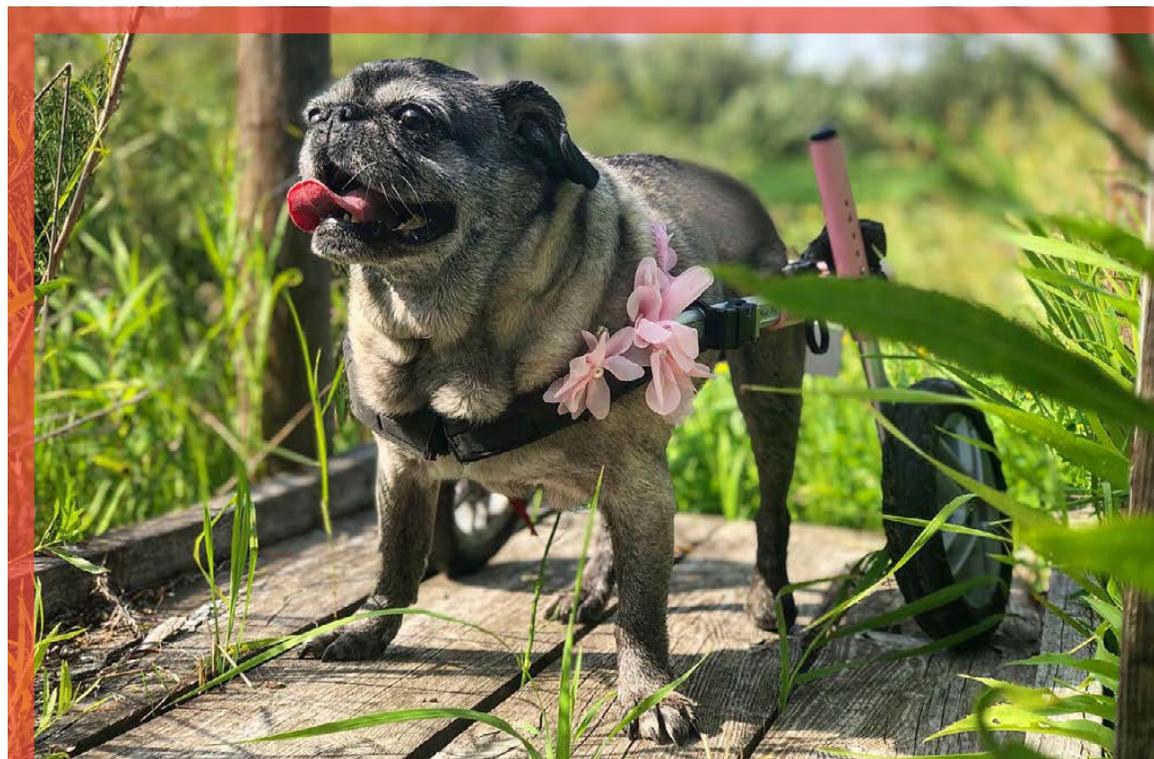
5. Weight Loss or Gain in Aging Pets

Your dog's metabolism changes as they get older. Some dogs become thin and experience muscle loss as they age whereas others will gain weight as they become less active.

Although weight fluctuation is normal, a senior pet's dietary needs may change. In order to help your pet live a long, happy life they may need to change their diet. Your vet can help your pet find the perfect nutritional balance.

6. Incontinence

As your dog's body changes there are often changes in their ability to "hold it". Older pets can forget that they need to go out or find it harder to get up quickly enough to get outside leading to accidents. Avoid these by encouraging elderly pets to go outside more often or diapering your dog when indoors. Changes in incontinence and bowel function may also be attributed to a more severe medical concern and should be assessed by a pet care professional.



HOW TO SPOT THE EARLY SIGNS OF MOBILITY LOSS

Difficulty Standing

Often the first sign of pet mobility loss is struggling to stand from laying down. A simple rear support leash can give your pet the boost they need to stand up.



Sudden Loss of Balance

Another early sign of mobility changes. Older dogs may sway or stumble suddenly when standing or going to the bathroom.



Needing Help on the Stairs

Reluctance to use the stairs may mean your dog needs your help. Aching joints, muscle loss, or weakening strength can make stairs a challenge for older pets. They may need extra support to safely and confidently navigate stairs.



Difficulty Getting In & Out of the Car

Jumping in and out of your car was never a problem, but suddenly your dog seems scared to try on their own.



COMMON PET MOBILITY CONDITIONS

DEGENERATIVE MYELOPATHY (DM)

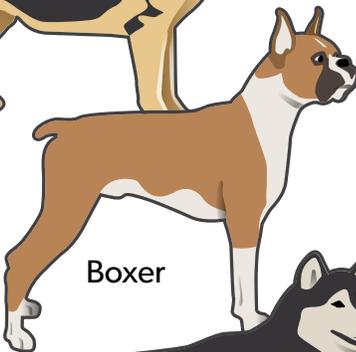
A progressive spinal cord disease in older dogs, resulting in lack of coordination and eventual mobility loss. Although there is no cure, intervention can extend survival time and greatly improve quality of life. Similar to ALS in humans, dogs with DM experience slowly progressive hind limb weakness and eventual paralysis as the condition worsens.

What Breeds get DM?

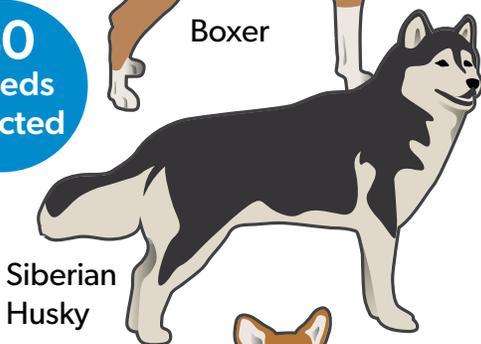
Breeds Commonly Affected:



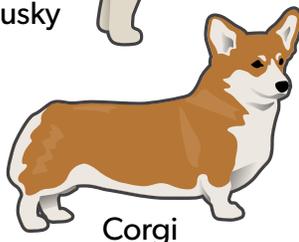
German Shepherd



Boxer



Siberian Husky



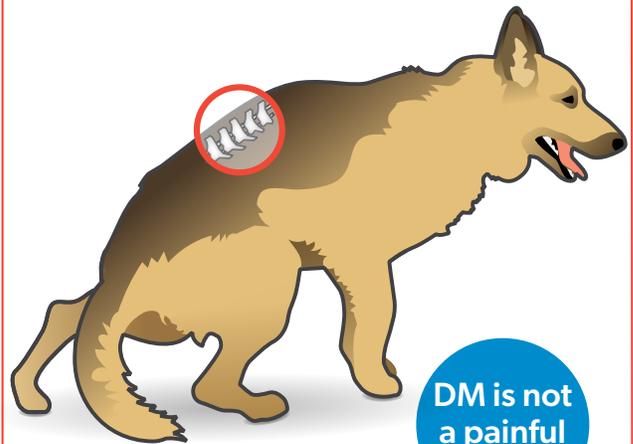
Corgi

40 Breeds Affected

8-14 yrs Age of Onset

DM can occur in many other breeds & mixed breeds as well.

Symptoms and Progression



DM is not a painful disease

Initial

- Loss of coordination in the hind limbs
- Rear feet knuckling or dragging
- Mild hind-end weakness

6 Months

- Hind limbs become weaker
- Dog has difficulty standing
- Dog may lose ability to walk

1 Year

- Urinary and fecal incontinence
- Weakness in front limbs as well as hind
- Eventual paralysis in hind limbs

DEGENERATIVE MYELOPATHY *Continued*

What Can I do if My Dog has DM

DM is not a painful disease, but it does weaken pets and this weakness can put added stress on a dog's body. If your dog is showing signs of pain, they may have another condition. Speak with your Veterinarian regarding diagnosis and developing a treatment plan. There is no cure for DM but there are ways to help manage your dog's symptoms and improve their quality of life.



Intervention

Assistive Equipment

- Slings and harnesses for a lifting support
- Pet booties to protect dragging paws



- Utilize training tools to help with paw placement and gait training



Holistic Care

- Physical therapy and hydrotherapy for muscle strength



- Acupuncture to help with blood flow
- Balanced nutrition

Dog Wheelchair

- Keep pets active and mobile
- Increase strength and minimize chance of muscle atrophy
- Offers progressive support that adapt to pet's changing needs



Be careful not to overdo exercise, or condition can worsen

INTERVERTEBRAL DISC DISEASE (IVDD)

The Intervertebral disc disease (IVDD), often called herniated or slipped disc, is a painful syndrome that occurs when one or more intervertebral discs suffer a lesion.

The typical age of onset is 3-6 years.

While any dog breed can experience IVDD, some breeds are more prone to the disease. Dachshunds are the most commonly affected, as well as the breeds listed below.



What Breeds get IVDD?

Breeds Commonly Affected:

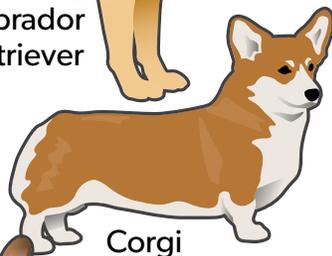


Dachshund

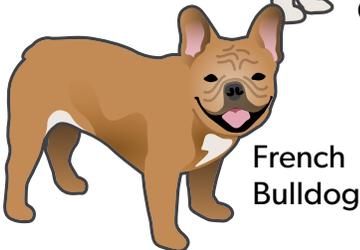


Labrador Retriever

40 Breeds Affected



Corgi



French Bulldog

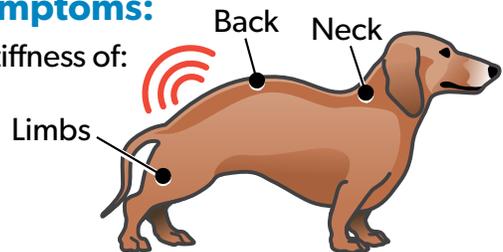
3-6 yrs Age of Onset

Other commonly affected breeds include Beagle, Bassett Hound, Cocker Spaniel, Pekingese, German Shepherd, Bulldog, Poodle, and Shih Tzu.

IVDD Common Symptoms

Symptoms:

- Stiffness of:

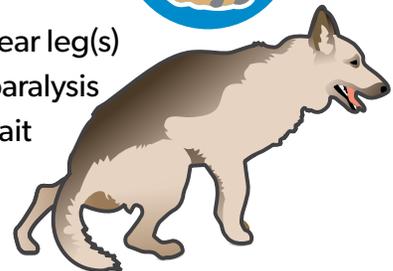


- Obvious weakness or pain
- Back/muscle spasms
- Incontinence

- Difficulty with paw placement or knuckling under



- Dragging rear leg(s)
- Hind end paralysis
- Impaired gait



Progression

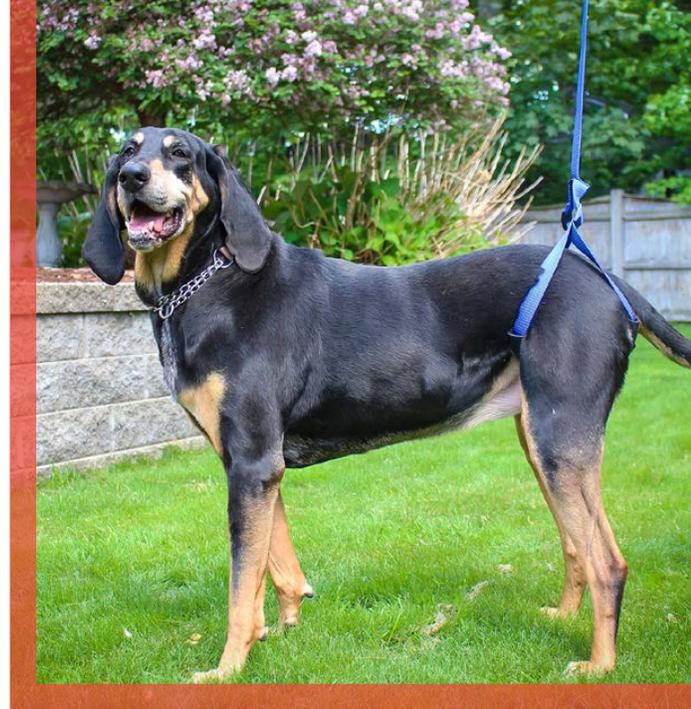
Symptoms can emerge gradually or be intermittent or sudden. Early intervention is crucial in order to minimize the possibility of permanent nerve damage.

INTERVERTEBRAL DISC DISEASE (IVDD) *Continued*

HOW CAN I HELP MY DOG WITH IVDD?

Assistive Equipment

- Lifting harnesses provide rear support
- Wheelchair for rehabilitative care and improved mobility
- Back Brace to alleviate pain & support the spine & surrounding structures



Professional Care

- Seek Veterinary care to locate injury source
- Dog may require extended crate rest and inflammatory meds
- IVDD surgery followed by rehabilitative care often recommended



In-Home Support

- Prevent jumping on/off furniture
- Keep dog's weight down
- Use a harness to reduce pressure on neck and back

BENEFITS OF A DOG BACK BRACE

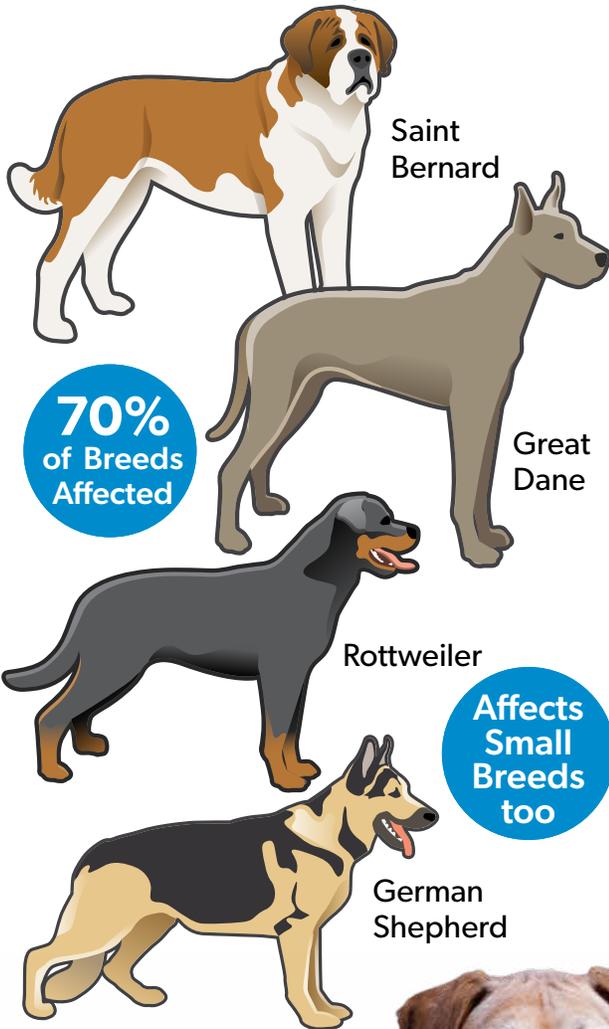
A back brace helps to support and stabilize your dog's spine and helps to alleviate the pressure in areas of injury. When selecting a back brace for your pet, look for one that supports both the spine and surrounding epipaxal muscles. Proper back support can help to limit the movement of the spine, which decreases pain and discomfort by stabilizing your dog's spinal column. Back braces can be particularly helpful when worn during recovery and may also be worn as a preventive method before IVDD presents itself. Moreover, Back Braces offer your dog the ability to be more active and safely move, jump, and enjoy life.

CANINE HIP DYSPLASIA

Hip Dysplasia is the mother of all orthopedic disease and the most common cause of hip pain in dogs. This inherited condition occurs when the hip joint is improperly formed. This malformation allows the hip joint to sit loosely in the socket, and as the dog's leg bone shifts around it causes painful wear and tear on the joint.

What Breeds get Hip Displasia?

Breeds Commonly Affected:



PROGRESSION

Excellent

A normal, fully functioning hip with full range of motion and no hip pain.



Mild Hip Dysplasia

Distance between the ball and socket of the hip increases, ligaments develop tears & begin to stretch, reducing the stability of the joint. Pet require monitoring and may need pain meds later in life.



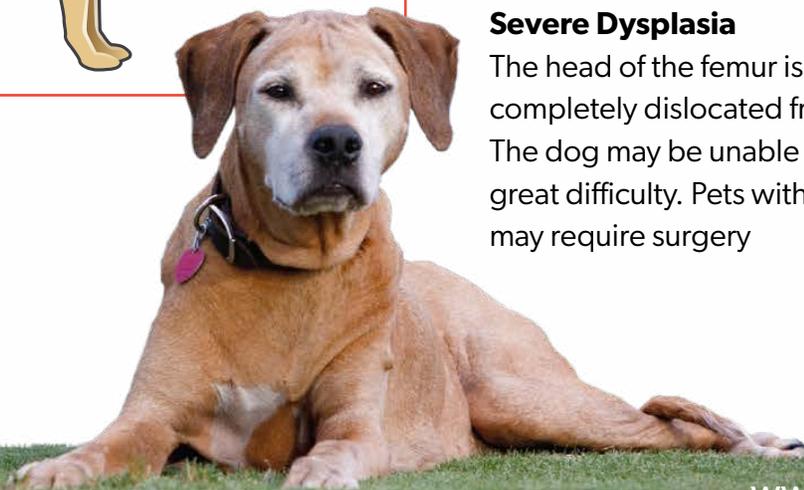
Moderate Dysplasia

Femur head barely rests inside socket & arthritic changes are evident. Such as occasional lameness, or pain when moving. Dog's at this stage may require anti-inflammatories, pain meds, and possible surgery.



Severe Dysplasia

The head of the femur is completely dislocated from the joint. The dog may be unable to walk, or only with great difficulty. Pets with severe hip dysplasia may require surgery



CANINE HIP DYSPLASIA *Continued*



SIGNS OF HIP DYSPLASIA

- Stiffness or soreness in the hips
- Hesitancy to exercise
- Difficulty standing for extended periods
- Pain and discomfort
- Favoring one leg over the other
- Inability to climb stairs
- Limping or “bunny hopping”

HOW CAN I HELP MY DOG WITH HIP DYSPLASIA?

Support the Hip Joint

For ambulatory pets with mild to moderate hip dysplasia a hip support brace can be beneficial and work nicely for a wide range of dogs. The brace provides a feeling of “lift” to the leg combined with compression to alleviate hip pain. Beneficial for young dogs showing early signs of hip problems up through senior dogs suffering from arthritis



Provide Mobility Assistance

Dog wheelchairs help to support your dog’s weight, relieve pressure on the hips, and gives them back their independence. If your pet is in the early stages of hip dysplasia, a dog wheelchair can be used as a part of their rehabilitation therapy or for short walks when their hip aches. As their hip dysplasia worsens, your pet can slowly transition to using the wheelchair on a regular basis when needed.

PHYSICAL REHAB FOR HIP DYSPLASIA

Rehab allows for a more conservative approach to treating your pet's Hip Dysplasia. Most importantly, you can improve your pet's overall movement and comfort by combining different techniques and modalities. Your dog's treatment plan is customized based off of their specific needs and condition.

Benefits include:

- Decreased Pain
- Improved Range of Motion and Flexibility
- Weight Loss and Increased Muscle Tone
- Increased Strength and Movement
- Overall Improved Health, both mental and physical

REHAB THERAPY METHODS



Hydrotherapy: used as a tool to exercise and increase muscle mass without having the dog bearing weight on the affected limb or limbs. Reducing stress on the body and encouraging ease of movement.



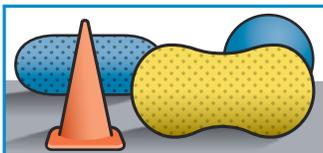
Laser therapy: a therapeutic treatment used to decrease and manage hip pain while accelerating the healing process.



Manual therapy: a combination of stretching and massage techniques to improve range of motion and reduce joint inflammation.



Acupuncture: an effective treatment option to decrease the pain associated with arthritis and joint diseases.



Possible exercises may include: Balance discs, physio balls, weaving, and underwater treadmills to name a few. Your Rehabilitation professional will guide you through the process of this effective conservative approach and develop the right plan for you and your pet.



SUPPORT YOUR PET EVERY STEP OF THE WAY



Walkin' Support Sling

- Lift and assist your pet with ease
- Protect your back from strain
- Helpful for post-surgical rehab
- Height-adjustable handles
- Made of 50/50 washable denim
- Lined with comfortable fleece



Walkin' Rear Support Leash

- Help dog up from lying down position
- Assist dogs up/down stairs
- Steady pets unstable rear legs
- One size fits dogs 20-150 lbs.
- Adjustable leg pads
- Adjustable leash handle length



Walkin' Lift Rear Harness

- Exterior made of durable canvas
- Lined with soft fleece
- Allows dog to urinate or defecate while wearing the harness
- Adjustable handles
- Compatible with Walkin' Wheels



Walkin' Lift-n-Step Harness

- Safe for post-op control after surgery and during recovery process.
- Offers both front and rear end control
- Provides lifting assistance for dogs
- Quick-release buckles for easy use
- Reflective stitching on webbing

SUPPORT YOUR PET EVERY STEP OF THE WAY *Continued*

Walkin' Combo Harness *Just Clip & Go!* Use with or without Walkin' Wheels



5

Rear

- Provides support for hind leg weakness



6

Both Front and Rear

- Front harness clips to rear harness for full lifting support



7

Attached to Walkin' Wheels

- Safe for post-op control after surgery and during recovery process.



8

Attached to Quad Walkin' Wheels

- Attaches with a few simple clips to Walkin' Wheels with front attachment



9

Walkin' Wheels® Dog Wheelchair

- Makin' Life Easier!
- Push button adjustability in height, length, and width
- Only one measurement required.
- Wheelchair Frame made of durable, lightweight extruded aluminum.

IMPROVING INDOOR MOBILITY

THE WALKIN'® SCOOTER

The Walkin Scooter is designed to improve indoor mobility for paralyzed pets, keeping your dog mobile and active inside all day. It allows pets to quietly zip and scoot around the house. The scooter glides gently across the floor and is gentle on your walls, baseboards and flooring.



Advantages of the Walkin' Scooter:

- Easily maneuvers around indoor obstacles and through doorways.
- Comfortable to use for extended periods of time.
- Allows paralyzed pets to lie down and rest when needed.
- Easy to Clean

THE WALKIN' DRAG BAG

Designed to keep your disabled pet comfortable wherever they go. Protects your pet's rear limbs and the chest from scraping against flooring when not in a wheelchair.

- Protects your pet's sensitive skin from abrasions caused by carpets, flooring, and rough surfaces.
- Chest and neck panels lined with soft, comfy fleece.
- Allows rear paralyzed pets to move around the house with ease.
- Breathable mesh panel in bag allows for ventilation.
- If incontinent: can be worn with a diaper, keeping bedding and blankets dry.



LIVE, LOVE, CARE: LIFE WITH A DISABLED PET

For people with disabilities, the connection they have with their dog might be one of the strongest and most cherished ones in their life. But what happens when the tables are turned? When it is the dog that needs extra care because it has a disability?

Enormous Responsibility = Enormous Rewards.

As a caregiver, you will need to know all the nuances of what that relationship entails, and if you are still willing to adopt a disabled pet, go into it with your eyes wide open.

However, there is the other side of this story. The part where all that love, care, and dedication is returned tenfold. We often forget that by taking a path less traveled, we learn not just new things about the world but also about ourselves.

Cherished Lessons

Loving a pet with a disability will teach you patience first and foremost. But it can teach you other important life lessons too.

Most pet owners who have embraced a disabled pet will often say that their pets do not realize they are different, and they live their life to the fullest. This is something we often forget in the frenzied, fast-paced lives we live today.



Witnessing how a dog in a wheelchair is facing adversity and is enjoying every day, not in spite of his disability but because of it, can be a powerful and life-changing experience for both parties. We often forget to be grateful for the things we have in life.

On the grand scale of things, living, loving, and caring for a pet with a disability might teach you that you were, perhaps, a more damaged party. Perhaps you were the one that needed a blind dog or incontinent cat more than they needed you.

If you are willing to adopt a disabled pet, you just might end up living a life less ordinary and loving every day of it.

BE MOVING



BE HAPPY



BE AMAZED



BE TOGETHER



MIRACLES IN MOTION



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