

Helping Hands

As responsible dog-guardians, we know the importance of quality veterinary care to ensure the best quality of life possible. Many dogs, as with many people, need extra support to keep their bodies moving well and their joints from aching. Ongoing veterinary care can be complemented by other practices to help control pain, improve mobility and provide the opportunity for our canine friends to keep playing and enjoying life! If a dog in your life is suffering from weakness, stiffness, joint pain or you've noticed that they are walking differently, are avoiding stairs or don't want to walk as far anymore, you may want to discuss one of the following options with your vet.

Animal Chiropractors can be Chiropractic Doctors, or Veterinarians, who have completed extra coursework recognized by the College of Animal Chiropractors or the American Veterinary Chiropractic Association. The four animal chiropractic programs approved in North America are, The Veterinary Chiropractic Learning Centre/Healing Oasis Wellness Centre of Canada (Ontario, Alberta), Healing Oasis Wellness Centre (Wisconsin), Options for Animals (Kansas) and Parker Chiropractic College (Texas).

Chiropractic problems are common in dogs. They can result from injuries relating to running and jumping, repetitive types of activities, long periods of cage rest, being under anaesthesia, birth trauma, slips or falls, and of course the general wear and tear of life. Animal Chiropractic is a form of rehabilitation that involves very gentle, but highly specific, adjustments to the body's spine and extremities. This helps to restore proper joint mobility, which improves range of motion and proper biomechanics (how the limbs and body moves), decreases inflammation,

improves nervous system function, and improves your dog's state of general health.

The Royal Canadian College of Massage Therapy in Toronto offers a two-level course in Canine Massage Therapy, a practice that is gaining in popularity in both rehabilitation after an accident or surgery, and as part of routine health care for dogs who are older or who suffer from chronic joint or mobility issues (e.g., arthritis). Massage affects all of our systems thus reducing overall stress in the body. It encourages circulation of fluids throughout the body which helps the joints and muscles flush toxins from the tissues to help them heal. This results in reduced pain and stiffness, more flexibility and greater range of motion. Massage also increases blood flow and is known to lower blood pressure and improve cardiovascular health in dogs.

Do you think YOUR Lab would benefit from an extra pair of helping hands? Talk about it with your veterinarian, and always do your homework to make sure the individual you take your beloved friend to has completed the appropriate training.

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