



POST SURGERY REHABILITATION

DEFINITION

Surgery is defined as “the branch of medical practice that treats injuries, diseases, and deformities by the physical removal, repair, or readjustment of organs and tissues, often involving cutting into the body” (Lexico.com Dictionary, 2025).

In dogs, corrective surgery of common orthopaedic conditions such as Hip dysplasia, Elbow dysplasia, Cruciate ligament damage, Patella luxation or Arthritis may be required (csu-cvmb.colostate.edu, 2020). Other surgeries may be needed to repair bone fractures, torn muscles and in extreme cases amputation.

Rehabilitation can be used after these surgeries and is defined as “restoration especially by therapeutic means to an improved condition of physical function” (Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary 2025). One such therapy which can be used as a non-invasive, safe and effective form of post surgery rehabilitation for dogs is Clinical Canine Massage.

CAUSES

There are an array of reasons why a dog may need surgery and subsequent rehabilitation. Orthopaedic problems can be genetic (Boge et al., 2019), however they can also occur as a result of sports injuries, abnormal development, cancer, immune problems, degeneration or seemingly innocuous accidents (Harari 2018).

SYMPTOMS

Any dog post-surgery is going to be in pain and may not be their usual happy, energetic self; this is to be expected. The most obvious symptom of any orthopaedic problem requiring surgery would be severe lameness which may be acute or may worsen after exercise. However, dogs have the ability to cope with mobility problems a lot better than humans, so sometimes the symptoms may be less obvious, especially in young dogs (Harari 2018). Unfortunately, in these cases they may still need surgery, so the first port of call should always be your vet if you have any suspicion of an orthopaedic problem or particular injury.

Sometimes surgery may not be successful, or rehabilitation does not go to plan, so symptoms of the original problem may persist.



Did you know?

In the ground-breaking clinical trials with Winchester University, 95% of dogs responded positively to Clinical Canine Massage therapy (Lenton Method®) in just 3 sessions.

Our therapists specialise in soft tissue rehabilitation and chronic pain management for orthopaedic conditions, using this unique method of clinical massage.

Providing results you can see and your dog can feel!





DID YOU KNOW THE 5 PRINCIPLES OF PAIN CAN HELP YOU IDENTIFY POTENTIAL SIGNS POST SURGERY?

POSTURE

- Uneven nail wear
- Shifting weight off of affected limb(s)
- Lack of balance
- Coat changes

BEHAVIOUR

- Appearing to age before their time
- Disinterested in life
- Snapping at people or other dogs
- Reluctant to be petted

PERFORMANCE

- Slowing down
- Early onset fatigue
- Deviation from normal performance

ACTIVITIES OF DAILY LIVING

- Difficulty using stairs
- Struggling to get on or off furniture / into or out of the car
- Inability to settle

GAIT

- Ongoing lameness
- Not fully engaging affected limb(s)
- Reduced range of movement
- Stiff movement



HOW MAY CLINICAL CANINE MASSAGE HELP MY DOG DURING POST SURGERY REHABILITATION?

BENEFITS

If your dog is still struggling either physically or emotionally some time after surgery, this is where, with veterinary consent, Clinical Canine Massage can help. Clinical Canine Massage as a form of rehabilitation may help your dog post surgery by:

- Encouraging full range of movement following orthopaedic surgery
- Improving circulation and facilitating venous return of lymph fluid following a period of limited movement
- Resolving ongoing lameness
- Softening abnormally tight muscles and reducing associated pain
- Reducing pain in fascia and other soft tissues around the site of injury
- Reducing compensatory pain and referred pain in other parts of the body
- Breaking down adhesions and remodelling scar tissue so as to restore proper muscle function and reduce associated pain
- Improving wellbeing

What do owners say?



Two years post bilateral cruciate ligament surgery. "I thought Clinical Canine Massage was a good idea and possible help for Oscar, having recovered fully from his first cruciate ligament surgery, It was the cruciate on his other leg that has caused him a great deal of pain. The next day [after Clinical Canine Massage] his foot was a lot lower to the ground and he was putting weight on it. He has reduced tension than he would normally have in the leg, and is more relaxed and happy, playing with his toys again. I will continue with Clinical Canine Massage in the future as this method suited Oscar, giving the best results to date."

Oscar's Guardian

