

# REHABILITATION TECHNIQUES YOU CAN USE AT HOME FOR SIMPLE ARTHRITIS PAIN

While advanced techniques and modern equipment are tremendously effective, they're only a part of the rehabilitation process. There are many simple and effective things dog owners can do at home to help with arthritis pain.

--If arthritis is causing stumbling, gently squeeze the feet (firm handshake pressure) a few times a day. This gives the neuromuscular network reminders about the location of the feet to help proper placement and mobility.

--If muscles are weak, do some short figure-8 patterns during walks. This will strengthen underused muscles.

--If your pet is overweight, decrease its food and treats immediately. Try to decrease carbs too. "Diet" foods and treats usually aren't necessary if you just feed less. Try canned (low-salt) green beans or veggies as treats.

--Beware of dry sand, which can be a hazard, especially for knees. Unstable motions on sand can cause strains or tears of ligaments or tendons.

--Gentle, frequent, low-impact exercise is best for arthritis. Becoming more sedentary with arthritis causes a dangerous downward spiral. Healthy joints need motion and proper weight-bearing to remain healthy. Arthritic joints may feel like they don't want to move, but without movement, they will deteriorate, muscles will atrophy, and function will be lost.

--Although warmth may be helpful for arthritic patients, care must be taken not to overheat the greyhound. A warm washcloth in a plastic bag placed over an affected area can give some relief.

--Heating pads and microwave-heated compresses are not recommended because they can burn delicate greyhound skin.