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Hydrotherapy for fitness...

We are currently raising awareness of our fitness hydrotherapy sessions which are open to any dogs with a clean bill of health. That said we do still require a referral form completed by the dog's vet. The fitness sessions were initially bought in to keep competing and working dogs in top condition. Of course, we can still tailor these sessions to meet the needs of an athletic dog but we also want to adapt them for anyone else keen to keep their pet in optimal shape. These sessions offer a safe, no-impact, alternative exercise for dogs to build their cardiovascular fitness, develop muscle and maintain a healthy weight. We also hope to educate owners about suitable forms of exercise for their dog and hopefully help reduce the occurrence of trauma injuries caused by inappropriate exercise.

Note: A hydrotherapist is always in the water with every dog and we only ever allow one dog in the water at a time.

Showering – beyond rinsing the patient...

"We see showering as part of the therapy so we do not rush this process"

To start not all patients are used to being showered so we gradually let them get use to the feel of the water to acclimatise first. We always monitor the temperature of the water so that it is comfortably warm. We shower them in a place where they can safely be contained and can see their owner for reassurance. Showering pre-pool is firstly for hygiene but we can use techniques to stimulate and warm the muscles to get them ready for the pool, paying particular attention to problematic areas. These techniques work particularly well on neurological patients as we can help to switch on the areas which have poor proprioception. On a fit and healthy dog, we would shower the bottoms of the paws but we would not do this for an elderly or vulnerable patient as they are unlikely to have the strength/balance to support themselves on three legs. In all instances we avoid wetting the head and always keep a look out for calming signals.



The post pool shower is firstly to remove any chlorinated water off the patients coat but we can also use the opportunity to apply heat treatment to areas causing the patient muscular/joint discomfort. Many patients find this process calming and it helps to further relax them following their pool treatment. We then gently dry the dog first with a shammy, minimising disturbance to the areas we have just treated and then further towel dry. Owners are always advised to bring a coat for their dog so they do not get a chill on leaving the centre as they will still be a little damp.

What else can I do to help my dog?

Quite often as hydrotherapists we are asked by owners what more could they be doing to help their dog. Here we have to be careful though not to step out of our scope of practice. We can give advice such as stopping stair use, no jumping on/off sofa and in/out cars, cease ball throwing, stick to a regular daily walking routine etc but we cannot give owners land-based exercises such as a physiotherapist would. So, for example in cases where the owner would like some range of movement or massage techniques to perform at home on their dog, we always advise them to go back to their vet or point them in the direction of a suitable land-based practitioner.



We've recently updated our website making it more user and mobile friendly. You can download all our backdated newsletters if you click on the "News" tab on the site navigation bar.

www.pawsomepaddles.com