



Okanagan Veterinary Hospital

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General Guidelines for Orthopedic Surgery Post Op

The First 10 Days:

Ice: Apply cold packs to the affected area 3-4 times daily for 15-20 minutes to help minimize inflammation. This is especially beneficial for the first few days while swelling is at it's greatest.

Support: support your pet while walking, especially over slippery surfaces (ie. laminate or hardwood floors). Use either a sling or towel under the belly to support him or her.

PROM: (Passive Range of Motion). This activity is designed to increase joint health, prevent muscle contractions and stimulate circulation to the limb. Use extra caution during the early stages as there will be limited **Range of Motion** post operatively.

Massage: massage the quadriceps and hamstring muscles for 2-3 minutes before and after PROM. Start close to the knee and work your way up towards the hip. Start with light pressure and slowly increase throughout the duration of the massage.

Exercise: *Short, Slow, Controlled* leashed walks, 2-3 times per day, 5-10 minutes each. It is important to keep it slow as this encourages your pet to use his or her leg properly and distribute weight evenly on the affected limb. Correct gait helps decrease swelling, build muscle mass and decrease tension on other joints. If your pet is allowed to move too quickly, they could potentially damage the affected limb or not use the limb at all, which could lead to muscle atrophy.

Weeks 2-4:

Exercise: after the first 10 days, SLOWLY increase the duration and frequency of the walks to 15-20 minutes, 3 times daily. REMEMBER, GO SLOWLY. Near the end of week 4, swimming sessions of 15-20 minutes can be incorporated into the exercise program. **Always** lead your pet into the water in a controlled manner until the feet are off the ground. DO NOT let pet rush in on their own.

Massage and PROM: Continue with both, especially before walks.

Heat/Ice: apply heat for 15 minutes before walking/swimming and apply cold paces for 15 minutes after the walk/ swim. This can be incorporated during massages.