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Strengthening Exercises:

Leash walking:

SLOW and CONTROLLED leash walks make up a huge part of your pets recovery. A small and sometimes assisted walk a few times a day will help strengthen your pet's muscles. It is important that you encourage your pet to walk and weight bear on all limbs. This can be done by offering treats every time they use their sore leg. Have your pet on a short lead so that you are in control of the speed. It is also important that they do not get over excited by going for a walk, so small walks in your yard or house may be better than walks outside of your yard to begin with. Walking distance and speed can be increased as your therapist recommends. As your pet gets stronger other things can be added to a simple leash walk such as; different surfaces, slopes and stairs, stepping over or around obstacles, changing directions, and transitions (slow,fast,slow). Ensure that you only increase these activities as advised.

Sit to stand:

Sitting to standing helps strengthen the stifle and muscles associated with the hind legs. It is generally an easy exercise for you to do with your dog as most dogs already know how to sit. However there are a few things you must focus on when practicing the sit to stand with your pet. Firstly, ensure your pet sits in a square position, this means both back legs must be tucked under their body. You can help position both legs under by asking your dog to sit and then put their legs into the correct position, or ask them to sit along side a wall or into a corner. Once your pet is in the sit position, use a treat to lure/encourage them to push off using their back legs into a standing position. Repeat this move several times as instructed.

Slopes, Stairs and Surfaces:

When you pet starts to make progress with their leash walking, slopes, stairs and new surfaces can be added to increase muscle strength. When adding slopes/stairs/new surfaces it is important that you encourage your pet to walk in a slow and controlled manner.

For slopes: to strengthen the hind limbs, walk straight up and zig zag down. To strengthen front limbs, zig zag up and walk straight down. At first start with very small inclines; as your pets strength and endurance improves your can increase the inclines and lengthen your treatment sessions.

For stairs: introduce stairs after your pet has done lots of work on inclines/declines as stairs require more muscle strength and movement. You can then encourage them to walk both up and down a few sets of stairs and slowly increase as they get stronger.

For surfaces: different surfaces and textures can make walking more difficult for your pet. As your pet's muscle strength improves you can start walking them on different surfaces, for example gravel/tiles/floorboards. This will add more of a challenge to your basic leash walk. Slopes, stairs and surfaces can also be added to other exercises such as sits to stands and dancing/wheelbarrowing.

Wheelbarrowing:

This exercise helps strengthen the forelimbs and should only be carried out when advised as it requires a higher amount of strength than other exercises.

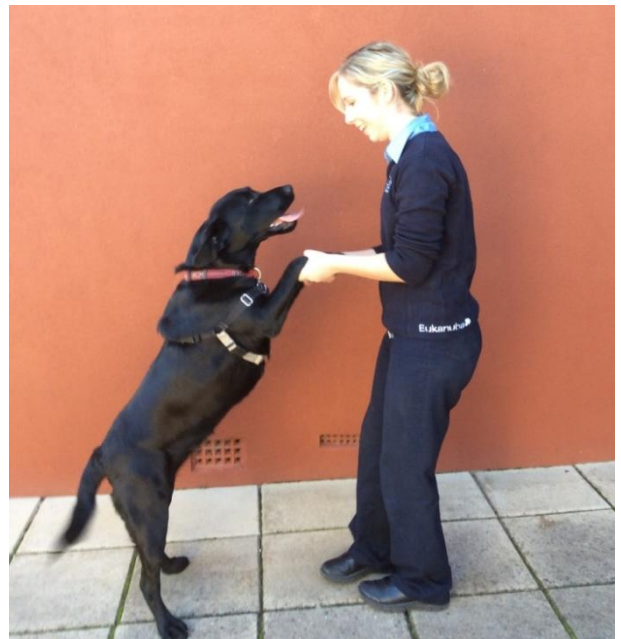
To carry out the wheelbarrow exercise, lift your pet's hind limbs from the ground so they are bearing all their weight on their front legs. Depending on the size of your pet you may need to hold their legs in one hand and support under their hips with your other arm. At first, encourage them to stand for a few seconds, bearing all weight on their front legs. As their strength increases you can encourage them to walk forwards on two legs, and eventually up and down slopes, over low objects, and in different directions.



Dancing:

This exercise helps strengthen the hind limbs and should only be carried out when advised as it requires a higher amount of strength than other exercises.

To carry out the dancing exercise lift your pet's front limbs from the ground so they are bearing all their weight on their back legs. At first, encourage them to stand for a few seconds, bearing all weight on their back legs. As their strength increases you can encourage them to walk forwards on two legs, and eventually up and down slopes, over low objects, and in different directions.



Visit our clinic website www.murraybridgevet.com.au and click the link to companion animal information to see our demonstration video.