

## **Adjustments, Refurbishment, and Rehabilitation**

After injury, diagnosis and custom orthosis or prosthesis prescription then what?

### **Adjustments**

VOP devices are made from a fiberglass impression of a patient's limb that allows our skilled VOP modifiers and innovators to come very close to a correct fit, but never exactly perfect. The mold is static and animals are only static when they sleep! The uniqueness of each injury, each animal, each activity, and each method of gaiting (walk, trot, run, and gallop) means that we must learn from the animal where adjustment in fit is needed.

For perfect fit and control the VOP device needs to be adjusted - We expect it, and we plan for it! Please contact your veterinarian for support if you see any irritation, thinning of fur, blisters, etc. It's a process to provide the best fit and function and your veterinarian's feedback will guide us in what needs to be adjusted.

We recommend regular recheck appointments with your veterinarian to assess for changes that could alter proper fit and function. If you see any wearing on the device that is of concern or if new skin irritations arise, don't hesitate to contact your veterinarian before your scheduled appointment.

### **Refurbishments**

The goal of your custom made OrthoPets custom device is to return your pet to their active lifestyle, so the device is going to experience quite a bit of wear and tear through day-to-day use! As time goes on the softer components of the device (foam liner, straps, and strap pads, etc.) will wear requiring replacement.

Your OrthoPets custom device is designed to last the lifetime of your pet. To keep the orthosis or prosthesis in top working condition, we recommend a refurbishment every 12-24 months, or as needed.

### **Rehabilitation**

It would hardly be fair to turn you and your dog loose with no help! The device is part of an overall plan. Can you imagine learning to walk again without the help of a professional? Human beings prescribed such devices visit a physical therapist and animals must do so too.

Fortunately there are skilled animal rehabilitation professionals to help that are trained through one of two certification programs: the Canine Rehabilitation Institute (CCRT) and the University of Tennessee Canine Rehabilitation Certificate Program (CCRP).

## **Rehabilitation, cont'd**

Whether your dog undergoes surgery or not, use of an orthosis or prosthesis will require some learning and some rehabilitation.

### **Goals:**

- 1) Device acclimation
- 2) Relearn basic life skills
- 3) Relearn balance, coordination, and proprioception
- 4) Gait re-education
- 5) Muscle strengthening and neuromuscular re-education

### **Find a therapist!**

[http://www.caninerehabinstitute.com/Find\\_A\\_Therapist.html](http://www.caninerehabinstitute.com/Find_A_Therapist.html)

## **TIPS & TRICKS to assist with acclimating to an OrthoPets device:**

It is very important that V-OP Specialist receives pictures of your pet in their new device(s) so we can ensure the device is fitting correctly!

- We encourage parents to use verbal rewards, treats or favorite toy motivators when using the device. We want your pet to associate “fun times” with the device.
- Slow and Short lease walks. The slower the walk, the more evenly weight will be distributed to each limb. Frequent short walks are more useful than long walks.
- Walking UP and DOWN stairs on a short leash will teach your pet to place the affected leg normally while wearing the device. Be certain that your veterinarian is ok with stair walking.
- Gently rock your pet's weight onto the affected leg 5-10 times several times per day. This encourages weight bearing. If this seems painful, please contact your veterinarian.
- Practice basic obedience commands (SIT-STAND-LAY DOWN). This encourages use of the affected limb in the device. A veterinary rehabilitation specialist can give advice on proper technique for maximum limb use.
- We suggest walking your pet alone (without other pets) for the first two weeks. This allows both of you to focus on the acclimation to the device.
- Your pet should never be left alone with the device on for the first few weeks and should never be left in a crate or kennel with the device on (in special cases this may not apply).