Fracture Rehabilitation Program Dog

When post-op x-rays confirm stable enough fixation, a rehabilitation program is started. During this period the dog’s activities are gradually increased in order to stretch the surgery scar tissue and rebuild muscles. The degree of activity should progress with the dog remaining comfortable. Since increasing duration, not intensity is the goal, explosive activities, such as running, jumping or playing are not allowed during this period.

**Week 1-3**

The first three weeks of activity are comprised of progressively longer, slow walks on a leash 6 feet long or shorter. Begin with a distance of one block and continue at this distance for a few days. If the dog remains comfortable, double the distance of the walk. Continue the distance of walks every few days as comfort level permits. Several short walks are better than one long walk each day.

**Week 4-6**

Continue the progressively longer walks with the dog on a longer leash (20 ft.). This will allow the dog the freedom to trot back and forth, increasing its usage of the leg while still under your supervision. It is important to monitor the dog’s comfort level closely during this stage of rehabilitation.

**Week 7-9**

Walks should continue and the dog is allowed very mild activity off leash. The area should have no other animals or distractions around; a yard is the best place for this activity. The dog should remain under voice control of the owner. No jumping, chasing a ball or Frisbee, or playing with other dogs is allowed.

**Week 10-16**

Continued walks and moderate running are allowed while monitoring the dogs comfort level. At 4 months most dogs can participate in exercise using caution until full muscularity is attained, which is usually at six months after surgery.

**Warning! Comfort Level**

If the dog appears uncomfortable or lame at any stage of the rehabilitation process, revert to the prior level of activity for two weeks before progressing. Any excessive twists or falls may result in injury to the bone, the implants, or both. **If your pet suddenly worsens or you suspect this may have occurred, contact your veterinarian and have your pet examined.**

(Program designed by Dr. Barclay Slocum, Eugene, Oregon)