



Frey Pet Hospital, PLC
“Treating your pets as if they were our very own”



Post-Operative Instructions Tibial Tuberosity Advancement

Historically, rehabilitation on knee surgeries in general has been limited to one common recommendation – *cage rest!* Veterinarians have been reluctant to allow their patients to perform even the slightest of exercise movements postoperative, for fear that the patient will ruin the work (and expense) already performed. If we have learned one thing from human medicine, the sooner the patient is up and using the leg, the quicker will be the recovery. There is only one modification to this thought that should be stated here, if the leg does not hurt, the dog will use it, and premature overuse of the leg will result in critical damage to the proper healing process. We cannot overemphasize enough, **do not let your dog run loose until the doctor has pronounced the surgery a success. This will typically be at least 8 weeks.** This means your pet cannot go outside unless on a short leash. When indoors, no jumping on or down from furniture should be allowed, nor should access to stairs be allowed.

Week 1: The first few days when your pet comes home, the pain will be the worst. Hang in there! Things will improve rapidly.

(1) Perform physical therapy three times daily as follows:

- Perform range of motion for approximately 3-5 minutes. Do so by gently extending the knee to mimic a walking motion while supporting the leg. This can be done with your pet lying down or standing. The doctor will show you how to perform this exercise at your pet's discharge.
- Then apply ice therapy to the knee for 5-10 minutes

(2) Pain medication – as written by the doctor. If this is not working, do not overdose. Call the office for further recommendations or additional medications.

(3) No other exercise is recommended for the first two weeks (other than walking outside **on a leash** to go to the bathroom).

(4) A small amount of drainage from the incision is common. If necessary, clean the wound periodically with hydrogen peroxide, and do not allow your dog to lick it. **Most dogs should wear an e-collar at all times unless directly supervised.**

(5) The swelling in your dog's knee may begin to descend toward the ankle or foot. This is simply gravity at work and is completely normal.

(6) Your dog may not have a bowel movement for several days. Do not be concerned unless you see him or her straining to go.

Week 2: This should be a continuation of week 1. However, prior to performing the range of motion, please apply heat to the knee for 5-10 minutes. Still, no exercise is to be allowed other than walking outside **on a leash** to go to the bathroom.

Week 3 to 4: At this point, going for leash walks is not only allowed, but encouraged.

- (1) Pain medication – in most cases, pain medication will no longer be needed.
- (2) Walking **on a leash** is acceptable, but begin with 10 minute walks twice daily. If your dog returns home and is not in pain, you may increase this in 5 minute increments every week as tolerated, provided your dog is not in pain when the walk is over.

Week 5 to 6: By this time, walks should be in the 20 minute range or better, and tolerated well. Do not run yet. Increase the duration of walking as much as you can without causing your dog pain. Do not exceed the 30 minute range, **always on a leash**. If you have access to a pool, some hydrotherapy is ok, but NOT unattended nor allowed to swim in water over your dog's head. Any hydrotherapy over 10 minutes is more likely to exaggerate patellar tendon inflammation and result in lameness.

Week 6 to 7: At the end of this period, it is time to come in for the follow up x-ray. We want to make sure everything has healed prior to increasing the exercise as tolerated. If we release exercise restriction at this time, be forewarned that if you just go home and turn your dog loose, she/he will be in pain. This is the point where you can SLOWLY build back up to full exercise.