



## Home Management Advice for Osteoarthritis Patients

### Flooring

If you have laminate or any kind of slippy flooring your dog has limited traction, and is therefore more at risk of slipping and causing further damage to their joints and surrounding soft tissues. Where possible try to lay down some matting or runners and prevent your dog from playing/running on slippy flooring.



### Stairs & Furniture

Running up and down the stairs and jumping on and off furniture is another activity that will aggravate arthritic joints. We want to prevent explosive activity so try to keep your dog downstairs and off the furniture. If your dog also jumps in and out of the car it may be worth looking into car ramps.



### Meal Times

Raising your dog's food and water bowls is one of the easiest lifestyle changes that will make a big difference to your dog. This prevents them from putting excess stress through the neck and forelimbs.

## Keeping Warm

Cold weather is the enemy of osteoarthritis so it is worth investing in a coat for your dog to keep their body and joints warm when out walking.

Osteoarthritis causes the breakdown of articular cartilage and the viscosity of the synovial fluid decreases, creating friction within the joint. Using heat therapy will cause vasodilation (increased blood flow to the area) and increase the viscosity of synovial fluid. Wheat bags/heat pads are a good form of heat therapy to use daily over your dogs affected areas. Ensure you use an interface to prevent burns and keep monitoring your dog for any signs of discomfort.



## Controlled Exercise

As osteoarthritis progresses one of the early clinical signs is a reduced exercise tolerance. Even when pain is under control it is still important to restrict exercise to prevent any flare ups. Shorter walks are recommended and try to prevent any explosive activity such as ball catching or playing with other dogs. It is also advisable to walk your dog in a harness as opposed to a collar and lead. This prevents overloading of the forehand and shifts their centre of mass more centrally as well as giving you a better control point.



Please ask the team for any further advice!

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