

## Guidelines for controlled exercise after stifle surgery

Your pet has had a major operation which involved an osteotomy (changing the alignment of the bone by surgically breaking and re-setting the bone) and because of this, it is very important to restrict your pet's exercise to allow successful bone healing.

Week 1 - 2	<p><b>All movement must be restricted and supervised.</b></p> <p>Keep your dog in a cage or kennel.</p> <p>Carry your dog or walk your dog on a short lead for <b>toilet purposes only</b>.</p> <p>High impact exercise must be prevented (i.e. no jumping, running or playing with other pets) as this can harm your dog's bone healing.</p> <p>Your dog should not be allowed to use stairs or slippery floors.</p> <p>Lift your dog in and out of the car, on and off the sofa.</p> <p>Sutures can be removed 10 - 14 days post surgery.</p>
Week 3 - 4	<p>Introduce slow <b>5 minute walks on a short lead 2 - 3 times daily</b>, but only on flat ground and avoid slippery floors.</p>
Week 5 - 6	<p>Gradually increase duration of <b>walks from 5 to 10 minutes on a short lead 2 - 3 times daily</b>. Continue to walk on flat ground and avoid high impact movement.</p>
Week 7 - 10	<p>Gradually increase duration of supervised lead exercise <b>by 5 minutes extra per week (to a maximum of 20 minutes per walk)</b> but only <b>1 - 2 times daily</b>.</p> <p>Continue to walk on flat ground &amp; avoid high impact movements.</p> <p>Consider starting hydrotherapy which exercises your dog and builds up muscles without risking high impact to the bones.</p>
Week 11 - 12	<p>Continue short lead walks for a <b>maximum of 20 minutes</b> but increase frequency to <b>2 - 3 times daily</b>.</p>
Week 13	<p>We would like to see your dog for a recheck and perform <b>radiographs (X-rays)</b> under sedation or general anaesthesia. This is the best way to assess bone healing before allowing a gradual increase in exercise. The speed of fracture healing depends on the age of your dog, type of fracture and fixation, and the degree of rest in the first few weeks. In some cases, dogs will need to be rested for longer.</p>
Week 14 - 16	<p>Longer duration of lead exercise with some supervised free exercise on flat ground.</p> <p>No contact with other dogs during free exercise.</p> <p>No jumping or playing with balls.</p>
Week 17 - 20	<p>Free exercise in a controlled environment.</p> <p>Longer duration walks on or off the lead allowed.</p> <p>Some contact with other dogs allowed.</p> <p>No jumping or playing with balls.</p>

After 20 weeks your dog can return to a normal exercise pattern, on or off the lead, on a variety of terrains and contact with other dogs is now allowed.