

General massage + physiotherapy instructions

Massage-

This is best done lying on side but can be done standing if weight supported

(One leg at a time) first give the effected leg a **rough massage** near the body/trunk this area is likely to have more feeling + makes the patient aware/concentrate on area + prepares them for more precise stimulation—so using palm of hand in circular or long sweeps roughly massage proximal to distal limb, observe for any signs of discomfort or stress from your patient (a lot don't like their paws being touched!!)

Then starting at the toes- gently using just the tips of your fingers and thumbs, massage the toes and lower leg, ensure to massage all surfaces, both sides+ front + back - easiest to use circular movements-**always** in an upward motion. As you move up the leg the muscle mass increases, a little more pressure can be used and as well as circular more longer sweeps can be added. Once up to the shoulder or thigh start with circular movements and then try longer strokes (again **always** in an upward motion) up the length of the leg. Any **high tone** (tense) muscles should have extra attention until they have relaxed + become more flaccid

Once the leg has been massaged and is warmed + all areas relaxed the **physiotherapy** can begin. This is taking the joints through their range of movement to stop them stiffening up + to keep muscles supple + stop contraction – all movements should be carried out slowly + with minimal effort – no movement should be forced, if muscles tense up simple hold where you are + wait until relaxes before continuing further with any movement

Hindlegs

Start at the **toes**, extend the toe forward (flat) and hold for 10 seconds, then flex the toes backwards (knuckled) and hold for 10 seconds, repeat this 5 - 10 times.

Hock (ankle) joint - flex (bring foot up/forwards) and extend (straighten fully down/back) the joint as before holding in position for 10 seconds + repeat 5-10 times, Then up to the **stifle** (knee) and flex (bringing the leg up/back to bend the knee) and then extend (straighten the knee back down/forward fully) then do the same with the **hip** joint flex (bringing the leg up/forwards under the body) and extend (straighten bringing leg down + back gently), care with older dogs as arthritis/stiffness may already exist so only flex/extend as comfortable for patient/joint After whole leg completed give the leg another "**rough massage**" to relax it again

Once this leg is complete start on the next effected leg.

Forelegs

Same as above for **toes**, the **carpus(wrist)** –flex by bringing foot back/up + extend by bringing foot down/forwards till straight – hold + repeat each movement as before

For the **elbow** bring lower leg forward/up to flex, then bring lower leg down/back to extend/straighten fully (hold + repeat as before). For the **shoulder** joint gently bring leg back + up (over thorax) to flex then bring leg down/straight + forwards to extend (hold + repeat). Again care in older patient with shoulder/elbow arthritis

Again a rough massage when finished to relax down

Once all effected legs are warmed/relaxed then the patient can be put in slings + walked out. Please encourage spinal patients to urinate outside – take to common urination posts/corners + using (a go toilet) command if the owners have one. A little pressure on the bladder whilst outside sometimes helps concentrate their minds!! If they don't pass any urine outside then express bladder (not before)

