

## Amputation Training



Your pet has been diagnosed with a disease or injury that may benefit from a full limb amputation (instead of or in addition to other treatment options.) Often, this is perceived by owners as a very big deal...it is. It will change your pet's lifestyle and your own lifestyle. How much of a change (minor to major) is often unknown and left to our own imaginations. Decision making is hard in this world of imagination.

Learning to walk on 3-legs certainly may be frustrating for you and your pet at first. If time allows, after the diagnosis, to do some "Amputation Training", you may have an easier time during decision making about treatments; and your pet will have an easier recovery should amputation be the final treatment selected.

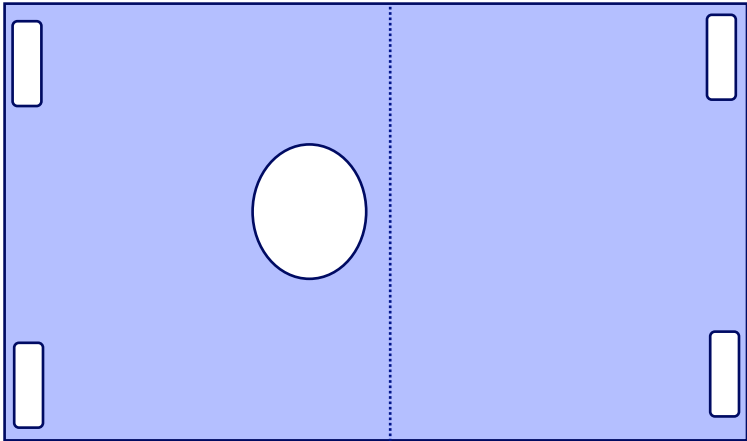
Start with brief, heavily assisted trials with the bad-leg bound up (in a tight shirt, wrap and/or medical bandage, etc.) Work in an area with solid footing and soft surface (carpet/grass). Maintain positive attitude by giving treats to your pet frequently as you are working through the process. They will be confused by the restraints and your close hands-on proximity. They may be on pain medication that are making them sedate (Gabapentin in the most common); try to time your training session 3-5 hours after giving this medication so they are better able to participate. Ask your veterinary team to clarify which medications might make your pet groggy.

Start with 5min sessions, and as stability and coordination improve, move to longer assisted sessions. Then move to brief "exercise" moving around supervised but not assisted.

A useful "sling" can be made from a bath towel or reusable/cloth grocery bag. (drawings below)

- In the center of the towel, cut a hole for one leg, and then the "bad leg" will be held in the sling of the towel.
- When using a grocery bag, slit the sides down to the bottom; cut a hole for one leg and the "bad" leg will be held in the sling of the bag.

Bath towel w/ center hole cut for leg and 4x slits cut for handles



Split cloth grocery bag w/ center hole cut for leg

