



Restricted Activity Protocol for Acute Lameness

Signs of orthopedic pain include lameness, decreased activity, avoidance of activity, uneven weight bearing, shifting weight on limbs, lethargy, immobility, panting, restlessness, decreased appetite, excessive salivation, and behavior changes including clinginess, defensive, reactive or aggressive behaviors.

Please restrict activity for the next 10-14 days. Minimize running, jumping, rough play. Pets should remain on leash, even when in the yard. Walks should be on leash only and kept to short 5–10-minute bathroom outings. Please also limit access to stairs during this period and allow rest and healing.

Once comfort and mobility have been restored to 100%, we can start to gradually increase activity level. Typically, start by increasing walk time by 5-minute increments every 3-5 days. Access to stairs and play may also be gradually re-introduced. Avoid repetitive jumping and racing for a 12 -week minimum to avoid re-injury. As we increase activity, monitor closely for signs of lameness recurrence, stiffness, uneven weight bearing on limbs, sensitivity on petting in any area of the body, tiredness or lethargy. Should you observe any of these symptoms, activity should be decreased and activity modifications will likely need to be reassessed with your veterinarian.

For front limb lameness and when neck sensitivity/pain has been detected, please elevate food and water bowls to lessen strain on the spine, muscles and joints. Use of a harness instead of a leash and collar is strongly recommended as well. Rough play should be avoided, especially tug play, rough wrestling, repetitive climbing and jumping.

Weight management is a very important part in the prevention of future orthopedic injuries and development of arthritis and in maintaining mobility and comfort. A lean body condition (4 out of 10) is ideal.

Medications for lameness may include anti-inflammatories, pain medication, and calming medications to facilitate activity restriction. These medications may be tapered once comfort and mobility are 100% back to normal. Please follow the advice of your veterinarian.