



Femoral Head Ostectomy (FHO)

Post-Operative Discharge Instructions

Immediate post-op Instructions

- Monitor the incision daily for any redness, swelling, discharge or pain.
- Cool compress the incision three times daily for 10 minutes for the next three days. You may purchase a commercially available cold compress or ice pack but frozen vegetables also work nicely and will conform well to surgical sites generally. Make sure you wrap the compress in a towel or clean cloth. Never apply a cold compress directly to the skin.
- Please schedule a re-check visit in 10-14 days for suture/staple removal.
- Your pet should wear an e-collar at all times until sutures/staples are removed, to prevent premature removal of any sutures.

In contrast to most orthopedic procedures, extended cage restriction and complete rest are contraindicated after an FHO surgery. After the sutures are removed, your dog should be allowed controlled exercise and physical therapy exercises should be initiated (*see below*). Walking up and down hills can help to strengthen pelvic limb musculature and improve muscle mass.

Pelvic limb strengthening exercises

Days 1-21:

- Leashed walks only
- Start walking for 10 minutes daily, increasing to 30-40 minutes at the end of three weeks.
- Passive range of motion: Put the limb through passive range of motion. Visualize and perform a running pattern with the dog's hind limb, holding for 10 seconds in flexion and extension. Always stay in your dog's comfort level.
- Torso strengthening: Gently place hands on either side of the hips and rock your pet side to side while in a standing position. This engages core torso muscles and encourages weight bearing on the pelvic limbs. Stop when your pet tenses stop and rest. Perform 5-10 repetitions.
- Cookies at contra-lateral hip: Have your pet take a treat from the hip on the good side. This shifts weight on to the problematic side. Hold stretch for 5-30 seconds and rest. Perform 5-10 repetitions

Days 21-60:

- Leash walks increase in duration five minutes every 5-7 days. You can work up to 20-30 minutes 2-3 times daily.

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- Three leg standing: With your pet in a standing position, lift the good limb off the ground and extend it backwards (support the limb from the knee and not the foot of shin). Hold this position for 15-60 seconds depending on your pet's stability. Repeat 5-10 times.
- Paws on counter: Have your pet place their front paws on a chair or counter and offer a treat from above head height. Increase the angle monthly. This exercise stretches back muscles and hip flexors. Hold this stretch for 30 seconds then rest. Perform 3-5 repetitions.
- Sitting exercise: Ask your pet to sit and encourage them to place the surgical limb the body by tapping on the foot. Rewarding them with a treat when this exercise is performed properly will encourage them to sit squarely. Perform 5-10 repetitions per session.

Days 60-90:

- Walking on hill: This should be done on a leash in a slow controlled walk to allow for extension of the spine and engagement of pelvic limb muscles. Start with very mild inclines for 3-5 minutes per session and increase inclines and length of time every 5-7 days based on your pets tolerance.
- Long low obstacle: Walk your pet over a long low obstacle so that he/she needs to take a larger step in order to clear the obstacle but not so long that then need to jump over it. Perform this exercise for five minutes per session.
- Circles: Walk your pet in circles alternating direction every 3-5 times in one direction. Start in a moderately sized circle gradually decreasing the diameter every 5-7 days until you are walking very tight circles.
- Ladder walking: Walk your pet slowly and in a controlled fashion through the rungs of a ladder or cavalettis placed a pet's length apart. Start with walking and gradually increase to a jog over a period of 7-10 days. Perform this exercise for 5-10 minutes per session.

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