



Post-Operative Instructions: MPL 8 week milestone

Summary:

Thank you for returning, and congratulations on making it to the 8w mark in recovery! You are almost home free! Almost!

An x-ray (radiograph) has been taken, and shows appropriate orthopedic healing for this stage of recovery.

The next phase is important, as it will help to re-train the muscles and soft-tissues around the knee joint. Ideally, we recommend working with a professionally trained and certified rehabilitation specialist (we recommend: The Holistic Vet Center in Oakland, or the Canine Rehabilitation Center in Walnut Creek)

Please note – luxation (dislocation) of the knee cap beyond this point is exceptionally rare, but can occur with excessive or explosive activity for up to 90 days post-op. So, we do recommend ‘measured’ introduction of new and more athletic activities for your pet.

Please study the following instructions:

Recovery Instructions:

1. Activity:

- a. In your home & yard, it is ok to allow your pet free range of the house while you are present
- b. Furniture/beds are ok to allow jumping onto and off of
- c. Stairs are ok to allow free access and unassisted navigation
- d. In your yard, your pet can be off-leash and encouraged to be more active – but within reason!
 - i. If your pet likes to hike, consider 1 mile (or less!) for a first time out, and over a period of 2-3w you can work up to longer distances.
 1. During this time, we would recommend that for the first ½ of the hike, you use a leash and collar, the second ½ of the hike, may be off-leash.
 - ii. If your pet likes to swim, this is an excellent form of exercise! We recommend 15-20 minutes at a time, while you are there to supervise. If your pet is eager for more,

work up in 5-10minute increments over a period of 2w to a period of time that is enjoyable, but not beyond over exertion.

- iii. If your pet likes to jog or run, see the notes above for hiking.
- iv. If your pet likes to 'fetch' we recommend starting with a timed period! Pets can really make a post-operative leg pretty sore if you overdue it. We recommend starting with 15m sessions of fetch with distances of only an underhand toss. If doing well, you can increase this in 5m increments over 2-3 weeks until you are up to 40 minutes. Once you have attained near normal performance at 40 minutes you can start with distances you can achieve with overhand toss, but we recommend that you consider a dial back to a timing of 20minutes and work back up to 40 minutes over several days/week.
- e. We still would recommend a 2-4 times per day of walks – we understand that working schedules might not allow this, but ideally 2-4 times of 45-60 minutes each of steady walking.
- f. We strongly recommend the expertise of certified, and professionally trained rehabilitation specialists – we work closely with Holistic Veterinary Center in Oakland, and can facilitate a referral easily. Please ask us how!
- g. Modifications to these instructions:

2. Set-Backs:

- a. Minor 'set-backs' are common once we start the off-leash program
- b. Some muscle and joint soreness is expected, and their presence does signal some important physical milestones (and plateau breakthroughs)
- c. However, too much soreness, with associated limb disuse (e.g. lameness) is counter-productive
- d. If you notice some soreness – cut back on the program! Give your pet a day or two off, with leash walks as their only source of exercise – consider 20-30minute maximums – and then resume the off-leash activities at the base level and work up from there.
- e. If the soreness remains – please call or email us for recommendations.
- f. There are simply some patients that can have ongoing medication requirements and these may need to be adjusted on a patient by patient basis. Just call or email!
- g. Modifications to these instructions:

3. Medications

- a. NSAID's – are exceptionally helpful – and in general are our go-to group of medications to relieve soreness encountered during rehabilitations.
- b. Glucosamines – life-time
- c. Omega-3 & -6 Fish Oils
- d. Modifications to these instructions:

4. Food

- a. Consider a reduction of 20% of regular diet while rehabilitating – and if weight loss has been discussed, please consider this a number 1 priority. Nothing, simply nothing can come close to optimizing recovery and post-operative limb performance as attaining an ideal body weight.

5. Recovery

- a. Generally you should see a very linear improvement (eg. Each new day is better than the previous) from this recheck. Minor set-backs are common, and do not affect overall recovery – as long as these slowly begin to diminish through the next 2-3 weeks
 - b. Any type of set-back, especially leading to wound drainage, or non-weight bearingness longer than 48h should be seen by us. Please call.
 - c. Modifications to these instructions:
6. Recheck
 - a. We consider this to be your final, and last scheduled follow-up! If you notice anything unusual and persistent, please call us to schedule an appointment.
 7. Complications
 - a. Relaxation – see notes above, although exceptionally rare CAN occur up to 90days post-operative, we do recommend a ‘measured’ and sensible reintroduction to pre-injury activities
 - b. Implant migration – is probably the most common complication if your pet had a tibial tubercle transposition (TTT) as part of the MPL correction. The implants used are smooth, small pins, and with the excessive flexion and extension of the knee can back out up to 5y after surgery! If this occurs a simple sedated procedure to remove the pin is necessary and will NOT compromise the repair itself (the bone is already healed! And the pin is simply redundant)
 - c. CCL tear – CCL (or ACL) tearing can occur subsequent to MPL repair – simply because it is a common orthopedic injury. This is not associated with the repair of the patella – however, what you will see is intermittent to persistent lameness and we will need to re-evaluate your pet to determine if this new condition is present.
 8. Questions
 - a. Our foremost interest is your pet’s rapid and complete recovery: Do not hesitate to call or email any questions or concerns.