

Hawksmoor Hydrotherapy

At some stage in their career a dog competing in agility may require hydrotherapy rehabilitation treatment. If unfortunately they do some of the benefits are listed within this article.

Hydrotherapy is derived from the Greek word meaning 'water healing'. It provides:

- Relief from pain
- Relief from swelling
- Relief from stiffness
- Zero impact exercise in the hydrotherapy pool
- Reducible impact on load bearing joints in the Aquatic Treadmill
- Increased joint range of motion
- Muscle strengthening and maintenance
- Improved cardiovascular fitness
- Pre operative conditioning
- Post operative conditioning
- Mental stimulation

Hydrotherapy is a controlled form of exercise where the water is sanitized to regulated standards and the temperature is maintained between 27 and 30 degrees centigrade. This allows surface blood vessels to expand, relaxing muscles and reducing pain, swelling and associated stiffness.

A multitude of conditions can be assisted and improved by hydrotherapy. These include but are not limited to the following:

- Cruciate ligament disease and rupture
- Patella luxations
- Arthritis
- Hip and elbow dysplasia
- Neurological disorders
- Spinal injuries/conditions
- Ligament and muscle injuries
- Soft tissue injuries
- Obesity

When choosing a hydrotherapy centre for your dog the points below may act as some guidance.

- Prior to the hydrotherapy session
 - A brochure should be received containing written information regarding hydrotherapy
 - Hydrotherapy should be discussed with the hydrotherapy centre so any concerns are alleviated
 - A Veterinary Referral should be obtained by the Hydrotherapist prior to any treatment being performed
 - Ensure the Hydrotherapist conducting the hydrotherapy treatment has achieved relevant qualifications.
- The initial consultation
 - Full assessment will be performed to include history taking, measurements of muscle mass, a full health check and the emergency procedure explained
- Subsequent visits
 - Health checks performed, the dog will receive a health check pre and post swim, appropriate buoyancy aid or harness fitted.



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- Post session
 - The dog should receive a shower and an appropriate method of drying.
 - Feedback should be given on the dog's performance throughout the session plus any post swim care instructions given.

It should also be ensured that the Hydrotherapy Centre or individual Hydrotherapist is a member of a minimum of one regulatory body:

- CHA (Canine Hydrotherapy Association)
- NARCH (National Association of Registered Canine Hydrotherapists)



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Case Study

Breed: Labrador

Clinical Condition: Osteoarthritis in both Hips, left hind being the worst.

Medication: Cartrophen, Seraquin.

Clinical History: On presentation at Hawksmoor, Fred had suffered a history of muscle atrophy on his hind limbs with occasional ataxia. Limited ROM and associated pain was detected in his left hip and following further investigations OA was diagnosed. On his initial session Fred was placed in the hydrotherapy pool with the support of a buoyancy aid and the hydrotherapist. Fred swam for 2 minutes and displayed adequate flexion and extension in all 4 limbs, the left hind demonstrating a slightly decreased ROM in comparison. His muscle mass measurements from his initial session are as follows:

Limb	Measurement
Left Fore	30 cm
Right Fore	31 cm
Left Hind	40 cm
Right Hind	46 cm

Clinical History Continued: As Fred's sessions progressed, he was attending twice weekly his confidence grew in the water and the results were showing. 1 month into his treatment he was swimming for 2.5 minutes rest 2.5 minutes and was demonstrating an improved ROM in all limbs. His muscle mass measurements were now as follows

Limb	Measurement
Left Fore	31 cm
Right Fore	32 cm
Left Hind	44 cm
Right Hind	48 c

Since then Fred has continued to improve not only with his performance and ROM in the pool but also at home. His owners have reported a marked improvement in his

abilities. Fred now attends once weekly for his hydrotherapy treatment and swims for 3.5 minutes rest 3.5 minutes with the support of a buoyancy jacket and Hydrotherapist. His most recent muscle mass measurements are detailed below:

Limb	Measurement
Left Fore	31 cm
Right Fore	32 cm
Left Hind	44 cm
Right Hind	48 cm

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