

HYDROTHERAPY AND UNDERWATER TREADMILL

What is Hydrotherapy?

Hydrotherapy has been used in humans for many years for rehabilitation and pain relief of neurological, musculoskeletal and orthopaedic conditions. It has recently been applied to horses and dogs based on the following three principles:

- ***Buoyancy***: The upward flotation force helps to reduce weight-bearing on joints thus potentially reduce pain during exercise in water.
- ***Hydrostatic Pressure***: Pressure exerted by water provides mild anti-inflammatory effects and improves blood circulation.
- ***Water Drag***: Water resistance helps to improve muscle strength and cardiovascular fitness.

What are the potential benefits of Hydrotherapy?

- Increase in range of movement of joints.
- Decrease in pain.
- Increase in blood circulation.
- Increased metabolic requirement.
- Muscle mass building and strengthening.
- Improvement in proprioception (i.e. the sense of relative position of body parts and strength of effort being employed in movement)

What do I need to consider before starting hydrotherapy sessions?

Walking under water requires much more effort than walking on land. Our therapist will assess and decide how much time a patient should spend walking on the treadmill. In general, during the initial sessions the animal will walk less than 5 minutes on the treadmill. Depending on the individual case duration can be extended to a maximum of 20 minutes. One should bear in mind that more time or a faster speed is not necessarily better for the patient. Please respect the professional judgment of our therapist.

Important points:

- It is very important for the dog to develop a positive experience before, during and after the hydrotherapy session in order to maximize the therapeutic effect. In connection with this, a lot of time will be spent getting the patient comfortable and relaxed inside and outside the water tank. Please do not rush or force your dog to exercise in the treadmill.
- Towels and hair dryers will be provided for you to dry your dog. It is not the responsibility of therapist to do the drying. You are more than welcomed to bring your own towels and hairdryers.
- Not every dog is fit for hydrotherapy. Dogs with hydrophobia, concurrent skin disease/infectious disease and open wounds are not suitable. In addition, if acupuncture is to be done at the same day, it should be done after the hydrotherapy session.

How to prepare my dog for hydrotherapy?

- Bath your dog in advance.
- Bring your dog outside to the toilet before the session begins.
- Bring your dog's favourite treats and/or squeaky toys to attract the dog to move on the treadmill.
- It is not advisable to feed your dog for 6-hour prior to therapy session.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONSULT YOUR VETERINARY SURGEON

水療及水底跑步機

甚麼是水療？

人類多年前已開始應用水療作神經系統、骨骼及肌肉與及骨科問題的康復和鎮痛治療。近年水療開始擴展至馬匹及犬隻身上，其原理如人類相若，大致如下：

- **浮力**：浮力能幫助減低關節所承受的重量，可減少運動時的痛楚
- **水靜壓**：水靜壓具輕微的消炎作用，並能促進血液循環
- **水阻**：水阻力能改善肌肉力量及心血管系統的耐力

水療的好處

- 改善關節擺動幅度
- 減輕痛楚
- 促進血液循環
- 增加代謝需求
- 增強肌肉力量
- 改善本體感覺（身體各部位的相對位置感和運動時所需肌肉力量的感覺）

進行水療前注意事項

動物在水中走動比陸上需要更多體力。物理治療師會評估及決定患病犬隻在水底跑步機的步行時間。一般來說，首次治療時犬隻不會步行多於五分鐘。隨著犬隻病情及體力有所改善，物理治療師會逐漸增加跑步時間，最多至二十分鐘。主人應遵從物理治療師給予的指示，切忌強迫狗隻進行過量/速度過快的治療。

重要事項

- 為使治療能順利進行，犬隻必須對整個治療過程建立正面的觀感。故此我們會花較多時間讓犬隻放鬆心情才會開始治療。請勿強迫或催促犬隻進入水缸。
- 為方便閣下弄乾犬隻，本會會為閣下提供毛巾和風筒。本會亦歡迎閣下自備毛巾。請留意弄乾犬隻並非物理治療師的工作範圍。
- 對水有嚴重恐懼、罹患皮膚病或傳染病、或有傷口的犬隻均不直接接受水療。另外，若犬隻在水療當日同時需接受針灸治療，水療療程應編排在針灸之前。

事前準備

- 為犬隻洗澡
- 帶備犬隻的喜愛的小食/玩具
- 治療前請帶犬隻如廁
- 治療前六小時請停止餵食（請繼續給予食水）

如有任何疑問可請教你的獸醫