



Post-Operative TPLO Surgery

Preparing for the Homecoming

Preparing the House

It is important to prepare & plan for having to restrict your dog's activity after surgery by confining them to a small area of the house. Rest is important and crucial during the recovery stages to promote healing. Some options include:

- Dog Crate
- Gated off area (i.e. Kitchen)
- Room confinement

Walking Surfaces:

Slippery floors such as wood, tile, etc. may be difficult for your pet to walk on. Consider putting down rugs, mats, etc. to help add some traction during the recovery stages.

No Jumping or Horsing Around!

It is EXTREMELY important not to allow your dog to jump. Over extension of the stifle (knee) could compromise and delay healing time. This includes not allowing your dog to interact with any other dog friends.

- NO JUMPING on/off bed
- NO JUMPING on/off couch
- NO JUMPING up on you

NO STAIRS!

Similar to jumping, stairs may over stress the joint & delay healing. It is important to try to prevent your dog from going up & down the stairs as much as possible. If stairs cannot be avoided, please use the following precautions:

- **SUPPORT:** Use a rolled-up towel or harness around to waist to help provide additional support
- **LIMIT:** Block off all stairs so dog cannot access them unless supervised. Limit the amount stairs being used unless absolutely necessary.
- **RESTRICT:** Make sure to have leash on hand & ready to restrict movement if required

What is “Okay” & “Not Okay” Post-Op?

It is important to know what to expect post-op & when you should contact your vet! Never hesitate to reach out if you have concerns!

Monitor	Contact Your Vet
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discomfort on the repaired leg & around the incision• Swelling around the incision and to the leg (this should only last for the first 3-4 days following surgery)• Bruising around the incision or on the leg• A small amount of discharge from the incision (may be clear or even a little blood tinged)• Warm to the touch around	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discomfort that causes your pet to cry or bite• Swelling that lasts longer then 4-5 days• Bruising in areas other than the incision site• Large amounts of discharge or discharge that is NOT clear• Bleeding that does not stop• If you do not find that your pet is still painful even after ice application & pain medications

Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions or concerns!

613-256-3443

****Do NOT Force Therapy****

The exercises to follow are supposed to be fun for everyone! They should be a mixture of relaxing, rewarding & **pain-free** for your pet. Not only will your pet benefit from these exercises but it will help to improve the human-animal bond you have together. Use the information to follow as a guide on your pet's road to recovery!

Phase 1 (Weeks 1-2)

GOAL: Decrease edema, manage pain, and control movement to promote bone healing

1. See DVM for pain medication & joint supplement instructions
2. **Rest:** Crate rest or limited movement in the house is **REQUIRED**. **Ensure ALL ACTIVITY is supported with the use of a support sling when mobile.** On-leash toilet breaks only. No jumping, rough play, or walks. No stairs.
3. Check for signs of exacerbation, re-injury, or infection:
If any signs of these are present, contact your veterinarian immediately
 - Increased swelling around the stifle (knee) joint
 - Increased pain or redness at incision site
 - Foul smelling drainage
 - Decreased Appetite
 - Mood Changes

****DO NOT FORCE THERAPY****

4. **Massage Strokes:** Massage strokes help to not only decrease pain & swelling but to improve circulation & promote healing as well. This should be done at the beginning of your session to help your dog relax & ease their anxiety! This is done best with your dog laying on their side, stroking & rubbing from the toes up maintaining the same amount of pressure throughout. *This should be done for 5-10 minutes, 3-5x/day*
5. **Ice:** Icing helps to decrease inflammation & pain. Using a soft gel pack or frozen vegetables is best due to the conforming nature. Ensure well covered with towel to eliminate moisture over the incision. *Complete 5-10 minutes 2-3x/day for the first 5 days, then as needed to help with inflammation*
6. **Elevation:** Surgical leg up **as able** by placing pillow between back legs, ensuring parallel to the floor. **Ensure leg is NOT elevated longer than 30 minutes.**

Phase 2 (Weeks 3-6)

GOAL: Control movement to promote bone healing & begin weight bearing to prevent atrophy

1. See DVM for medications (if required) & joint supplement instructions
2. **Rest:** Slow, controlled movements in the house are permitted (NO RUNNING). Use baby gates to limit activity & ensure support is provided on slippery flooring. Chew toys may be provided for mental stimulation.
3. **Controlled Leash Walks:** Slow, controlled **LEASH WALKS** can now be introduced. Remember that the slower your dog walks, the more likely they are to use their surgical leg! ***Start with only 5 minute walks, around x2-3/day.***
4. **Massage Strokes:** This should be done for 10 minutes, 2-3x/day
5. **Passive Range of Motion (PROM):** Helps to improve joint motion & lubrication after surgery while preventing muscles & other soft tissues to heal improperly. This is best performed with your dog on their side & important to remember this should never be painful! Hold the leg by placing one hand on the stifle (knee) joint & the other below the joint. Starting at the hip & ensuring to support the knee, gentle rotate in a circular motion for 10 repetitions. Continue to the knee by ensuring the leg is parallel to the floor. Slowly bend & straighten the knee to the dog's tolerance. Repeat for the ankle. Complete 10-15 repetitions (each area) 3-5x/day

Phase 3 (Weeks 6-8)

GOAL: Control movement to promote bone healing & strengthening exercises

1. **Rest:** Slow, controlled movements in the house are permitted (NO RUNNING, JUMPING, RUNNING UP STAIRS, OR ROUGH PLAY).
2. **Controlled Leash Walks:** At this point you can now allow more freedom during walks. This encourages more intermittent trotting to help strengthen & build muscle. Ensure walk is *no longer than 10 min, x2-3/day*.
3. **Massage Strokes & Passive Range of Motion (PROM):** You may discontinue as long as your dog is using their leg consistently

ENSURE TO PREFORM THE EXCERCISES BELOW ON A STABLE GROUND:

4. **Exercise #1: “Single-Leg Stance” or “Tripod Balance”**
Lift each *front limb* off the ground one at a time, holding for 5-10 seconds each. Repeat x3 times each leg. This helps to encourage some weight shifting on the hind limbs.
5. **Exercise #2: “Sit-to-Stand” or “Puppy Squats”**
For this exercise, you want your dog to sit down then immediately stand back up. Complete 5-7 repetitions, x3-4/day. Helps to improve overall range of motion & to strengthen and build muscle mass.

Phase 4 (Weeks 8-12)

GOAL: Focus on strengthening exercises to regain lost strength & muscle tone

1. **Rest:** Controlled movements in the house are permitted (**NO RUNNING, JUMPING, RUNNING UP STAIRS, OR ROUGH PLAY**).

ENSURE TO CONSULT WITH VETERINARIAN REGARDING POST-OP RADIOGRAPHS BEFORE STARTING THIS LEVEL OF REHAB!

2. **Controlled Leash Walks with Hill Work:** Find an incline that is suitable for your dog to walk up & down. While on your walks, slowly walk your dog up & down the incline. Begin with 5 minutes of hill work, then you may try to increase to 10 minutes after a few days. Doing this helps to support the knee & build muscle. Ensure walk is ***no longer than 15 min, x2-3/day & 5 min of hill work x1-2/day.***
3. **You may DISCONTINUE “Single Leg Stance” & “Sit-to-Stand” Exercises**
4. **Exercise #5: “Stair Work”**
You may now incorporate the stairs as a form of exercise. **Always do this exercise with your dog on leash & support them under the belly.** See below for guidance.
 - **START SLOW:** Start by slowly walking up 3 stairs then slowly back down. Increase frequency & number of stairs each week. Stair work should be completed x1-3/day.
 - **SUPERVISED ACCESS:** It is too early for your dog to have free access to the stairs! This exercise should always be done on leash with slow & controlled movements.

Phase 5 (Week 13+)

GOAL: Focus on continuing to strengthen & maintain muscle tone

1. **Rest:** At this time your dog can have full, supervised access to the house. Try to continue to restrict any jumping, running on the stairs, or rough play. A slow transition back to normal is ideal.
2. **Supervised Off-Leash Activity:** Speak to veterinarian before allowing your dog off-leash! You may allow your dog to have some freedom off leash with **STRICT** supervision.
****If you know your dog cannot be controlled from jumping, chasing balls, squirrels, other dogs, etc. DO NOT allow off-leash activity****
3. **Continue with “Stair Work” Exercise #5:** 5-7+ steps (at your pet’s level), x1-3/day
4. **Swimming**
Ensure to get approval from your veterinarian before bringing your pet swimming!
Swimming can have many benefits for your pet. It is very soothing to the muscles & allows your pet to exercise their leg in a “no-impact” environment. It helps to improve overall range of motion, muscle strength, cardiovascular system, etc. This is best done in a controlled environment under direct supervision. Preferably in a pool & where your dog may be lifted in & out of the water. Your dog should be held in place or allowed to swim with assistance (using handles from lifejacket, support harness under chest & belly, etc.) for about 2-5 minutes, once weekly. **START SLOW**, then you may transition to 5-10 minutes, x1-2/week as the weeks progress.