

Senior Dog Discussion

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When is my dog considered a senior

- ▶ Large breed dogs, like Otterhounds, are considered seniors at 7 years of age



Some things to look for in your aging dog

- ▶ New or changing lumps and bumps
- ▶ Changes in mentation
- ▶ Increased thirst and/or urination
- ▶ Changes in appetite and weight
- ▶ Horrible doggy breath
- ▶ Has become incontinent or has trouble going to the bathroom
- ▶ Is no longer fully housebroken
- ▶ Changes in gait
- ▶ Changes in vision and/or eyes starting to appear cloudy
- ▶ Appears to be experiencing discomfort
- ▶ Changes in hearing/hearing loss

When should your dog be seen by a Veterinarian

- ▶ If your dog is experiencing anything from the previous slide
- ▶ Typically, Veterinarians like to see senior dogs twice annually if they are otherwise healthy
- ▶ Is a good idea to have baseline bloodwork drawn every 6-12 months to check organ function, blood values, total proteins, specific gravity, etc
- ▶ Your Veterinarian may also recommend x-rays and an ultrasound
- ▶ Dental health is also important, so they may recommend that your dog have their teeth cleaned
 - ▶ Is important to keep up with dental care throughout your dog's life

Is your dog experiencing pain? - some things to look for

- ▶ Lameness
- ▶ Less interest, or changes in their normal activity
- ▶ Lags behind during walks
- ▶ Restless- is wandering around and can't seem to get settled or comfortable
- ▶ Has a difficult time getting up or lying down
- ▶ Panting
- ▶ Constantly licking a particular area of the body, such as around a joint, like the carpus
- ▶ Vocalizing

Pain-continued

- ▶ Changes in posture
- ▶ Increased salivation
- ▶ Dilated pupils
- ▶ Inappetence

Arthritis in senior dogs

- ▶ Is quite common in large breed dogs and there are estimates that around 80% of senior dogs will develop osteoarthritis
- ▶ There are differing therapies to help treat and control pain and discomfort associated with arthritis
 - ▶ NSAIDS
 - ▶ Other pain medications
 - ▶ Nutraceuticals
 - ▶ Physical rehabilitation
- ▶ Important to note that it is not uncommon to use multi-modal medications when treating pain associated with arthritis

NSAIDS

- ▶ NSAID (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug)
- ▶ Common medications used to treat arthritis in dogs
- ▶ This class of drugs helps to control pain and inflammation associated with arthritis
- ▶ Some common NSAIDS used in Veterinary medicine include:
 - ▶ Rimadyl (carprofen)
 - ▶ Deramaxx (deracoxib)
 - ▶ Metacam (meloxicam)
 - ▶ Previcox (firocoxib)
 - ▶ Galliprant (grapiprant)



NSAIDs
continued

NSAIDS-continued

- ▶ These are prescription medications, so your dog will need to see their Veterinarian
- ▶ Your Vet may recommend baseline labwork prior to starting an NSAID to check that your dog's kidney and liver functions are within normal levels
- ▶ Once your dog starts taking an NSAID and is tolerating it well, your Veterinarian will recommend once to twice yearly labwork to make sure your dog's kidney and liver values stay within a normal range
- ▶ Side effects are typically minimal, but some NSAIDS may affect the GI tract
- ▶ Always discuss any concerns you may have regarding side effects with your Vet

Other Pain Medications

- ▶ Often used in conjunction with NSAIDs to provide a multi-modal approach to pain management
- ▶ Gabapentin-can be used to help reduce chronic or nerve pain
- ▶ Amantadine-can be used to help reduce chronic pain
- ▶ Opioids-most effective in treating acute pain and may be used at times for managing chronic pain (aaha.org)
 - ▶ Tramadol (synthetic opioid)
 - ▶ Buprenorphine/morphine

Nutraceuticals/joint supplements

- ▶ According to VCA Animal hospitals, Nutraceuticals are a type of dietary supplement that is not an essential nutrient, but may provide other health benefits
- ▶ Joint supplements claim to improve joint mobility, provide varying degrees of pain relief and reduce inflammation
- ▶ Important to note that very few of these supplements are studied and proven to work in the matter they claim the supplements work (not FDA approved)
- ▶ Ask your Veterinarian what their preferred one may be and when to start giving them
- ▶ Some popular names include; Cosequin and Dasuquin
- ▶ Omega 3 fatty acids are another type of joint supplement
- ▶ Some prescription dog foods, such as Purina Pro Plan Joint Mobility contain higher levels of joint supplements than regular dog food

Examples of joint supplements



Cosequin

Also comes in soft chews



Dasuquin

Also comes in soft chews



Nordic Naturals

Comes in soft gel capsules and liquid

Adequan

- ▶ Is considered a chondroprotectant
- ▶ Per Adequancanine.com- it is the only FDA approved disease modifying OA drug
- ▶ Inhibits cartilage loss in a dog's synovial joints
- ▶ May help to restore joint lubrication, relieve inflammation and renew building blocks of healthy cartilage
- ▶ Is an injection

Adequan

Is given IM or sub-Q twice weekly for the first 4 weeks and then often once monthly thereafter



Librela

- ▶ Not available in the US as of yet, but has had good results in Europe
 - ▶ Is a monthly injection for the treatment of osteoarthritis
 - ▶ Is a monoclonal antibody that specifically targets nerve growth factor
 - ▶ Nerve growth factor is considered a key player in osteoarthritis pain
 - ▶ Is showing to have minimal impact on the GI tract, liver and kidneys
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- ▶ [Zoetis.co.uk/products](https://zoetis.co.uk/products)

Physical Rehabilitation



Physical Rehabilitation

- ▶ Differing exercises and modalities that can be helpful for senior dogs
- ▶ Important to note that most of these therapies should be performed by a Veterinarian or Technician that has been trained in physical rehabilitation
- ▶ Some examples are:
 - ▶ Ice or heat packs
 - ▶ Massage
 - ▶ Laser
 - ▶ Acupuncture
 - ▶ chiropractic
 - ▶ Assisi loops/mats
 - ▶ Underwater treadmill
 - ▶ Therapeutic exercise
 - ▶ Passive range of motion/stretching

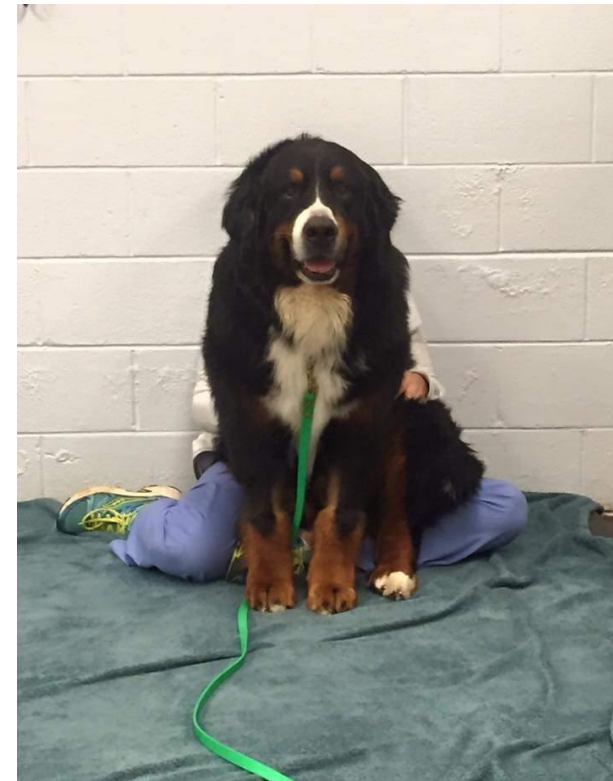
Heat therapy

- ▶ Can give some pain relief
- ▶ Help with muscle spasms
- ▶ Increases blood circulation in the area being treated
- ▶ Important to make sure that it is not too hot
- ▶ Apply for 5-10 minutes 2-3 times daily



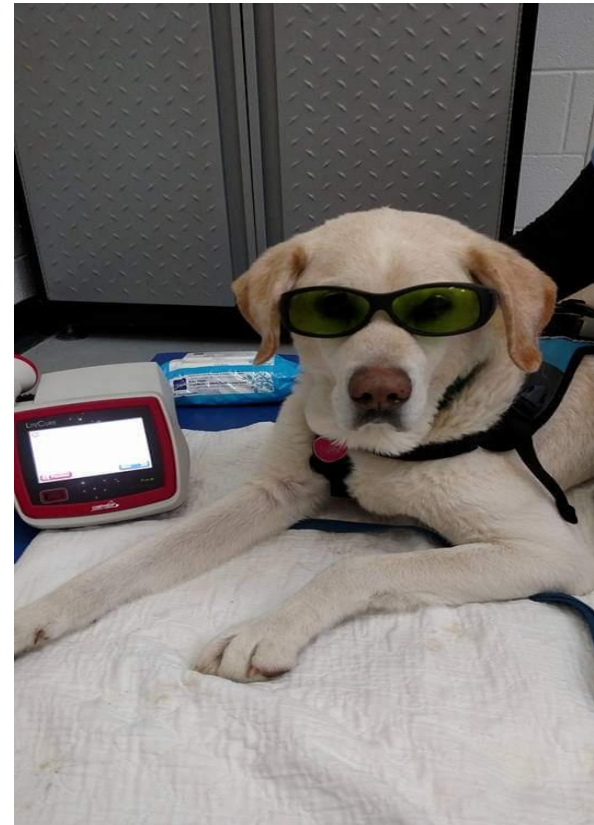
Massage

- ▶ Helps to relieve muscle tension
- ▶ Provide some pain relief
- ▶ Improves mobility and flexibility
- ▶ Improves circulation and lymphatic flow
- ▶ Relaxing
- ▶ Videos and classes are available to learn the proper way to massage a dog



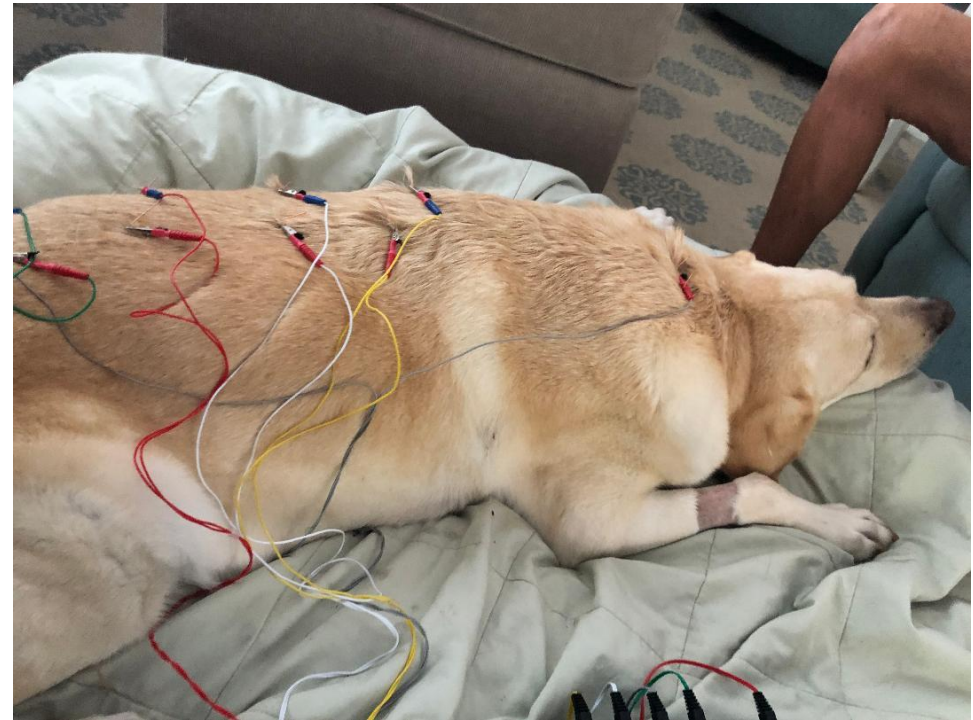
Laser

- ▶ Provides analgesia and pain relief
- ▶ Reduces inflammation
- ▶ Can stimulate and help the release of painful trigger points
- ▶ Helps with the healing of wounds
- ▶ Can discuss with your Vet how often they recommend laser treatment



Acupuncture

- ▶ Treatment typically lasts 20-30 minutes
- ▶ Should be performed by a trained Vet
- ▶ May achieve at least 4 therapeutic goals
 - ▶ Release of physical and emotional stress
 - ▶ Activation and control of immune and anti-inflammatory mechanisms
 - ▶ Acceleration of tissue healing
 - ▶ Pain relief secondary to endorphin and serotonin release



Chiropractic

- ▶ Should be performed by a trained, experienced Veterinary professional
 - ▶ Refers to the practice of manipulating the spine to treat disease
 - ▶ Can be used to treat neurologic or biomechanical issues to include; hip dysplasia, spondylosis, intervertebral disc disease and cervical instability
 - ▶ One of the few modalities where results can be immediate
 - ▶ Often used in canine athletes
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- ▶ Info from vcahospitals.co,

Assisi Loops and mats

- ▶ Called tPEMF therapy-targeted pulsed electromagnetic field therapy
- ▶ Considered a safe, drug-free alternative to treating pain and inflammation
- ▶ The signal stimulates the reparation of cells by increasing the production of endogenous nitric oxide, which is considered an anti-inflammatory molecule



Assisi loop and mat

- ▶ This therapy can be done at home
- ▶ You can purchase through your Veterinarian or rehab practitioner
- ▶ One treatment lasts approximately 15 minutes and you can get 100-150 treatments from each assisi loop
- ▶ The loop can be used 2-4 times per day. Ask your Veterinarian how often they would like you to use the loop
- ▶ Pictures and info from assisianimalhealth.com



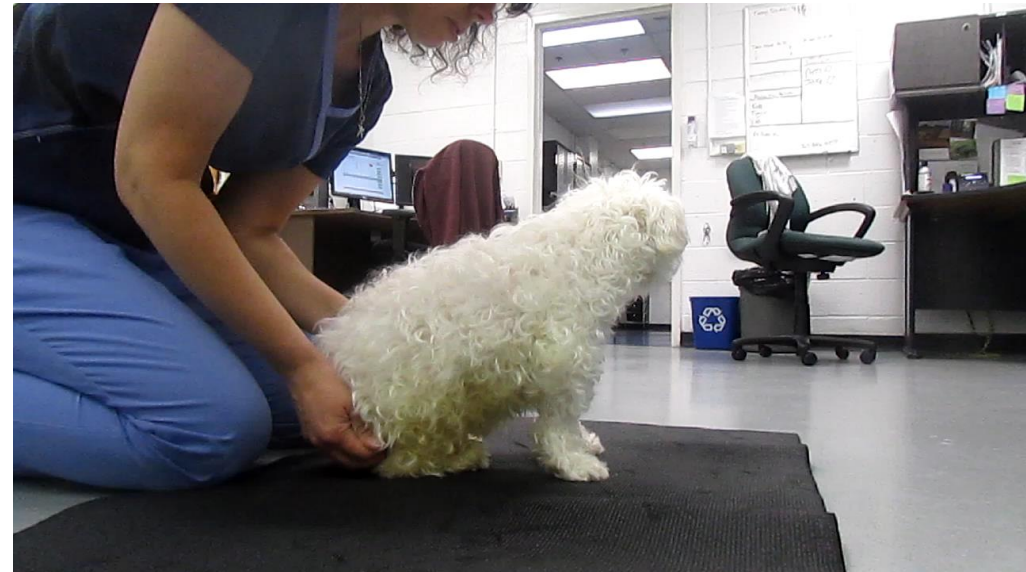
Underwater Treadmill

- ▶ My personal favorite!
- ▶ The water is warm, typically around 90 degrees, which helps with circulation, increases the flexibility of joints and can help with pain
- ▶ Buoyancy and resistance are important factors
- ▶ The higher the water level, the more buoyant a dog is and will be placing less weight on painful joints
- ▶ In the video, you can see the water level is higher and the dog is only using about 38-40% of her body weight
- ▶ The dog is walking against the resistance of the water, which can help re-build atrophied muscle



Therapeutic Exercise

- ▶ For senior dogs, it is important for the exercises to be controlled and low impact
- ▶ Bodies in motion tend to stay in motion so is important to keep your senior dogs moving (in a controlled manner)
- ▶ Over-doing it may cause an increase in inflammation
- ▶ Leash walks or walking in water are always good
- ▶ Sit to stands, paws up and controlled stair climbing can help maintain or regain strength in the rear legs



At home

- ▶ Make sure they have a comfortable bed to sleep on-orthopedic beds are great for senior dogs
- ▶ If you have slippery floors (tile, hardwoods, vinyl plank), you may want to consider placing carpet runners in areas where your dog spends a lot of time so they have better footing
- ▶ Instead of one long walk per day, you may want to consider shorter walks 2-3 times per day instead and try to walk the dog on softer surfaces, such as grass, dirt or sand vs. concrete
- ▶ If you have an SUV, don't make your dog jump in and out of the SUV as this puts a lot of strain on their joints (there are ramps available for SUV's)
- ▶ An informative website concerning arthritis: www.caninearthritis.org

bibliography

- ▶ Canine Rehabilitation and Physical Therapy 2nd Edition, Darryl L. Millis and David Levine, 2014, Elsevier Inc

Thank you for your time!

