



## IS A PATELLAR ORTHOSIS THE RIGHT SOLUTION FOR YOU AND YOUR DOG?

Patellar tendon injury is relatively uncommon and complex. It takes a long time to heal tendons. To facilitate this we decrease motion at the knee, limiting the ability to bend the knee and flex the hip. This is done with a large support orthosis that prevents any motion at the knee until the tendons heal. At that time, we gradually reintroduce flexion of the knee as your dog rehabilitates the atrophied muscles (quadriceps and hamstrings). It is important to control this rehabilitation phase to prevent re-injury while the muscle recovers. This is considered an excellent option when surgery is not appropriate, not necessary, or not possible.

Because an orthosis is not the correct therapy for all patients, before choosing an orthosis the following points are important to keep in mind:

- 1. Device design is paramount to success.** Careful consideration is taken in prescribing a device and its specific components. Important clinical variables surround use of a paw segment and whether articulation by way of hinges is possible.
  - a. The paw segment is required at least in the beginning to help suspend the device. It may be possible to remove it after initial tendon healing.
  - b. Articulation (hinging) is ideal. This will be provided for the paw and the tarsus (hock or ankle). Initially the knee will not be allowed to bend. This will be allowed with a controlled motion limiter once healing is established.
- 2. The device MUST be worn 24/7 with short NON-WEIGHT bearing breaks throughout the day.** We recommend 3-4x 15-30 minute breaks per day. During this time your dog must remain lying down. Therefore, it is important to follow the exact wearing schedule provided by OrthoPets.
- 3. Adjustments are expected and are a normal part of the custom orthosis process.** The device is custom-made for your dog. Every effort is made to accurately fit the device. If adjustments are required, it will be necessary to ship the device to OrthoPets with a turnaround time of 1-3 business days excluding shipping time. Even so, your dog is much more active at home than here at OrthoPets. Increased activity and activity intensity can expose fit issues requiring adjustment. Additional adjustments are most commonly required in the first few months and as time goes on as the device is manipulated to allow knee movement. Please follow all instructions with regard to monitoring the leg and contact OrthoPets promptly if you have concerns.
- 4. Follow-up is critical to success.** An orthosis is considered a “durable medical device.” This means that proper use is necessary to meet therapeutic goals and to ensure its safe application over the duration of the healing and rehabilitation process. In the first few months of fitting, our OrthoPets team will see you and your dog for fit checks and coaching with regard to device use.
- 5. Rehabilitation is critical for success.** Most dogs adapt quickly to wearing an orthosis. Behavioral techniques can facilitate this. Also your dog will need to learn basic skills while wearing the device. These include: transitions (sitting, lying down, and getting up), stairs, getting into vehicles safely, managing on different types of surfaces (ground, carpet, hardwood floor, etc.). Finally, orthopedic injury leads to compensatory abnormal movement and associated muscle strain and weakness. The best way to ensure the highest level of success is to follow the recommended rehabilitation schedule and techniques. Each patient’s condition and abilities are unique and as such an individualized rehabilitation program is needed. OrthoPets’ certified rehabilitation team is experienced in helping orthosis patients adapt and progress through healing and recovery.