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# ALTERNATIVE THERAPIES & EXERCISE FOR OLDER DOGS - CATHY CHEN-RENNE

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SFSPCA

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## Why Exercise?

### Exercise for chronic pain

- Chronic pain is often linked to the geriatric animal and its tier of progressing disease
- Clients who are adaptable, educable, and willing to take responsibility for assisting in their pets recovery will have significantly better outcomes than those unable to do so.
- Benefits of physical therapy which reduce pain and provide analgesia include: increased flow of blood and lymph, earlier resolution of inflammation, ...promotion of normal joint mechanics, prevention or minimization of muscle atrophy, and positive psychosocial effects for both patient and owner.

### Exercise benefits for arthritis

- **Exercise can maintain muscle strength**, which in turn helps stabilize the joint and slow the progression of osteoarthritis.
- The exercise must be **controlled** and **continued indefinitely** or the beneficial effects will not be long lasting.
- The appropriate exercise can decrease pain associated with mild to moderate osteoarthritis as well.
- By **controlling the exercise**, excessive force on the joint and articular cartilage is avoided while at the same time building muscle strength.
  - Examples: swimming, jogging or walking on non-slick surfaces such as grass lawns, treadmills.

### Exercise helps cognitive function

- In fact, studies have also shown that **environmental enrichment** (e.g. training, play, exercise, novel toys) can help to maintain cognitive function.

## Links:

- <http://www.celebrex.com/about-celebrex.aspx> (human medicine, but showed the commercial that references 'keeping moving!')

## References

*USE OF PHYSICAL THERAPY FOR PAIN RELIEF. Andrea L. Looney, DVM, DACVA, Tufts Veterinary Emergency Treatment and Specialties And Cornell University Hospital for Animals. Northeast Veterinary Conference. August 6, 2005*

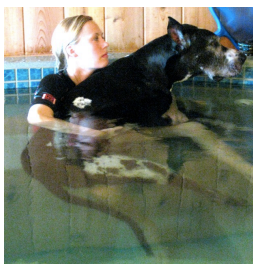
*USE OF PHYSICAL THERAPY FOR PAIN RELIEF. Andrea L. Looney, DVM, DACVA, Tufts Veterinary Emergency Treatment and Specialties And Cornell University Hospital for Animals. Northeast Veterinary Conference. August 6, 2005*

*DIFFERENTIAL DIAGNOSIS AND NEW APPROACHES IN MANAGEMENT OF BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS IN AGING DOGS. Gary Landsberg, BSc, DVM, MRCVS, DACVB, DECVBM-CA, Kersti Seksel, BVSc (Hons), MRCVS, MA (Hons), FACVSc, DACVB, DECVBM-CA, CMAVA at NAVC Conference Proceedings (North American Veterinary Conference) January 17, 2009*

## Canine Aquatic Fitness

### It's not just swimming!

- 1/3 of The Rex Center clients are dogs over 8 years old
- Sessions in warm water with a swim coach
- Floating
- Water massage
- Swimming
- Benefits of water:
  - Hydrostatic pressure massages
  - Protects joints
  - Resistance for muscle building



Swimming videos:

<http://youtube.com/therexcenter>

Jimmy doing an assisted swim:

<http://youtu.be/Z9FWCdKzA8Q>

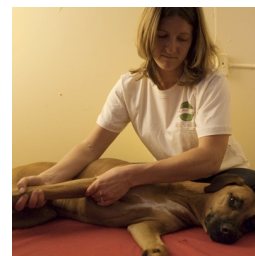
<http://www.animalreikisource.com/>

<http://goldentreeholistic.vpweb.com/>

## Massage

### Benefits of Massage

- Human Animal Bond & Wellness “inspection”
- Improve circulation, reduce edema, loosen and stretch tendons, and minimize scar tissue formation... Facilitating arterial, venous and lymphatic flow, thereby increasing available nutrients to an area and promoting removal of waste products and edema. (*Andrea Looney DVM*)



Types of Canine massage

- Therapeutic, Sports, or Acupressure

## Energy Work

- Reiki – (pronounced *Rey – Key*) describes a Japanese energy healing system used originally for spiritual development and used today for “hands-on” healing
- Flower Essences
  - Benefits:
  - Not contraindicated with anything
  - Energy for the dog to use in any way that s/he needs it



## Veterinary Acupuncture

### What Is it?

- Acupuncture points are very special, discrete spots on the surface of the body. The points allow access to the energy channels of the body.
- Biopsies of acupuncture points show a higher than normal number of nerve-vascular bundles as well as mast cells.
- Needling an acupuncture point can increase or decrease the energy flow at that spot in the channel which can help to balance the overall Qi of the body.
- Has been shown to aid pain relief, improve nerve regeneration, speed stroke recovery, and benefit senile dementia.
- In California, regulation requires that acupuncture be done by a Veterinarian (DVM) or an Acupuncturist(LAc) working with Veterinarian supervision
- Simple pain protocol to complex Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) protocols with herbs, nutritional changes and acupuncture (needles, moxa, vitamin shots, etc.)

### Two points to know:

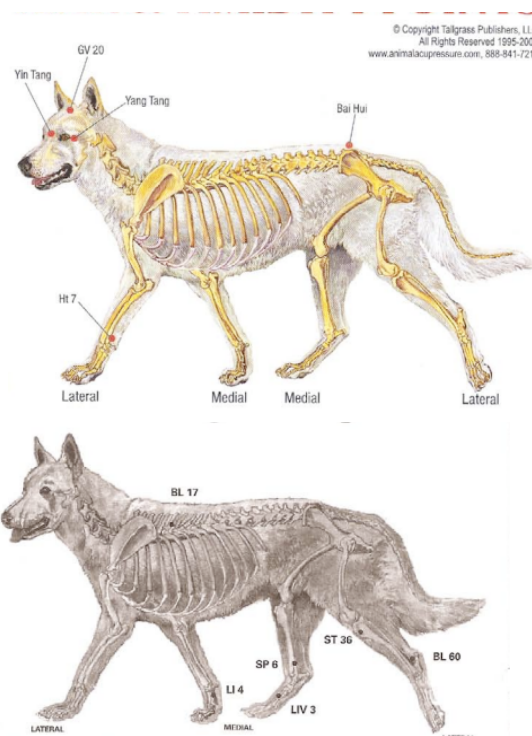
BL 60: “Aspirin point” relieves pain in the body. Located at the thinnest part of the hock, lateral aspect. (same on people! Ankle/Achilles tendon)

GV 20: Benefits the spirit of the animal while also clearing the mind of anxiety & fear. or Bai Hui (top of hip) – Increases sense of well-being

### References:

VETERINARY ACUPUNCTURE – WHAT’S THE POINT? Douglas E. Knueven, DVM Beaver Animal Clinic, Beaver, PA

Snow, Amy & Zidonis, Nancy. The Well Connected Dog: A Guide to Canine Acupressure.  
www.animalacupressure.com



## Canine Rehabilitation

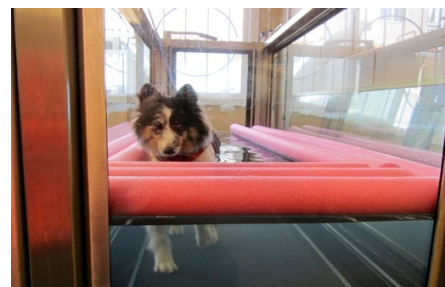
### What is it?

- Passive range of motion exercises (PROM)
- Therapeutic exercise programs
- Water therapy: underwater treadmill, tanks
- Local hypothermia/hyperthermia
- Ultrasonography
- Neuromuscular stimulation (TENS)
- Exercises can be done at home in addition to facility. Ask the therapist to give you exercises for home!
- In California, regulation requires that canine rehabilitation be done by a Veterinarian (DVM), a Licensed Veterinary Technician (LVT) with a certification OR a Physical Therapist (PT) with the certification and working with Veterinarian supervision
- Most facilities have exercise equipment, treadmills, and water treadmills
- Only two certifications: University of Tennessee and Canine Rehabilitation Institute

### Links/Videos:

CRGC West is a big rehab in Denver, CO: Here is a disabled older dog taken through a lot of different exercises

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F1zF3HrmpRM>



## INVITATION to the SENIOR DOG SOCIAL

- **Let's be social!**
- Combo of educational topics along with hands on work with the dogs.
- Important areas to emphasize mental stimulation are general training, problem solving, exercise and games.
- Discuss geriatric behaviors, dietary changes, and hospice.
- Information on physical conditions common to older animals can also be discussed.
- **Saturdays 1pm starting October 1**
- Email [info@therexcenter.com](mailto:info@therexcenter.com) for more information!



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