



Hydrotherapy Frequently Asked Questions

We understand that you may have lots of questions about Canine Hydrotherapy, Physiotherapy and Massage, and how they relate to your dog.

Below, we have attempted to address some of the more common questions that our customers have asked about the treatments we offer.

Why Choose Hydrotherapy?

Hydrotherapy provides a therapeutic treatment in warm water, helping to increase circulation, improve mobility, proprioception and relieve pain without excessive strain.

How does the hydrotherapy work?

Because your dog will be exercising without bearing weight or with reduced loading of limbs, they can work their joints without the damage or associated pain caused by walking, running etc. Swimming also develops the muscles, strengthens the heart and respiratory system and improves general fitness levels.

Pool Vs Aquatic Treadmill

The hydrotherapy pool allows your pet to exercise in a non-weight bearing environment which relieves pressure on joints reducing pain and encouraging movement.

In the underwater treadmill the water height can be adjusted to precisely control the amount of weight bearing. The degree of weight bearing can be increased as the animal strengthens or recovers. The speed of the underwater treadmill can also be changed to achieve the best possible movement of the limbs. The dog can be viewed from all angles and this is very useful for assessing how it is moving and to make adjustments to get better quality movement. Re-educating gait or correct limb use is very important for dogs learning to walk again after spinal problems.

What results can I expect to see?

Initially your dog may be a bit tired after their hydrotherapy treatment but over a period of time you will notice increased muscle tone, suppleness and fitness. Alongside the physical benefits you may see a return of behaviours you feel your dog has no longer been able to show such as wanting to walk further, play again or be more eager to get in and out of the car.

My dog is overweight. Can hydrotherapy help with the weight loss my vet has recommended?

Yes, many dogs attend and reach target weight when hydrotherapy is used in conjunction with a suitable diet. A program of treadmill hydrotherapy helps the dog to exercise in a low impact but effective way, promoting safe and healthy weight loss. The overall aim of a hydro weight loss programme may be used to prepare the patient for future exercise on land.

Hydrotherapy Sessions at Rose Tree

How long is each session?

Your initial assessment will last approximately 45 mins to 1 hour and will be carried out by a fully qualified veterinary physiotherapist. This includes a thorough assessment including in-depth history, gait analysis, palpation and detailed musculoskeletal evaluation. Follow up appointments thereafter last approximately 30 - 45 minutes.

How many sessions per week are needed?

This very much depends upon the dog's breed, age, weight, capability, medical condition and medical history and the reason for treatment. Sometimes it is recommended to begin with a loading dose of treatment twice weekly, however for most dogs once per week to begin gives the positive benefits.

Does my vet have to refer me?

We require confirmation from your vet that your dog is fit enough to be treated and does not have any conditions that may adversely affect your pet in the water. This protects you, your dog and other animals visiting hydrotherapy centre, and ensures that the treatment plan is appropriate for your dog. Our staff are happy to obtain this on your behalf, just ask!

How soon after surgery can I bring my dog in?

Each animal's treatment plan is unique to them. Our highly qualified staff will be able to advise you on this time frame and will liaise with your vet to ensure your animal receives the appropriate course of treatment.

Will my insurance pay?

It depends on the terms of your insurance policy and how the insurance company defines hydrotherapy or physiotherapy. Some insurance companies limit the number of hydrotherapy sessions per condition; others will pay up to your insurance limit. Some companies include hydrotherapy under 'complementary' treatment whilst others have a hydrotherapy section in the policy. Physiotherapy treatment is normally listed under veterinary fees. Our staff are happy to submit claims for you and help you complete any relevant paperwork.

What if I have to cancel?

We would appreciate at least 24 hours notice, as a late cancellation may leave a gap which could have been utilised by a dog needing to swim. Less than 24 hours notice, there is a cancellation fee of 50% payable. If you fail to attend a session the full session is chargeable.

What do I need to bring?

Our centre is fully kitted out with everything you need. However, it may be useful to bring a towel or drying robe for the journey home. We have treats in the clinic but if your pet has a sensitive diet then please feel free to bring treats with you for the session.

Can I swim with my dog?

No, you don't get in the water yourself. There will be a trained hydrotherapist in the pool with your dog to ensure a therapeutic experience for your animal and full safety for you and your dog. Our hydrotherapists welcome your input during sessions and will direct you through this as the sessions progress.

Should I feed my dog prior to the hydrotherapy session?

Please make sure your dog has not eaten for at least 3 hours before swimming and allow at least 2 hours after swimming before giving them a full meal.

Does my dog need to be vaccinated?

As the centre has lots of dogs visiting throughout the day it is important that we are aware if your dog has not been vaccinated. Please get in touch if you have chosen not to vaccinate your dog, our therapists will be happy to discuss the options with you. It is possible to visit the centre for both hydrotherapy or physiotherapy with the correct procedure in place.

My vet advised hydrotherapy, but my dog doesn't like swimming. What do you advise?

Some dogs can take a few sessions before they find their confidence and start to enjoy their swims. Your dog will be gently guided into the water wearing a life jacket, and will be closely supported by one or more of our hydrotherapists, who will be in the water at all times with your dog to offer encouragement and support. We take our time to gain your dog's trust and confidence and try and make swimming a positive experience. Our hydrotherapists have a wealth of experience working with a variety of breeds and behaviours and may advise to begin with water treadmill therapy to begin in order to acclimatise to the environment.

Will there be other dogs in the pool area when my dog is there?

There will be no other dogs in the hydrotherapy room when your dog is having their hydrotherapy session. It is possible to bring other dogs of the same family to a session with you as long as it is beneficial to the animal receiving treatment and they are kept on a lead at all times. Please get in touch with our therapists to discuss this further.

Can I attend the sessions, or do I have to leave my dog?

Absolutely, we find that in most cases owner input is highly beneficial to the dogs therapy. We also have chairs in the centre if you require to sit down during your dogs treatment.

The price seems quite expensive for my dog to have a 'swim'.

When you pay for a hydrotherapy treatment you're not just paying for your dog to swim. You're paying for the therapist's experience, understanding, compassion and knowledge. Our therapists are fully qualified Veterinary Physiotherapists who hold extensive post graduate training and continued professional development. They are invested in providing your pet with the gold standard of care and integrate suitable physiotherapy techniques throughout the session to ensure the best progress is made by your pet.