



# Therapeutic Support

## Program

**BY: Water Walkies Hydrotherapy**

# Welcome

Hey there, we are so glad you're here!

The Water Walkies Team are passionate about dogs, well all animals to be honest. The team have a long history of animal care. From Vet Nursing, Wildlife and Seabird Rescue, Pet Rescue including fostering and living with animals with special needs.

Our own companions have consisted of dogs of course, cats, poultry, rabbits, reptiles, aquatics, exotic birds, horses, a pig, and many more.

Water Walkies was born back in 2017 after Ava, Cath's Great Dane, had accidently ran over her adopted special needs cat, Zoidberg. It resulted in a broken leg. Though he had successful surgery, he was still not using it well.

After speaking with longtime friend Alli about the frustration of not being able to find rehabilitation available locally at the time, we decided to study a new career and completed Hydrotherapy and Canine Massage Certifications which included an internship in the UK.

We opened Water Walkies Hydrotherapy in the Illawarra in 2020, where sessions include everything from water confidence, learn to swim, weight-loss, fun and fitness through to rehabilitation.

## **Therapeutic Support Program     \$990**

### **10 x 45 minute Sessions**

\*Whilst our program includes the use of the Underwater Treadmill for sessions, if we deem that rehabilitation in our heated pool would be more suitable, we will discuss this in depth with you.

#### **Program includes:**

10 x 45-Minute Sessions designed to give your dog the best chance at a full, happy recovery. Sessions 1 and 8 are a comprehensive assessment with one of our Rehab Therapists where a full physical examination, behavioural observation and gentle palpation to identify pain, muscle loss/gain, or dysfunction are undertaken.

We'll discuss your pet's medical history, daily routine, personality, current medications and goals for therapy.

Your pet's journey starts with hands-on treatment. Sessions may include Hydrotherapy, Laser Therapy, Massage and or land-based exercises depending on your pet's needs.

We offer specialised care for:

- Pre/post-op orthopaedic surgeries (e.g., TPLO, FHNO)
- Neurological conditions (e.g., IVDD, Wobblers)
- Musculoskeletal injuries
- Senior pet mobility support

Collaborative Approach:

We work with you and your vet to set realistic goals and choose the best treatment combination for recovery, comfort, and mobility.

## **Intensive rehabilitation can play a crucial role in speeding up the recovery of a canine injury for the following reasons:**

**Focused and Consistent Treatment:** Intensive rehabilitation allows for a concentrated and consistent approach to the treatment of the injury. This consistency is essential for promoting healing and preventing setbacks.

**Early Intervention:** Starting rehabilitation promptly, after vet clearance, can prevent the development of secondary issues such as muscle atrophy, joint stiffness, and compensatory movement patterns. Early intervention helps address the root cause of the injury and reduces the risk of long-term complications.

**Muscle Strengthening:** Intensive rehabilitation involves targeted exercises to strengthen the muscles surrounding the injured area. Strong muscles provide better support to the affected joint or limb, reducing the risk of re-injury and promoting overall stability.

*Did you know? Many Pet Insurance companies  
cover hydrotherapy in their policies now*



**Range of Motion Improvement:** A focused rehabilitation program aims to restore and improve the range of motion in affected joints. This is crucial for preventing stiffness and maintaining the dog's ability to move comfortably.

**Improved Circulation and Healing:** Rehabilitation exercises, including controlled movements and therapeutic activities, enhance blood circulation to the injured area. Improved blood flow facilitates the delivery of oxygen and nutrients, accelerating the healing process.

**Neuromuscular Re-education:** Intensive rehabilitation helps in retraining the neuromuscular system, ensuring proper coordination and control of movement. This is vital for regaining functional mobility and preventing the development of abnormal movement patterns.

**Pain Management:** Rehabilitation programs including hydrotherapy in a multi-modal approach, can help manage pain and discomfort associated with the injury. Pain control is crucial for encouraging the dog to participate actively in the rehabilitation process.

*"A dog is the only thing on earth that loves you more than he loves himself." – Josh Billings*

**Patient Compliance:** An intensive six-week rehabilitation program allows for consistent monitoring of the dog's progress and adjustments to the treatment plan as needed. Regular follow-ups and assessments enhance the likelihood of the dog completing the rehabilitation regimen effectively.

**Prevention of Secondary Complications:** Extended immobility or insufficient rehabilitation can lead to secondary complications, such as joint contractures and muscle imbalances. Intensive rehabilitation aims to address these issues proactively, reducing the risk of long-term consequences.

**Enhanced Overall Recovery:** By focusing on a comprehensive rehabilitation plan for six weeks, your companion has the opportunity to make significant strides in recovery. This concentrated effort can lead to a more robust and efficient overall rehabilitation process.

It's important to note that the intensity and duration of the rehabilitation program will be tailored to the specific injury, the dog's individual needs, and the guidance of a veterinarian or qualified rehabilitation professional. Regular communication between the pet owner and the rehabilitation team is key to ensuring the program's success and the dog's optimal recovery.

*Dogs are not our whole life, but they make our lives whole.*

*-Roger Caras*

When it comes to rehabilitating our companions, the underwater treadmill emerges as a game-changer. Designed with precision and care, this innovative therapy tool offers a controlled environment that can make a world of difference in the recovery journey of injured dogs.

1

The underwater treadmill provides a low-impact workout, allowing dogs to engage in controlled movement without putting excessive strain on their joints. This is particularly beneficial for dogs recovering from surgeries, orthopedic injuries, or living with chronic conditions like arthritis.

2

**Buoyancy Matters:** The buoyancy of water reduces the weight-bearing load on a dog's limbs, promoting a more natural range of motion. This alleviates pressure on injured areas, facilitating movement and muscle engagement without causing discomfort.

3

**Controlled Resistance:** The resistance of water in the treadmill can be adjusted to tailor the intensity of the workout. This controlled resistance helps in building strength gradually, allowing for a customised rehabilitation program based on the specific needs of the individual dog.

4

**Increased Circulation:** The hydrostatic pressure of water enhances blood circulation, promoting faster healing by delivering oxygen and nutrients to injured tissues. This can accelerate the recovery process and reduce inflammation.

5

**Supervised Environment:** One of the key advantages of the underwater treadmill is the controlled environment it provides. Our Qualified Hydrotherapists can closely monitor the dog's movements, adjusting the settings as needed and ensuring a safe and effective rehabilitation process.



## What is Hydrotherapy?

Hydrotherapy is a therapeutic approach that involves the use of water to promote health, alleviate pain, and aid in physical rehabilitation. It is commonly employed for both humans and animals, including dogs. There are several forms of hydrotherapy, but they generally share the goal of utilising water's buoyancy, resistance, and other properties to enhance healing and well-being.

The recommended temperature of a hydrotherapy pool for dogs typically falls within the range of 28 to 32 degrees C.

Here are some considerations for hydrotherapy pool temperatures:

**Warmth for Comfort:** The water should be warm enough to keep the dogs comfortable during the therapy session. This is especially important for older dogs or those with arthritis, as warmer water helps relax muscles and joints.

**Muscle Relaxation:** The warmth of the water contributes to muscle relaxation, which is beneficial for promoting flexibility and reducing muscle tension. It enhances the overall effectiveness of the therapy.

*"A dog is the only thing on earth that loves you more than he loves himself." – Josh*

*Billings*



**Promoting Blood Circulation:** The elevated temperature helps improve blood circulation, delivering oxygen and nutrients to the muscles and tissues. This can aid in the healing process, making hydrotherapy more effective.

Professional hydrotherapists monitor the dogs closely during sessions. *Hydrotherapy is not yet a regulated industry in Australia, good news is that it is coming! That means at present anybody can perform hydrotherapy without any training.*

*Make sure any facility that you use has a Qualified Hydrotherapist. Hydrotherapy is a specialised field and not taught in regular veterinary studies at this point in time. There are many cautions and contraindications that need to be considered before allowing a client to undertake a hydrotherapy session.*

The most common types of hydrotherapy for dogs include:

**Underwater Treadmill:** Dogs walk in an underwater treadmill, which allows for controlled and monitored exercise. This is particularly beneficial for rehabilitation after surgery or injury.

**Swimming:** Swimming is an excellent low-impact exercise for overweight dogs, providing a safe and controlled environment where they can move freely without placing excessive strain on their joints. The buoyancy of water supports their body weight, reducing stress on aching joints and allowing for pain-free movement, making it particularly beneficial for dogs suffering from arthritis or other mobility issues. As they swim, their muscles engage in a full-body workout, helping to build strength, increase endurance, and improve overall fitness. Swimming also promotes cardiovascular health by increasing heart rate and circulation, which supports weight loss and enhances metabolic function. Additionally, the natural resistance of water encourages flexibility and joint mobility, preventing stiffness and improving range of motion.

**Aquatic Massage:** Gentle massage or manipulation of limbs in a warm water environment can help improve circulation, alleviate muscle tension, and enhance joint mobility.

Hydrotherapy is often recommended by veterinarians for conditions such as arthritis, hip dysplasia, post-surgical recovery, and various orthopedic or neurological issues. The water's supportive properties make it an effective and safe way to facilitate rehabilitation and improve a dog's overall quality of life.

### **What is the difference between taking my dog for a swim at the beach compared to hydrotherapy?**

- Swimming at the beach can lead to further injury and soreness as movement cannot be controlled. Unstable shifting sand, and waves can flare up some conditions.
- Cold water causes constriction of the blood vessels near to the skin and to the superficial muscles which restricts the flow of blood, making the muscles less efficient.
- Swimming in cold water can be counterproductive as the blood rushes to protect the vital organs to keep them warm leaving the limbs more at risk of injury and cramping.
- Our water quality is checked and if required treated a minimum of twice a day. Our pool is fitted with an oversized filter to allow for the hair and coat oil. Both our pool and underwater treadmill are heated at all times.

**Laser Therapy (Photobiomodulation):** provides a non-invasive, pain-free, surgery-free, and drug-free treatment that is used to treat a variety of conditions and can be performed either in conjunction with existing treatments or as a stand-alone session.

### **Laser Therapy For Pain Relief**

Laser treatments are an excellent way to provide pain relief to your canine companion. Laser therapy reduces pain by reducing inflammation through 'vasodilation' (the opening of blood vessels) and activating the lymphatic drainage system, thus draining swollen areas. The result is a reduction in swelling which reduces pain. The lasers also stimulate nerve cells that block pain signals from being transmitted to the brain, thereby decreasing nerve sensitivity. Because there is less inflammation, less swelling, and an interruption of pain signals to the brain, your pet will experience less pain. Laser treatments also stimulate the production of high levels of naturally produced endorphins and serotonin which further counteract your pet's pain.

### **Laser Therapy To Recover From Injury Or Surgery**

Laser therapy is a beneficial tool during postoperative recovery. In minor cases, laser therapy alone may be enough to alleviate pain and stimulate the healing process. Because it works directly on injured or affected areas, laser treatments can help speed up healing, strengthen muscle and tissue, improve mobility, and enhance your pet's overall quality of life almost immediately.

## **What Types Of Conditions Can Laser Therapy Be Used To Treat?**

Laser therapy can be used to treat a multitude of ailments, including:

- Muscle, ligament and tendon injuries
- Post-surgical and soft tissue trauma
- Back pain, especially the difficult-to-treat Iliopsoas Muscle scenario.
- IVDD, especially a problem for Dachshunds and French Bulldogs
- Ear infections
- Gingivitis
- Hot Spots and open wounds
- Dermatitis
- Arthritis/hip dysplasia
- Anal gland infections and inflammation
- Cystitis/Renal Disease
- Lick granulomas
- Ear Infections
- Allergic airway i.e. Asthma in Cats, Rhinitis in Pugs, Westie Lung etc.
- Agility/Working Animal: Improves stamina, reduces muscle injury risk

Our Therapeutic Support program is a crucial step towards restoring your companion's vitality. While this comprehensive program lays a robust foundation for recovery, it's essential to understand that every healing journey is unique. In some cases, additional sessions beyond the initial ten sessions may be necessary to achieve complete rehabilitation. These supplementary sessions ensure a tailored, gradual approach to address your pet's specific needs and response to therapy. Our dedicated team of professionals is committed to guiding your companion through the entire rehabilitation process, fostering optimal well-being.



Let's connect!



**Have questions or just want to chat?** Jump on our website  
[www.waterwalkies.com.au](http://www.waterwalkies.com.au)

or drop us a DM

@waterwalkies



**Disclaimer:**

The information provided in this document is intended for general informational purposes only. It is not a substitute for professional veterinary advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Always consult with a qualified veterinarian or canine nutritionist regarding your dog's specific nutritional needs, dietary concerns, and any existing health conditions.