



## holistic animal PHYSIOTHERAPY

### **How to deal with confinement and reduced physical activity**

Lets face it, hearing that your dog needs to be confined is up there with most dog owner's worst nightmares. Most dog owners enrich their dog's lives by taking them for walks and this is great exercise for human and canine alike. When this is taken away through injury or illness, dogs can become anxious and destructive if they are not used to being confined.

Crate training is an excellent skill for all dogs to learn. Although easiest to begin at an early age, it is never too late. Done correctly, a crate can become a place of safety and comfort for your dog. If you want to participate in any dog sports with your dog, crate training is an essential skill to have, as your dog will be spending extended periods in their crate. Having a dog that can relax in their crate and save their energy for the sporting field is an advantage compared to the dog that is anxious and cannot relax in their crate. It is important for sporting dogs to be able to tone down their energy levels and rest between runs. Even if you do not have a sporting dog, crate training is a very useful skill for your dog to learn. At some point in most dog's lives (maybe even more than once), they will be faced with a period of confinement. This may mean crate rest, for a short or extended period of time. If your dog has never been faced with confinement in a crate, this can be very daunting for both you and your dog. Dogs need time and patience when learning about their crates, so this is best done when you do not have a time pressure, however, this is not always possible. If you are new at crate training, there are many resources out there, and Susan Garrett from Say Yes Dog Training in Canada has an excellent DVD of crate games to play with your dog to get them used to their crate, making it a positive experience for both you and your dog. [https://www.clickerdogs.com/crate\\_games.php](https://www.clickerdogs.com/crate_games.php)

When your dog's physical activity has been limited, we need to find other ways for them to pass the time and use their energy. Most dogs are very physical beings, but we often neglect their exceptional intelligence. When we can't tire our dogs out physically, we need a plan B. Mental stimulation is a fantastic way to tire your dog quickly. There are many ways we can do this. Teaching our dogs tricks is a good way, not only to get your dogs using their brain, but also helps to improve the bond between you and your dog. This is not necessarily tricks for our amusement (although this is certainly possible!), but these tricks can also form the foundations for some of your rehab. For example, simply learning to give paw is a good weight shifting exercise that you may use during rehab from injury, and is also one that can be built upon to increase difficulty. The number of tricks you can teach your dog is endless, and limited only by your imagination. There are many resources and YouTube videos out there to help you along your way. The "Do More With Your Dog" Academy in US have also developed trick dog titles, so that you can complete a number of tricks, and receive a title of Novice

Trick Dog (to start with), to acknowledge the dedication and skill that it takes to teach your dog. What a cool thing to add to the brag board!

<http://www.domorewithyourdog.com/trickdog/>

Enrichment feeding is also a great way to mentally stimulate your dog. All dogs eat every day, so this is a fantastic opportunity to engage your dog's brain, and tire them out. Enrichment feeding usually involves props or toys that either hide the food or makes the food difficult to access. They have to think about how to access the food and sometimes do some complex problem solving!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q1bTPuhVHY0>

We all know that our dogs like to sniff and smell. But do you know exactly how incredible a dogs nose is? Dogs have around 300 million smelling cells (olefactory cells) compared to our 5 million. The world literally smells different to them! Tapping into this incredible highly developed sense, and using their innate ability to sniff, you can teach your dog to use their nose to find objects or scents or even just food. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p7fXa2OccU>

The internet is a wonderful resource, and I encourage to get on line and start googling. The information here is just the beginning. If you can be calm and take the period of confinement in your stride, and use the time with your dog differently, then they will be able to pass the time much more calmly. You never know, once its over, you may have a better relationship with your dog than you started with!

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