



GIVE MORE
DOGS
MORE DAYS OF
PLAY

EXERCISE

Activities for dogs with osteoarthritis:

Exercise is an important part of managing osteoarthritis in dogs. It helps prevent muscle wasting and promotes joint health. Exercise must be tailored for each individual case and respectful of the limitations of mobility which results from their condition.

- In order to be beneficial, exercise should be controlled, gentle and pain-free.
- Regular short periods of exercise during the day, with rests in between, are recommended.
- An exercise programme helps keep muscles strong and joints mobile.
- It is helpful to start and finish your exercise session at a slower pace in order to allow your dog to warm up and cool down.
- It is crucial to dictate the length of the exercise session and not be tempted to keep going when your dog seems keen to do so.
- Please use the Exercise Grade Chart (EGC) overleaf to identify your dog's exercise grade, set their target grade and monitor their ongoing progress.

EXERCISE GRADE CHART*



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Grade	Objective	Instruction	
0	Normal exercise	Free exercise pattern Regular on and off lead	All terrains Contact with other dogs
1	Supervised free exercise	Free exercise off lead with owner keeping visible contact	Limited jumping opportunities Contact with other dogs handled carefully
2	Supervised and controlled exercise	Controlled off lead exercise with owner close to dog Sessions 30-60 min max	Flat terrain best, limited jumping No contact with other dogs off lead
3	Extended lead exercise (hill)	All exercise on extended lead Sessions 30-60 min max Steep slopes on a short lead	Contact with other dogs on lead Limit jumping
4	Extended lead exercise (flat)	All exercise on extended lead Sessions 20-40 min max Short (20m) often (x3,x4 day)	Contact with other dogs on the lead Avoid sloping terrain Limit jumping
5	Controlled lead exercise high level	Dog on normal lead at all times outdoors Sessions 15-30 min max Contact with other dogs ok if controlled	Can manage stairs on the lead Frequent x2, x4 daily Limit jumping Off lead in the house
6	Controlled lead exercise medium level	Dog on lead at all times outdoors Contact with other dogs ok if controlled Avoid stairs if convenient	Off lead in house Sessions 10-15 min max Frequent x2, x4 daily No jumping
7	Controlled lead exercise low level	Dog on short lead at all times outdoors Avoid contact with other dogs Avoid stairs	Off lead in house with care Sessions 5-10 min max Frequent x3, 4x daily No jumping
8	Assisted mobility	Confined to a small space Limited walking with sling in place and short lead	No stairs or jumping No contact with other dogs
9	Assisted mobility low impact	Confined to kennel/small space	Allowed to walk for toilet requirements only with sling in place and full support
10	No activity	Confined to small space/kennel Carried or moved with full support for toilet requirements	Passive manipulation of joints

* Reproduced courtesy of Professor Stuart Carmichael BVMS, MVM, DSAO, MRCVS.

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