Geriatric Therapy

Rehabilitation is useful in the following conditions seen in senior pets

1. Arthritis pain and discomfort
2. Rear leg weakness
3. Decreased activity tolerance
4. Incontinence

The goal of geriatric rehabilitation is to help make the aging pet as comfortable and as active as possible, for as long as possible. The first step in this program is to have your primary care veterinarian do a geriatric exam including blood work and x-rays. This is necessary to determine any underlying conditions that may need additional treatment, in addition to rehabilitation.

The main parts of the program consist of acupuncture and therapeutic laser to decrease pain. Once your pet is more comfortable, massage, supervised exercise, hydrotherapy and home exercises may be utilized.

**Acupuncture** is the insertion of very fine needles at specific points on the body. It works by neuromodulation of the nervous system and also causes release of endorphins which are the body’s pain relieving mechanisms.

**Therapeutic Laser** This is the newest type of treatment available for pets. Therapeutic laser works through light energy (photobiomodulation) to decrease pain and inflammation

**Massage treatment** helps relax tissues, increase circulation and loosen up tight soft tissues, which decreases pain and improves muscle and joint biomechanics.

**Therapeutic Exercise** The goals of therapeutic exercise (much like in human physical therapy) include comfortable range of motion, muscle development and strengthening, improved performance of daily activities, increased confidence and a reduction in lameness.

**Hydrotherapy** Water has dual benefits of pain management and rehabilitative properties. The buoyancy helps support the patient’s body weight so they can move with more ease. This decreases weight bearing on painful areas so they can work out more effectively. The warm temperature of the water improves circulation and eases pain. Through building strength and improving joint range of motion, hydrotherapy aids in pain management.