WEIGHT MANAGEMENT:

How can hydrotherapy help?

Obesity is becoming a major health problem in the human world and increasingly so in the pet world as well.

**How can you tell if your pet is overweight?**

1. You should be able to feel the ribs but not see them.
2. If you look at your pet from above, there should be a waistline.
3. From the side, the abdomen should angle up toward the hips

If your pet doesn’t meet these guidelines, then he or she is overweight. It is strongly recommended that your visit your primary care veterinarian. There may be medical reasons for the obesity and/or the obesity may be causing medical problems. Your veterinarian can verify that there are no underlying health issues contributing to the weight problem and recommend appropriate foods and diet.

Obesity can cause or contribute to orthopedic problems. Being overweight places undue stress on the joints which can increase the progression of arthritis and can be a factor in cranial cruciate tears. Elbow and hip dysplasia are additional examples of where excessive pounds can aggravate joint discomforts and deterioration.

**How do you manage your pet’s weight?**

Just as in humans, monitor the diet and increase exercise. That brings about the question of how to increase exercise if the dog has a hard time moving or is already arthritic. The answer is to exercise in water!

Hydrotherapy is our main strengthening and endurance exercise tool. In the water, body weight is supported, which reduces stress on the joints.

Also, the animal is able to move more freely in the water and is therefore able to exercise for longer periods of time, burning more calories.

You can track your pet’s weight here, or at your primary care veterinarian’s when you stop in to purchase food. This will give you immediate feedback on how your pet is doing and help with tracking your pet’s progress.