

Options for Arthritic Dogs

If your dog suffers from arthritis despite traditional therapies, consider the following:

Massage, useful for decreasing arthritic pain and increasing circulation, energy, and flexibility. Therapeutic exercise with a certified small animal physical rehabilitation practitioner. Arthritic dogs who are overweight and out of shape can quickly lose weight and gain cardiovascular fitness, reports Ross H. Palmer, DVM, of Colorado State University. Extracorporeal shock wave therapy uses high-pressure, acoustic waves focused at a small, specific site within the body to help heal tendon and bone problems. European and American studies on moderately to severely arthritic dogs showed ESWT increased range of motion, comfort, and weight-bearing, reports Darryl Millis, DVM, of the University of Tennessee. Transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation uses electrodes to flood the spinal cord with tingling, low-pain impulses, preventing big-pain impulses from getting through. TENS is under-used, Millis says. It can successfully manage pain and produce improvement in weight-bearing comparable to NSAIDs. However, it requires training to properly apply this form of therapy.