

My dog can walk again

Dr. Ed Mapes, Stonebridge Animal Hospital | Posted: Monday, September 22, 2014 8:00 am

Real frustration is watching an otherwise healthy and happy dog that is crippled with arthritis or interruptions of nerve transmission to the rear legs.

When I first saw a 12-year-old Labrador retriever named Sutton in the examination room, he was lying on the floor looking up at me while wagging his tail; the problem was he couldn't get up or walk on his own.

This great dog's rear legs were obviously atrophied and weakened due to lack of use. During our examination, he showed a distinct proprioceptive deficit bilaterally – he couldn't feel where his legs were placed – and the reflexes were greatly diminished.

He was on medications for pain but they were ineffective; his condition had steadily worsened over the months and years until the point where rising and walking had become almost impossible.

This is unfortunately a situation we see all too commonly: nice dogs without other health problems stricken with pain or interruption of nerve transmission that diminishes their quality of life. In past years, we would have been forced to consider euthanasia when the conditions became overwhelming or they simply could not walk at all. That's not the case anymore; now, we offer solutions that add years of quality life.

Severe hip dysplasia and spondylosis deformans are disorders that cause pain and difficulty walking. Patients can also suffer from severe constipation, vomiting and loss of bladder control.

Modern veterinary medicine has two means of providing relief in these cases: laser therapy and stem cell regenerative medicine. We are thrilled with the results of both modalities in our patients, bringing pain under control and restoring nerve transmission for dozens of patients in just the past year.

The laser therapy regimen begins with a series of six to eight treatments spaced approximately two days apart. This usually provides enough pain/inflammation/swelling relief to bring their conditions under control. Most of our patients are then maintained on one session every three to four weeks.



Dog Can Walk

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Sutton returned for his fourth treatment walking on his own from the car into the hospital, across the tile floors and into the exam room. He waited anxiously for a biscuit treat and nuzzled close to me as I knelt to greet him.

After his session, he was able to get up on his own and was ready to head for the door. His tail didn't stop wagging the whole time he was here.