

Canine Sprains and How Therapy Helps

Supporting Joint Health and Recovery

What is a Sprain?

A **sprain** is an injury to a **ligament**, the tough band of tissue that connects bones together at a joint. Sprains occur when a ligament is stretched or torn, often due to sudden twisting, impact, or overextension.

Common Causes:

- Slipping or skidding on hard surfaces
- Sudden twisting or awkward landings
- Overexertion during play, agility, or running
- Trauma or falls
- Compensating for weakness in another limb or joint

Common Signs:

- Limping or favouring one leg
- Swelling or heat around a joint
- Pain when the joint is moved or touched
- Stiffness after rest or exercise
- Reluctance to walk, jump, or climb stairs

Areas Often Affected:

- Carpal (wrist) and tarsal (hock) joints
- Stifle (knee) ligaments
- Toes and digits (especially in agility or working dogs)

How Therapy Helps (Osteopathy and Massage)

Osteopathy and massage therapy play a valuable role in supporting dogs recovering from sprains. These therapies focus on improving joint mobility, reducing pain, and restoring overall balance to prevent compensatory strain on other parts of the body.

Therapeutic Benefits:

- **Reduces joint stiffness & discomfort:** manipulation helps restore normal range of motion.
- **Relieves muscle tension:** Loosens tight muscles that work harder to protect or stabilise the injured joint.
- **Improves circulation & lymph flow:** Encourages faster healing by increasing blood supply and reducing swelling.
- **Restores body alignment:** Corrects compensatory patterns that can cause secondary pain or imbalance.
- **Decreases inflammation:** Promotes relaxation and helps calm irritated tissues.
- **Supports joint stability:** Encourages proper muscle engagement for balanced movement.

Together, **osteopathy and massage** offer a comprehensive, non-invasive approach that complements veterinary care and supports the body's natural recovery process.

Aftercare and Prevention

- Always seek **veterinary assessment** before beginning any therapy.
- Allow time for **rest and controlled movement** as the joint heals.
- Maintain a healthy **weight** to reduce strain on joints.
- Consider **regular maintenance therapy**
- Use **supportive flooring and avoid slippery surfaces** where possible.

Therapy helps dogs recover from sprains by reducing pain, improving mobility, and restoring confidence in movement.