

# Soft Tissue Injuries & Myalgia in Dogs - Understanding Muscle Pain & How Therapy Can Help

## What is Myalgia?

**Myalgia** means **muscle pain**. In dogs, it often develops due to **overuse, strain, trauma, or compensation** for another problem such as joint disease or poor posture.

The term **soft tissue injuries** includes damage to **muscles, tendons, ligaments, and fascia** - the supportive tissues that keep the body stable and mobile. These injuries are common in active dogs, working breeds, and pets recovering from other conditions.

## Causes of Myalgia and Soft Tissue Injury

- Overexertion during play, running, or agility work
- Slipping, twisting, or sudden impact
- Repetitive movement or poor conditioning
- Compensating for joint pain, arthritis, or lameness
- Prolonged rest or inactivity leading to muscle weakness
- Post-surgical muscle tension or imbalance

Myalgia may also appear **secondary to stress, inflammation, or postural imbalance**, making early recognition and support important.

## Signs and Symptoms

- Local tenderness or sensitivity to touch
- Stiffness after rest or exercise
- Shortened stride or uneven gait
- Reluctance to jump, climb, or stretch
- Decreased performance or enthusiasm for activity
- Muscle twitching or spasms
- Visible swelling or tightness in one area
- General fatigue or irritability

Because dogs often hide pain, signs may be subtle and noticed only as changes in behaviour or movement.

## How Therapy Helps

**Osteopathy and massage therapy** are highly effective for treating myalgia and soft tissue injuries. These gentle, hands-on approaches work to **reduce pain, improve circulation, and restore healthy muscle function**.

## Therapeutic Benefits:

- **Releases muscle tension:** Relieves tightness, spasms, and trigger points within affected muscles.
- **Improves circulation:** Enhances blood flow and oxygen delivery to promote healing.
- **Reduces inflammation & discomfort:** Calms irritated tissues & supports the body's natural repair process.
- **Restores movement and flexibility:** Encourages healthy range of motion and prevents stiffness.
- **Corrects compensatory patterns:** Addresses imbalances that develop when dogs shift weight off sore areas.
- **Supports relaxation and recovery:** Promotes calmness, reduces stress hormones, and helps the nervous system reset.

By combining **osteopathic techniques** (to improve structure and alignment) with **massage therapy** (to ease muscular restriction), therapy provides a complete approach to managing soft tissue health.

## Aftercare and Prevention

- Follow your **veterinarian's guidance** for diagnosis and treatment.
- Provide **rest and gradual return to activity** to prevent re-injury.
- Maintain **regular conditioning and warm-up routines** before exercise.
- Include **gentle stretching or mobility exercises** under professional guidance.
- Keep **therapy sessions consistent** to support ongoing tissue health.
- Ensure **balanced nutrition and hydration** to aid recovery.
- Monitor for **recurring stiffness or behavioural changes** that may signal discomfort.

Therapy helps dogs recover from myalgia and soft tissue injuries by relieving pain, restoring mobility, and improving overall comfort and performance.