

# Lameness and Limping in Dogs - Understanding the Causes and How Therapy Can Help

## What is Lameness?

Is a general term describing any **change in the way a dog walks or moves** due to pain, injury or structural imbalance. It can affect one or more limbs and may appear suddenly (acute) or develop gradually (chronic).

Lameness is a **symptom, not a diagnosis**, and identifying the underlying cause is essential for effective treatment and recovery.

## Common Causes of Lameness

- **Soft tissue injuries:** Strains, sprains, or muscle tears
- **Joint issues:** Arthritis, hip or elbow dysplasia, luxating patella
- **Trauma:** Fractures, ligament damage, or dislocations
- **Paw problems:** Cuts, foreign objects, cracked pads, or nail injuries
- **Neurological issues:** Nerve compression or spinal problems
- **Compensatory movement:** Overuse of one limb due to pain elsewhere

## Signs and Symptoms

- Limping or favouring one leg
- Stiffness after rest or activity
- Uneven gait or shortened stride
- Reluctance to jump, climb, or run
- Pain, swelling, or heat in a limb or joint
- Whining or restlessness after exercise
- Licking or chewing a specific area

Lameness maybe intermittent, worsen after activity, or appear subtle - especially in chronic or compensatory cases.

## How Therapy Helps

**Osteopathy and massage therapy** can be valuable tools in managing lameness, both as part of recovery from injury and as ongoing support for chronic conditions. These therapies focus on restoring **Balance, Comfort, Strength and Mobility** throughout the body.

## Therapeutic Benefits:

- **Relieves muscle tension:** Eases tight or overworked muscles that develop from compensating for pain.
- **Improves joint mobility:** Gentle manipulation helps maintain flexibility and range of motion.
- **Encourages circulation and healing:** Increases blood flow to reduce inflammation and promote repair.
- **Supports postural balance:** Addresses uneven weight distribution and helps prevent secondary strain.
- **Reduces pain and discomfort:** Soft tissue work helps calm the nervous system and improve comfort.
- **Enhances overall movement:** Promotes smoother, more balanced motion as recovery progresses.

Therapy is always tailored to the dog's individual needs, working alongside veterinary care to ensure a safe, effective recovery plan.

## Aftercare and Prevention

- Always consult your **veterinarian** to identify the cause of lameness before beginning therapy.
- Provide **adequate rest** and avoid overexertion during recovery.
- Introduce **gentle, controlled exercise** to rebuild strength and coordination.
- Maintain a **healthy weight** to reduce strain on joints and muscles.
- Ensure **regular therapy or maintenance sessions** for ongoing support.
- Check paws and nails regularly for signs of injury or irritation.
- Provide **non-slip flooring** and a comfortable resting area.

Therapy supports dogs experiencing lameness by **reducing pain, restoring mobility, and promoting balanced, comfortable movement for a better quality of life.**