

BENEFITS AND RISKS OF REHABILITATION AND HYDROTHERAPY

Benefits of Rehabilitation and Aquatic therapy

Rehabilitation may include a variety of treatments, including: range of motion, stretching, therapeutic exercise, balance and proprioceptive training, strengthening, endurance training, sensory re-education, gait retraining electrical stimulation, ultrasound, Laser therapy, functional training, heat, cold and hydrotherapy.

Rehabilitation and Hydrotherapy benefits may:

- Increase muscle mass and strength
- Improve range of motion and flexibility
- Improve overall endurance
- Assist with gait training
- Improve coordination and balance
- Improve neuromuscular function
- Improve cardiac and respiratory function
- Reduce edema
- Improve superficial circulation
- Assist with weight loss and weight control by increasing metabolism

Risk to dogs of rehabilitation and aquatic therapy

Rehabilitation and aquatic therapy in dogs is an evolving field, and scientific evidence to measure effectiveness is gradually increasing. BARC are committed to keeping up to date with any new advances in our field. Rehabilitation and hydrotherapy for fitness have associated risks. The risks to your pet vary based on the medical history and condition of your pet as well as the treatment modality that is employed. The following potential risk factors are listed for both you and your dog. Most importantly, despite careful supervision there remains a risk of drowning for you or your pet albeit highly unlikely.

Risk to humans of Rehabilitation and Aquatic therapy

- Slips and/or falls resulting in injury
- Injury during transfers of your dog into or out of the pool
- Drowning
- Ear infections
- Skin rash
- Dog bites

Contraindications for Aquatic therapy programs include:

- Fever
- Cardiac conditions/instability
- Abnormal blood pressure (hypotension or hypertension)
- Infectious diseases
- Contagious skin rashes
- Perforated eardrums or severe ear infection
- Open wounds
- Unstable epilepsy/seizures
- Severe asthma or uncontrolled respiratory illness
- Late stage or high risk pregnancy
- Aggression
- Water phobia/panic

IMPORTANT – the aforementioned list of contraindications is not exhaustive and there may be other conditions identified by your veterinarian that would prevent treatment. This is one reason we require veterinary pre-authorisation for any rehabilitation, hydrotherapy or fitness/swimming program.