



A Customer Reports Back...

I adopted a 3 year old German Shepherd named Thor with a pre-existing injury to his left hind leg and paw, caused by stepping on a broken bottle that severed an artery and damaged his tibial nerve. The injury caused him to walk on the rear of his paw instead of on his toes. In turn, this “flat footed” stance caused an abrasion leading to an open wound on the metatarsal pad. He was reluctant to stand on his left hind leg; he would use it when running or walking but would hold his leg up off the ground while standing still.

Our veterinarian suggested looking into aqua therapy thinking the motion would strengthen the leg. He was unsure as to why Thor was favoring the leg, whether it was due to the original injury, pain in the paw, or neurological in nature. He also suggested looking into laser therapy to increase the healing of the slow healing pad.

While researching the recommended therapies, I came across a case study done by Jennifer Brooks PT, CCRP, owner of *Horse 'n Hound Physical Therapy* in Hollis, NH. The paw injury case study she had reported was very similar to Thor's paw pad wound and the facility had an underwater treadmill. I contacted Jen and arranged for a consultation.

At my initial appointment, Jen, and Chris VT/RA (veterinary technician/ rehab assistant) looked over Thor's Injury, I went over what I was told regarding the original injury, and we discussed therapy treatment options and expectations. I was a little concerned when setting up this appointment because Thor possessed some behavioral issues. Thor was nervous around new people and animals, and not feeling 100% well, only made this worse. Jen and her staff were very knowledgeable with this type of behavior, making us both feel a little more at ease. Thor did as well as he could and was able to settle down with the way they handled him.

After the consultation and subsequent discussion they instructed me as to the best methods to keep the wound clean and dressed, I would change the dressing twice daily and leave it unwrapped at night to let the air in. This could be done only

because Thor had shown no interest in licking the affected area, thus indicating that he probably has no sensation of his foot. Jennifer suggested that we start six weeks of physical therapy consisting of aqua therapy (underwater treadmill) and home exercise program to strengthen his involved hind limb (it was significantly smaller in muscle girth than his healthy right hind leg). After Thor got his energy out on the treadmill, we would worked him specifically at exercises to strengthen, improve his coordination and balance on his injured leg.

Jennifer also suggest that I incorporate daily laser therapy on the open wound to stimulate the healing. Therefore I rented a SpectraVet Zues laser from *Horse 'n Hound Physical Therapy* (HnHPT) Having no knowledge of this type of treatment I will say I was a little skeptical as to the benefits but figured that if there was a chance it would help, I was all in. We started doing the prescribed home exercises to our daily home routine. Upon agreement to rent the laser from HnHPT, I was trained on its proper use to treat his injured paw twice daily, morning and night during bandage changes. We also continued our weekly underwater treadmill and physical therapy visits. Each week, Jen and her team added additional exercises and lengthened the time spent on the treadmill. In turn we would add these new exercise treatments to our home routine. Thor's behavior and comfort level improved by leaps and bounds during this time; he was finding his groove and clearly feeling better. He loved the water, would toss around his toy and truck as fast and as long as he could. He really got the hang of using the treadmill and was showing great improvement at weight bearing on his left hind limb again.

I cannot say enough good things about this therapy and rehabilitation facility or Jen, Chris and the rest of the team at *Horse 'n Hound*. The positive changes I saw in Thor's wound and the strengthening of his hind leg was incredible. I am a believer that the laser treatment was a big reason why the wound closed so quickly. Thor, after just a few treadmill sessions, had begun to stand on all four legs; he continued putting full weight on all four of his legs as he continues to do today.

Due to the original nerve injury he will always be susceptible to re-injuring the metatarsal pad, but Jen was able to make suggestions and show us how to limit these chances and react quickly to the first sign of skin abrasion. Those changes that we were able to make in Thor in such a relatively short time have certainly helped him refrain from additional injuries.

I would highly recommend to anyone in need of physical therapy and low impact exercises for their dog, to absolutely visit Jen and her staff at *Horse 'n Hound Physical Therapy*, in Hollis, NH, and take advantage of all they have to offer. I have to admit it was challenging for me to undertake all the care that Thor required. I

would not have been able to do it without the support and the instruction from Jen and her team. Both Thor and I were mentally and physically tired after each and every appointment. This was not a drop off where someone else would fix his issues; I wanted the knowledge to be part of the solution and they gave me the tools to succeed. I have enclosed the weekly photos taken of the wound on Thor's pad so you can see the transformation and healing that took place weekly.

Thanks again for all the hard work and keep helping those most in need,

--David Hughes & Thor, 2015



Week 1



Week 2



Week 3



Week 4



Week 5



Week 6



Now...

