



# Canine Hamstring & Gluteal Pain

When dealing with a dog with hamstring and/or pain there is many factors to consider. The dogs' hamstrings and gluteals are an integral part of your dogs ability to move. A major part of your dogs engine; the gluteals and hamstrings are huge muscles that make up your dogs hip and hind leg. Your dogs power comes from these large muscle groups. It is very easy to work the gluteals so hard that they sustain small injuries and hold muscle adhesions, that you as a handler might overlook as just some stiffness or slowness to warm up. Because these muscle groups consist of several individual muscles it's easy for the group to pick up the slack if one of the muscles has a restriction within. Due to the depth of the tissue as well, it's easy for handlers to be lacking in proper warm up and cool down needed to keep this tissue in tip top shape. As these large muscles gain pain, they shorten, as they shorten they not only effect the joints below in the hind leg but they can pull on the balance of the hip and the pelvis can rock back. This is a posture that can vary in severity but at its worst will create a rotated pelvis.

## Tips for working with hamstring and gluteal pain:

- Have your dogs postural balance checked.
- Application of heat (can be used before and after work). Use 12-18 min of heat.
- Therapy products that increase circulation.
- Light to moderate massage using your hand or if the dog allows it a massage mitt to increase circulation and stimulate nerves.
- Use the hip rock, quick tail pull and tummy lift technique to warm the tissue and mobilize the joints before work.
- Try not to force the back, hip, or hind leg into a static posture with training aids that force a shape, the muscle will not be able to have full range of motion and this will only encourage more stiffness.
- Use hind leg dangle bracelets to stimulate lift and reach.

## Exercises:

Ensure your dog has an adequate warm up and cool down. Muscles need that circulation to function at their best. Encourage the hind leg to move during this time and work through full range of motion.

## Inhand work

- Poles
- Cavaletti
- Turn on haunches
- Labyrinth
- Hill work; up hills, down hills, and transverse (across) hills. Gait transitions on the hill, going up or down the grade.
- Backing: both straight line and circles
- Zig Zag laterals
- Figure 8 or small diameter serpentine
- Flexion work; True Flexion, Counter Flexion, Serpentine, Spirals, Figure 8's
- Lateral work; leg yield, Haunches in and out, Hip Yield, Half Pass, Side Pass.
- Transitions; both up and down as well as within the gait. Gait

transitions in a straight line and on a circle.

- Backing; in a straight line and on a circle
- Roll backs, pirouette work in the walk or trot
- Gymnastic jumping

## Range of motion exercises

Performed before and after work, as well as safe for the dog that has been taken out of work altogether.

- Quick Tail Pull
- Stifle Isometric
- Hip/Rib Rock
- Foreleg Lifted Rock Back
- Tummy Tuck

## Stretches

- Tummy Tuck
- Stifle Isometric
- Rib/Hip Rock
- Hindleg Stretch
- Tail Pull
- Quick Tail Pull
- Lateral Hind End Tuck

Do you need to get on the fast track to getting your dogs' fitness InHand?

I know how busy life can be, and I know we all want to do the best we can for our dog. If you don't have the time to do the complete program listed above with your dog, it's better to do a little work rather than skip it all. Choose one exercise a day from the exercises, range of motion and stretch list above. Even if you rotate through the above list of work on a daily basis, you will be making a positive change and helping your animal. Choose to do something every day, no matter how small will be a step forward in your dogs wellness program. When we work our dog in the peak and valley type of program with a ton of work for a few days and then nothing for a time, we may actually be doing more harm than good.

Steady work towards your dogs postural goals will bring the results you want, and the more time you can devote the quicker you will get there, however slow and steady will win the race as well.

**\*\*NOTE: Therapy is not a replacement for Veterinary Care.\*\***

