



Canine Jaw & Poll Pain

When dealing with a dog with jaw and or poll pain there are many factors to consider. The dogs jaw and poll is an integral part of your dogs' ability to move. A dog with jaw, hyoid, or poll pain may show symptoms of head shaking, reaction to touching of the jaw and ears, stiffness in the neck, and resistance to flexion or extension in the upper neck and poll. Restriction can show up in the way the dog moves in the shoulder because of the attachment to the shoulder and thorax of the long muscles that originate on the poll, jaw and hyoid (region located within the jowl). The dog may have a shortend foreleg stride or lack shoulder range of motion. A postural assessment of your dogs jaw and poll will allow you to understand what is happening with the dog and give some insight into what you are seeing in the forehead movement. The poll is often used as a lever to rock the weight forward off a painful hind end, back or SI. This region can also be overused as well when a dogs back and hip flexor fatigues, the dog uses this area to help pull the back up when hind end fatigue occurs.

Tips for working with jaw and poll pain:

- Have your dogs teeth checked.
- Check collars, harnesses or any other tack or devise that is placed in this region for fit.
- 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 neck rock and poll nod technique to warm the tissue and mobilize the joints before work.

Exercises:

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

Inhand work:

- Poles
- Cavaletti
- Turn on forehead
- 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 serpentines
- Flexion work: True flexion, Counter flexion, Serpentines, 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

Range of Motion Exercises

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

- Neck/Rib Rock
- Poll Nod
- Wither Rock
- Foreleg wither lift

Stretches

- Cookie stretches
- Clock stretch
- Ridgway hyoid stretch
- Poll nod
- Neck/Rib Rock
- Wither Rock
- Foreleg stretch
- Foreleg Sternal Lift

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.****

