

SOFT TISSUE INJURIES IN DOGS

Sprains, strains and ligament injuries can cause pain and limit your dog's movement.

Early assessment and appropriate treatment give your dog the best chance of a full recovery and help prevent further injury.

PAIN CAN
BE SUBTLE –
DON'T DELAY
SEEKING HELP.

? WHAT IS A SOFT TISSUE INJURY?

Soft tissue injuries affect muscles, tendons, ligaments and the surrounding connective tissues.

They can occur suddenly after trauma or develop gradually from overuse.

Any lameness or change in movement should be checked by a vet.



! Rest may help mild injuries, but some need veterinary care. Never give human pain relief unless prescribed by your vet.

💡 DID YOU KNOW?

- 🐾 Dogs often hide pain and may continue to use the injured leg.
- 🐾 Some injuries heal with rest and rehab, while others need surgery.
- 🐾 Early treatment can reduce pain and speed up recovery.
- 🐾 Re-injury is common if the injury is not fully healed.

COMMON CAUSES



Sudden trauma
(impacts, falls,
collisions)



Overexertion
or strenuous
exercise



Twisting or
awkward
movements



Slippery
surfaces or
rough terrain



Poor
conditioning
or older age

Common injuries include muscle strains, ligament sprains or tears, tendon injuries and bruising.

1 RECOGNISE THE SIGNS

Watch for any changes in your dog, including:

- 🐾 Limping or favouring a leg
- 🐾 Stiffness or reluctance to move
- 🐾 Reduced activity or play
- 🐾 Difficulty getting up or lying down
- 🐾 Swelling, heat or tenderness
- 🐾 Muscle tightness or spasms
- 🐾 Licking or biting the area
- 🐾 Changes in gait or posture



! If symptoms are severe or don't improve within 24–48 hours, see your vet.

2 HOW IS IT DIAGNOSED?

Your veterinarian will:

- 🐾 Perform a physical and orthopaedic examination
- 🐾 Assess your dog's gait and range of motion
- 🐾 Check for pain, swelling or instability
- 🐾 May recommend imaging such as X-rays or ultrasound
- 🐾 Discuss your dog's activity and recent events



Accurate diagnosis helps determine the best treatment and recovery plan.

3 TREATMENT OPTIONS

Treatment depends on the type and severity of the injury.

- 🐾 Rest and activity restriction
- 🐾 Pain relief and anti-inflammatories
- 🐾 Cold therapy (early) then heat therapy (later)
- 🐾 Physiotherapy and controlled rehabilitation
- 🐾 Supportive bandaging or bracing if needed
- 🐾 Surgery may be required for severe tears or instability



Follow your vet's instructions carefully and complete all recommended treatment.

4 AT HOME CARE

Help your dog heal by:

- 🐾 Keeping your dog quiet and confined as advised
- 🐾 Short, controlled leash walks for toileting only
- 🐾 Providing a soft, comfortable resting area
- 🐾 Preventing jumping on/off furniture or in/out of the car
- 🐾 Using ramps for access if needed
- 🐾 Monitoring for swelling or pain



! Do not allow off-lead exercise or play until your vet says it is safe.

5 REHABILITATION & RECOVERY

A gradual approach helps your dog return to normal activity:

- 🐾 Follow your vet's rehabilitation plan
- 🐾 Gentle range of motion exercises as advised
- 🐾 Physiotherapy (laser, massage, hydrotherapy) can aid healing
- 🐾 Increase activity slowly – too soon can cause re-injury
- 🐾 Most soft tissue injuries take several weeks to months to fully heal



Patience and consistency are key to a strong, lasting recovery.

6 PREVENTION TIPS

Help reduce the risk of soft tissue injuries:

- 🐾 Keep your dog fit and well-conditioned
- 🐾 Warm up before exercise
- 🐾 Avoid sudden increases in intensity
- 🐾 Use appropriate surfaces for exercise
- 🐾 Maintain a healthy weight
- 🐾 Check paws and nails regularly
- 🐾 Use proper equipment for activity and sport



Strong muscles and good conditioning help protect joints, ligaments and tendons.

7 WHEN TO SEE YOUR VET URGENTLY

Seek immediate veterinary attention if:

- 🐾 Your dog cannot put weight on the leg
- 🐾 There is severe pain or swelling
- 🐾 There is a 'pop' or sudden injury
- 🐾 The limb looks deformed
- 🐾 There is muscle spasming or collapse
- 🐾 Symptoms worsen or do not improve within 48 hours



Quick treatment improves outcomes and reduces the risk of long-term damage.

8 RECOVERY REMINDERS



Follow your
vet's plan
carefully



Rest today
for a stronger
tomorrow



Rehab helps
restore strength
and function



Complete
treatment for
the best results

With time, care and the right treatment, most dogs make a full recovery.

9 THE GOOD NEWS

Most soft tissue injuries heal well with appropriate care.

- 🐾 Early diagnosis
- 🐾 Pain management
- 🐾 Controlled rest
- 🐾 Rehabilitation
- 🐾 And a gradual return to activity

Help your dog get back to doing what they love – pain free!

