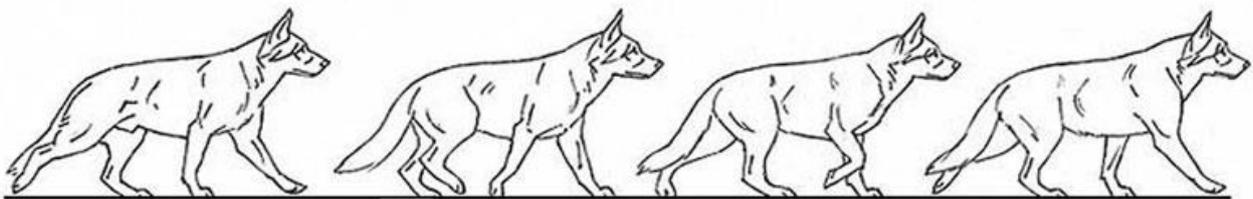


Controlled Slow Lead Walking

Controlled lead walking is one of the most under used, yet simplest method of dog walking. Many owners believe that dogs running off the lead and chasing balls will give dog's adequate exercise to keep them physically healthy, which is **not** the case. Incorporating controlled and slow lead walking into your weekly routine can help to reduce injury and disease progression, build muscle and help owners to identify any physical problems more readily. This method is also one of the most important aspects of canine rehabilitation and is crucial post injury and / or surgery.

What is controlled, slow lead walking? – This method of walking is where the dog is walked on a lead, to heel with their heads raised and at a slow pace.



WALK

Why should you do this? – It is very easy for dogs to hide painful pathologies by moving at a faster pace. At a faster pace physical compensations are easily used and dogs will often off load limbs / skip / hop. When a dog does this the affected limb becomes more and more atrophied (reduced musculature), and then the physical problem becomes worse and worse. By walking at a slow pace you are encouraging the dog to place and weight bear through each limb on the ground individually. This means that the dog is building musculature evenly through each leg. You are also encouraging the dog to shift their weight back onto the hind quarters and use their legs more effectively creating a larger range of motion and stride length. Slow lead walking is hard work for even physically healthy dogs and so should be incorporated slowly into a dog's regime E.g. Five minutes added every two weeks. **The slower the dog is walked the better.**

Walking for Rehabilitation - Dogs with injuries / post-surgery will display muscular atrophy (weakness) and lameness in the affected limbs. The individual placement of the controlled walking increases the stance phase of each limb and therefore the load time which aids to encourage the dog to use the affected limbs. In effect you are re-educating the gait pattern to incorporate the affected limbs once again. **If you allow dogs to wander around on the lead or off lead before they are ready during their rehabilitation process you could do more damage!**

Notes:

- Retractable leads are not appropriate for slow lead walking as they do not allow for enough control even when they are restricted.
- Dogs should not be pulling ahead on the lead, if you have problems with this consult a behaviourist or try a harness or halti.