



canine arthritis management

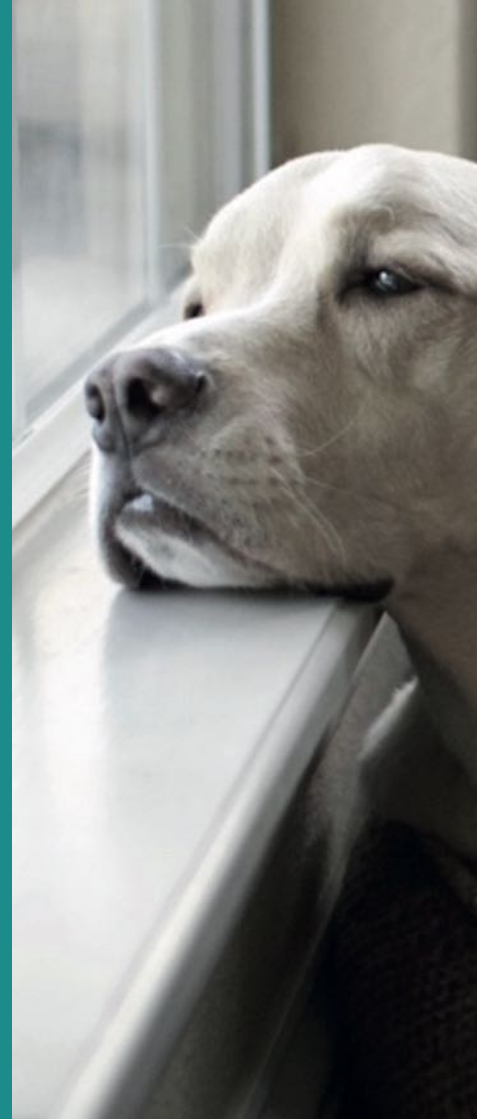
WHAT IS ARTHRITIS?

WHY DOES MY DOG HAVE IT? AND WHAT CAN I DO?



ARTHRITIS IN DOGS

- Arthritis is a very common condition that affects all animals that have joints
- 80% of dogs over the age of 8 years old have arthritis in one or more joints
- It isn't just a disease found in older dogs, as dogs of less than 1 year old can also have arthritis

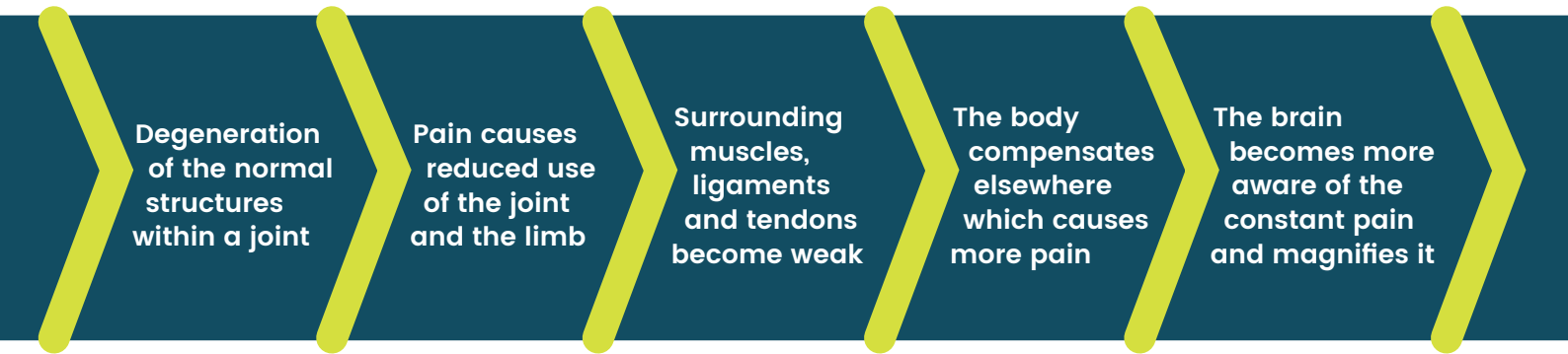




“IF IT WASN'T FOR THE PAIN, ARTHRITIS WOULD NOT BE SUCH A PROBLEM.”

Arthritis is the most common cause of chronic pain in dogs.

If this pain is not addressed, the dog will use the painful joints less, which will lead to the loss of the muscle strength surrounding that joint, and a weakening of that limb.



Degeneration
of the normal
structures
within a joint

Pain causes
reduced use
of the joint
and the limb

Surrounding
muscles,
ligaments
and tendons
become weak

The body
compensates
elsewhere
which causes
more pain

The brain
becomes more
aware of the
constant pain
and magnifies it

A dog will “cope” initially, but over time these painful, dysfunctional joints and weak limbs will result in your dog being unable to walk without severe pain, and may lead to you having to say goodbye.

Arthritis is a disease we are familiar with, as it's also the major cause of chronic pain in humans.

We too can suffer from painful joints, and have to learn how to manage the condition, as there is no cure for arthritis.

But there is so much that we can do to reduce the risks of getting it, slow the progression, and control the pain.

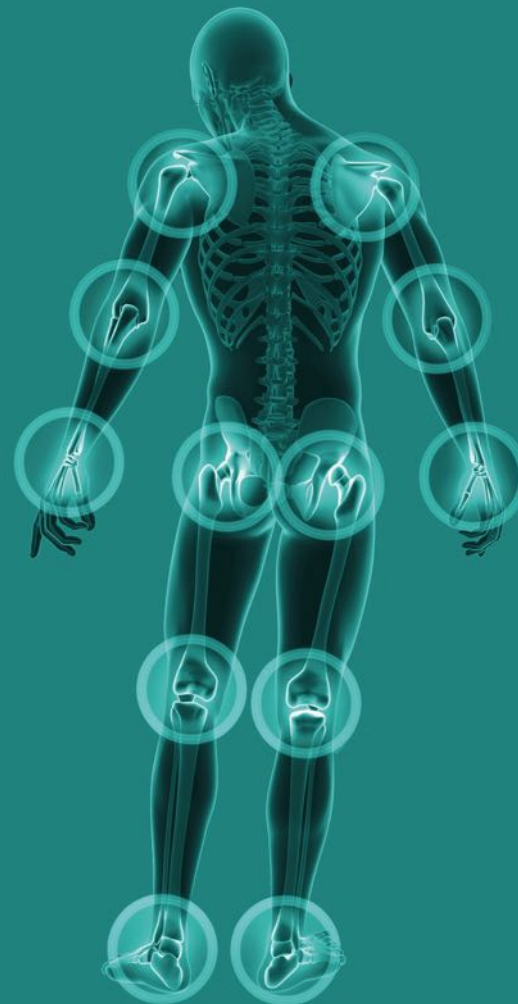


It is estimated that around 10 million people in the UK alone suffer from arthritis.

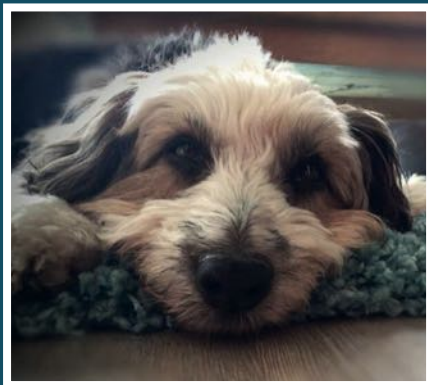
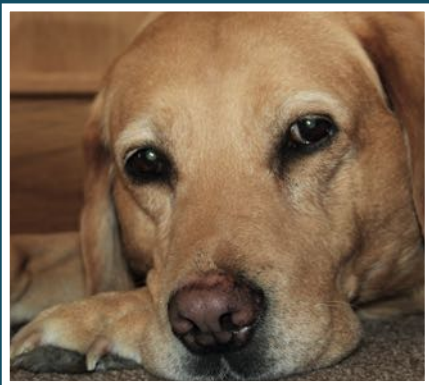
It is a major drain on the economy and our health services.

Human patients are encouraged to manage their disease through lifestyle change, nutrition, weight control, exercise and pain control.

We hope to help you do the same for your dog in our series of short booklets.



**“BUT HE DOESN'T YELP, CRY OR LIMP.
HE CAN'T HAVE ARTHRITIS, BECAUSE HE IS NOT IN PAIN!”**



CHRONIC PAIN

Arthritis causes **CHRONIC PAIN** which is different from the pain that you would recognise.

Yelping, crying and limping is associated with **ACUTE PAIN**.

ACUTE PAIN is short, sharp, and designed to make us react, to protect the bearer from further harm.

For example, putting your hand in fire, causes **ACUTE PAIN** which will make you remove it immediately to prevent further damage.





CHRONIC PAIN is a long-term pain. It waxes and wanes. You can't "get away" from it. It is something you try and **COPE** with.

CHRONIC PAIN is harder to identify, and harder to manage.

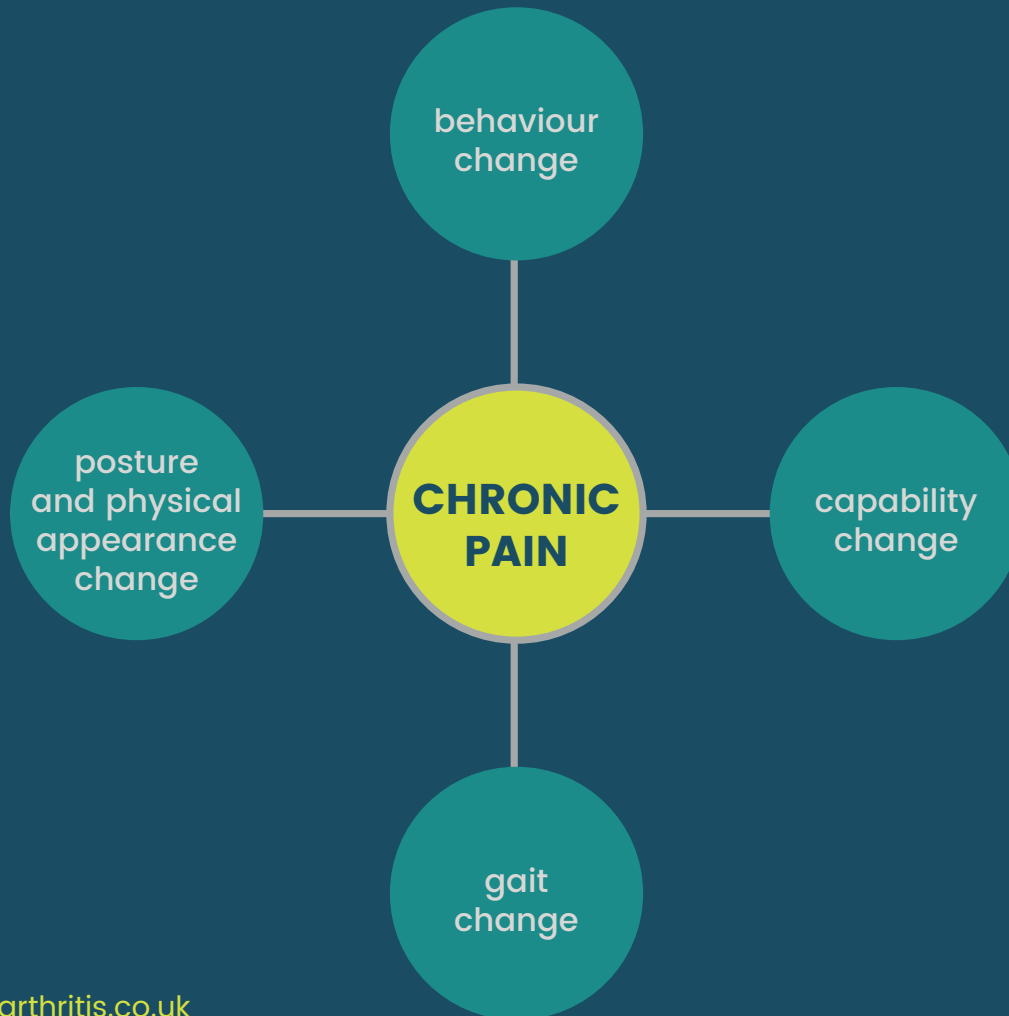
UNDERSTANDING ARTHRITIC PAIN

Arthritis is a major cause of **CHRONIC PAIN** with **ACUTE PAIN** flares which are generally short lived, lasting for 5-7 days, with a return to normal after they wane. This is when you will see your dog limp, or show obvious signs of discomfort.

Arthritic dogs generally show more subtle signs of pain, because they are attempting to **COPE** with it.

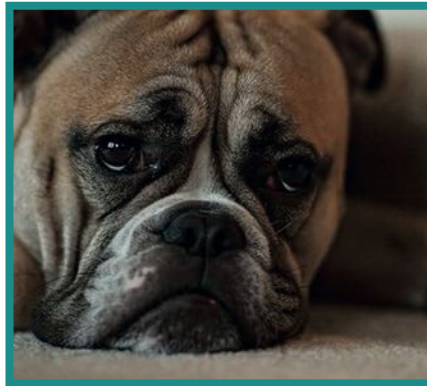
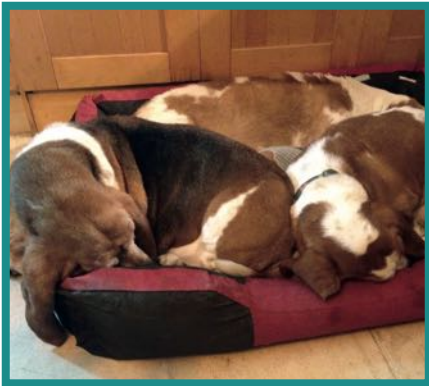
These subtle signs of pain fall into four categories:

- 1. Changes in behaviour**
- 2. Changes in posture**
- 3. Changes in how they move**
- 4. Changes in their physical appearance**



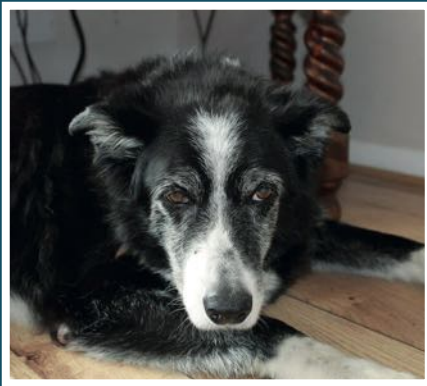
CHANGES IN BEHAVIOUR

- They may not be so enthusiastic to go out
- They may not play, walk or run for as long
- They may seem to tire easily
- They may not greet you anymore, or sit with you
- They may seem to have become moody, angry or more anxious
- They may be less tolerant of other dogs



CHANGES IN POSTURE

- They may not be able to stand for long, before sinking into a sit or a lay down position
- They may arch their back, or hardly raise their head
- They may not use their tail so much
- They may stand in a wonky, unbalanced way



CHANGES IN HOW THEY MOVE

- They may not run as much, preferring to trot or walk
- They may slow down when getting into a sit or a laying position
- They may show a lot of effort when getting into a stand
- They may stumble or trip over their own feet
- You may hear them drag their feet, or see them tremble
- They may not be able to toilet as easily, and poo on the move



CHANGES IN PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

- They may become front end heavy, meaning they are built like a body builder around the front legs, but become thinner around the hind limbs
- They may develop a big neck and mane
- Their coat may change, becoming dull and patchy
- Their feet may change, with some nails being very worn down, and some pads changing shape

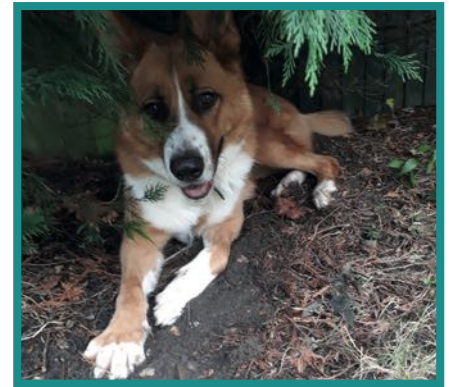


HOW DO YOU KNOW YOUR DOG MAY HAVE ARTHRITIS?

The changes that you are seeing are due to your dog **COPING** with arthritis.



- They may change the way they run, walk, sit or lay to not use the painful joints
- Their physical appearance may change as they bare less weight on painful limbs and more weight on good limbs
- Their behaviour may change as they are trying to make a more comfortable lifestyle
- Living with pain will affect many areas of the bearer's life



WHY DO DOGS GET ARTHRITIS?

There are many reasons why dogs get arthritis. And most of them are not your fault.

- Some breeds are genetically more prone to developing arthritis as their joints do not form perfectly when they are young
- Some breeds are more likely to get arthritis due to the lifestyle they lead



- Some dogs get arthritis due to joint injuries or diseases they sustain during their active or competitive sports lives.



CAUSES OF ARTHRITIS

To have long-term healthy joints you need normal forces being applied to normal joints.

This means an appropriate lifestyle and an appropriate body weight on well-formed healthy joints.



CAUSES OF ARTHRITIS

Arthritis is caused by normal forces on abnormal joints, as seen with breeds that develop joint defects such as elbow dysplasia, hip dysplasia, or cruciate disease.



CAUSES OF ARTHRITIS

It is also caused by abnormal forces on normal joints, as seen in dogs that carry too much weight, or who exercise in a repetitive, high impact manner.



CAUSES OF ARTHRITIS

Arthritis can also be due to traumatic injuries such as falls and crashes, or due to infections that get into the joint, or diseases such as immune-mediated arthritis.



ARTHRITIS MANAGEMENT

No matter the cause of the arthritis, the most essential component of successful management is identifying it early and working with your vet to diagnose it correctly.



WORKING WITH YOUR VET

By noting the signs of discomfort, and identifying the joints affected, a comprehensive plan to manage the disease can be created.

The long-term outlook of managing this disease successfully is always better when the joints are still functional.



ARTHRITIS MANAGEMENT

The second most essential component to successful management of an arthritic dog is to control the pain to the best of your ability.

This will encourage your dog to stand, sit, lay, walk and run in the appropriate comfortable way.



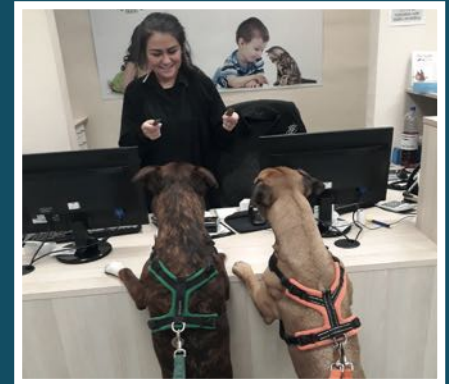
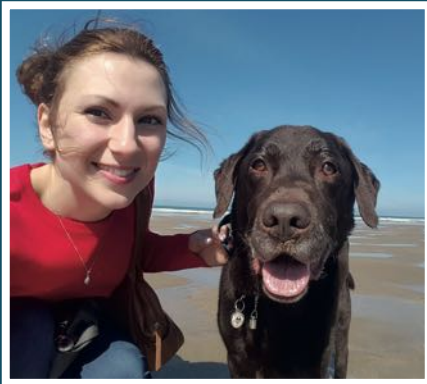
It will encourage them to exercise which will maintain their muscle and stamina.

This will, in the long term, protect the joints from further deterioration.



ARTHRITIS MANAGEMENT

The third essential component is learning to monitor your dog's level of comfort and ability to move with ease and to communicate your findings to your vet.



Through being more observant of the changes in behaviour, posture, movement and appearance you can detect when they are doing well and your management is appropriate, or when they seem to be doing less well and your management plan needs to be reassessed.



ARTHRITIS MANAGEMENT

The fourth essential component of managing arthritis is to prevent adding to the condition.

Through minimising your dog slipping and falling whilst at home, in the garden, or out on exercise you will minimise the pain and damage from additional injuries.



Through reducing these stumbles and trips, your dogs pain state will be less, and further pain relief requirements will be reduced.



ARTHRITIS MANAGEMENT

Through ensuring your dog is at the correct body weight, you will slow the progression of arthritis, and reduce the pain of the disease.

Through regular weight checks and hands-on assessments, you can make sure that your dog is a Body Condition Score 4 to 5 out of 9.

Carrying extra fat is like adding fuel to an inflammatory arthritic fire within each joint.



Through maintaining regular non-traumatic low impact exercise like gentle walking and trotting you can maintain the mobility of the joints.

Arthritis causes joints to move less well and feel tight and uncomfortable.

Joints need to move though, in order to keep them healthy and well-oiled with joint fluid.



#YOURDOGMOREYEARS

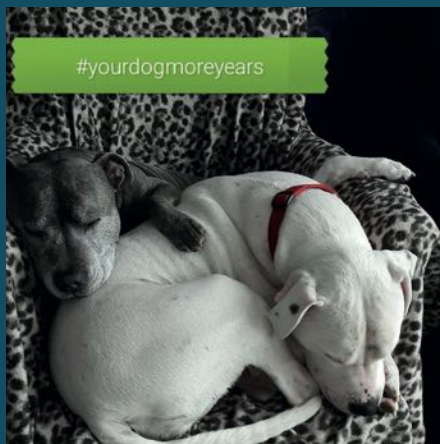
Arthritis is a disease that requires a multi-modal approach to management.

This means that multiple approaches to control the pain, and slow the progression are required.

This may involve, weight control, exercise and lifestyle modifications, house adaptations, adapted diet, medications, complementary therapies, or even surgery.

No one treatment alone is effective in managing this disease long term.

Canine Arthritis Management aims to help you throughout this “long term”.





The intention of CAM is to provide resources to help change owners, vets and the public's perception of how to diagnose and treat chronic pain in animals, which will then lead to improved lives for the dogs and their owners.

Find out more online...

www.caninearthritis.co.uk

info@caninearthritis.co.uk



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