

Ten Ways to Help an Arthritic Dog

1. Bring your dog in for regular checkups so that your veterinarian can monitor your dog's arthritis and make necessary adjustments to the treatment plan.
2. Getting or keeping your dog slim can help by decreasing the load on his or her joints. Feeding your dog the right amount of high-quality food should help with weight control.
3. Carefully monitored exercise on soft surfaces can help affected dogs. Ask your veterinarian for more details.
4. Because arthritis is aggravated by the cold and damp, keep your dog warm and dry. Padded dog beds can help. Warm compresses can soothe affected joints.
5. Massage therapy can increase your dog's flexibility, circulation, and sense of well-being. Professional animal massage therapists are available.
6. Pain medication, including nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (commonly called *NSAIDs*), may help relieve signs of your dog's arthritis. Disease-modifying osteoarthritis drugs (DMOADs) can also be an important part of managing osteoarthritis. Never give your dog a drug without your veterinarian's recommendation.
7. Glucosamine and chondroitin supplements are considered DMOADs and can be used to help manage arthritis in dogs and other animals.
8. Acupuncture isn't just for people. It's painless and has shown some success in animals with arthritis.
9. Surgery may be a good choice in advanced cases of canine arthritis. Your veterinarian can tell you more.
10. A low-stress environment, plenty of affection, and supportive care can help improve your dog's quality of life.

Many pain relievers that help dogs and people are poisonous to cats.

At-Home Aids for Arthritic Dogs

- Slip-free flooring
- Soft bedding
- Ramps (instead of steps)
- A warm, dry environment
- Help with grooming