

## 5 More Ways To Ease Pet Arthritis (Part II)

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[Missed part 1? Find it here>>](#)

As discussed [recently](#), about 30% of [cats](#) and [dogs](#) are affected with arthritis. Earlier this week, I listed [five ways to ease pet arthritis](#). Here are five more:

#### 6. Anti-inflammatory drugs

The most commonly used pain medications used for arthritis pain are non-steroidal inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs). Ideally used on an as-needed basis, rather than every single day, modern NSAIDs are safer and more potent than aspirin & "people" drugs. By the way, [please never use people drugs in your pet](#) without your vet's complete approval, especially in your cat. Such drugs can be deadly.

Potential side-effects of veterinary NSAIDs include vomiting and/or diarrhea, with or without blood, lack of appetite, lethargy or jaundice (a sign of liver injury), or kidney disease. Your family vet will typically perform regular lab work, testing blood and urine, e.g. every 6 months or more, to monitor possible side-effects.

#### 7. Pain medications

When anti-inflammatory drugs cannot be used, or are not strong enough, other pain killers can be given, such as morphine-like drugs (tramadol, etc). There are other options, which need to be tailored to each individual patient. Sometimes, it is a matter of "trial and error" until the ideal drug combination is found.

#### 8. Environment changes

Many small tricks can help. Keeping your pet in a dry and warm place should help, just like it would help an arthritic person. It is important to keep your pet on thick, soft, clean padding at all times, rather than on tile or linoleum (although some pets seem to prefer those!). Minimize access to stairs. Elevate the food & water bowls.

If you have a few steps on your deck, you could build a ramp. Some companies sell steps to help pets get onto furniture more easily. To get in the car or the truck, you can also use a ramp. Whether inside or outside, always provide good footing so your pet doesn't "do the splits". Hardwood floors may need to be covered with rugs. And be extra careful on ice during the winter time. Pets can get seriously hurt after slipping on ice. An easy solution is to use a sling under your dog's belly.

#### 9. Periodic re-evaluations

Re-checks with your vet are critical to adjust the plan to your pet's progress. For example, if you are trying to make your pet lose weight, monthly weigh-ins are important to track your progress. The amount of food may need to be adjusted, otherwise the weight may just plateau if you continue feeding the same amount. Similarly, pain medications could be changed or the dosage adjusted depending on your pet's progress.

#### 10. Surgery

In some cases, surgery is an excellent way to treat arthritis. From simple procedures (removing a flap of cartilage or part of a bone) to more complicated surgeries (fusing a joint, or a total hip replacement), ask your family vet or your surgeon if your pet would benefit from surgery.

So there you go: there are (at least) 10 ways to help a pet with arthritis. There are other modalities, such as acupuncture and stem cell therapy, which you can discuss with your family vet or your surgeon.

*If you have any questions or concerns, you should always visit or call your veterinarian - they are your best resource to ensure the health and well-being of your pets.*