



Procedure: Cranial Cruciate Ligament Repair via TightRope

Exercise: The importance of limiting exercise during the first 3 months cannot be over-emphasized. Exercise must be limited to leash walks only for the first 3 months. Stairs must be limited to 2 steps or less or the use of a ramp is needed. No playing with other dogs, no jumping, or any other source of rough play should be permitted. Abrupt, strenuous activity during the first 3 months post-op will weaken the surgical repair. The long term success of the surgery is dependent on following these restrictions. However, leash walks around the block etc are encouraged, if controlled. After 3 months post-op, gradual increase in off leash exercise is allowed.

Expectations: 85% of all dogs undergoing cruciate ligament repair will have significant improvement by 6 months following extracapsular repair. However, half of the dogs will experience some lameness after heavy exercise and with some weather changes associated with low pressure centers. Arthritis will develop in most dogs as years pass especially if a meniscus is damaged or if arthritis was present at the time of surgery. Degenerative joint disease and arthritis will progress despite surgical repair. Our goal is to slow the process and provide a functional, pain-reduced leg.

The following is a guide for the expected progress post surgery:

10 days post-op ... toe touching only

4 weeks post op ...30% use of leg with pronounced limp

8 weeks post op ... 50-60% use of leg with moderate limp

12 weeks pos op ... 70-80% use of leg with mild limp

Most dogs will plateau on healing at about 6 months post surgery and reach 85 – 95% improvement. 50% of all dogs rupturing one cruciate ligament will rupture the other leg in time. Obesity plays a major role in cruciate tears, therefore, maintaining a normal body weight will help prevent damage to the other leg and slow the progression of arthritis.