

# Canine Arthritis Management

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***The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new lands but seeing with new eyes*** Marcel Proust

A quote that Canine Arthritis Management can really relate to. The “rat-race” that we all live in, racing to work, feeding the kids, paying the bills, often lends to us being completely unaware of what or even who is around us. We are so busy we overlook the simplest things in life.

Canine Arthritis Management (CAM) was set up to raise awareness of canine osteoarthritis and the treatment routes available to dogs and their owners. We aim to help owners and other professionals “see with new eyes”, and together tackle the wide scale problem.

The shocking statistics are that over 80% of dogs over the age of 8 years old will already be suffering from osteoarthritis, and that this insidious disease is the single largest cause of early euthanasia in dogs. The figures don’t begin to uncover the sheer scale of the problem though, with so many younger dogs also suffering from the disease but are overlooked as they don’t fit the stereotypical mould of an arthritic dog. Many dogs suffer in silence for years before a prominent lameness, a change in behaviour or an inability to perform the owner’s routine alerts them to their dogs requirements.

As therapists of all disciplines, we know we can do so much more to improve both the quality and longevity of dog’s lives. We have all witnessed the incredible results achievable when combining veterinary care with therapist intervention. The CAM team consists of determined souls that are hoping to go one step further. Having witnessed transformations in pain control, mobility and quality of life when education, inspiration, empowerment and options are given to the owner, they have taken their knowledge, experience and enthusiasm online. Every member of the team is learning from each other as well as from the guest speakers we invite to write for us. But what is wonderful is we are also learning from the public. Through “listening with new ears” we have been given a glimpse of ways we could really raise greater awareness of the condition and the available treatment options for owners.



Social media is a booming phenomenon with estimates of 1.5 billion people having Facebook accounts. You either love it or hate it, but you can’t avoid it. CAM started as a simple Facebook page where Hannah posted about the cases she was treating (with the owner’s consent). Most of her clients were dogs in stage 5 osteoarthritis (5x5x5) that were running out of options. Through combining owner education, lifestyle advice, home management tips and her chosen therapy, she too saw almost miraculous results, too miraculous to not share and inspire other owners. Since then the page has grown, and has become, and will continue to be, a platform for other vets, vet nurses, therapists and pet professionals to empower owners to construct the best multimodal plan for their dogs.

Time and time again we are reminded that everything counts when managing this disease, from minor adjustments of daily routines, to major house rearrangements. A rug placed in a key location, such as where the owner greets them, can prevent those repetitive slips, trips and falls that can progress their condition. A pet step in front of the sofa can minimise the concussive forces that jolt through those forelimbs as they descend. Furthermore we have also learned that this input is also a game changer for the owner. When creating a therapeutic plan for a dog, the owner’s needs can be overlooked as we are programmed to treat the dog. Through fulfilling the owner’s needs, which are to also do the best for their beloved dog, the results can be outstanding. Owners become driven, not defeated. They become inspired not deflated. They develop confidence in their own role rather than feeling confused and frustrated.

To offer this additional support can be the straw that breaks the camels back for many. As a profession, we are all very prone to empathy exhaustion, compassion fatigue and other mental health issues.

Many of the CAM team understand this having been exposed to it themselves, another reason why they are driven to give up their time to provide an online resource where this “owner essential” can be delivered.

We now offer a plethora of free resources, which can be found on our website [www.caninearthritis.co.uk](http://www.caninearthritis.co.uk), on our facebook page [www.facebook.com/CAMarthritis](http://www.facebook.com/CAMarthritis), subscribe to our youtube channel or join our fantastic forum which can be found by going to [www.cam-foundation.co.uk](http://www.cam-foundation.co.uk). The forum is a fantastic place for owners to come together, ask questions, gain appropriate answers and share their stories. So as well as gaining expert advice they gain support from their peers.

For the forum to become increasingly successful it needs to grow and become a vibrant oasis of information and support. If therapists united and supported the forum they would be able to share their skills and give the forum members information on how each of the specialist disciplines benefit dogs suffering from this debilitating disease. Awareness and teamwork really is the answer to raising both the profile of the condition and how therapists can become increasingly involved.

To assist with awareness CAM launched the initiative #yourdogmoreyears. and it is vital that as many therapists as possible unite and promote this information to their existing client base and ensure that their local vets, who they work alongside of, are engaged with this initiative. So #yourdogmoreyears needs to be trending via all social media, the more it is shared the more dogs will benefit from the information. Doing this is simple – just write #yourdogmoreyears on paper and take pictures of both your and your clients dogs, share them via all social media routes and make sure you include #yourdogmoreyears in the text – let’s all get the message out there and get it trending.

Therapists need to share the benefits of sharing the knowledge and the change that it can make to dogs lives – To quote our youtube video “not just growing old, but growing old great”<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=772uy7NnCBM>.

