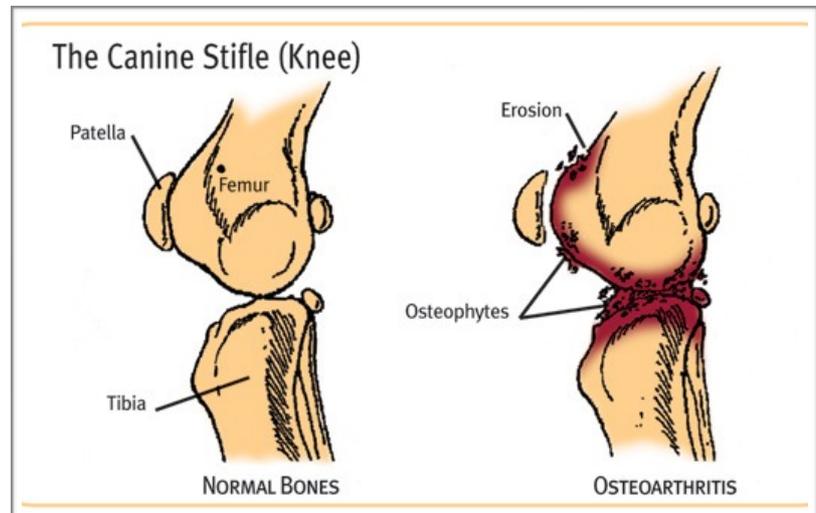


# OSTEOARTHRITIS

## What is it and how can you help your dog?

### Early Warning Signs

- Slow or stiff movements when walking, after a rest, or in cold weather.
- Difficulty climbing stairs, getting into the car, or getting up onto furniture.
- Disinterest in physical activity, especially play.
- Tiredness & resting more than usual.
- Taking a lot longer than usual to get up from a lying position.
- Swollen joints - may be warm and tender.
- Spinal Issues - arthritic changes can also occur in part of the spine & result in a sore neck, abnormal posture or lameness in the legs.
- Licking, biting or chewing at the joint.
- Loss of appetite or weight gain.
- Irritability - your dog may no longer like being touched as it may cause pain.
- Abnormal stance when walking.
- Muscle atrophy caused by inactivity.



### What is it & how is it caused?

Osteoarthritis is a degenerative joint disease characterised by a chronic breakdown of cartilage in the joints. Without the cushion of cartilage, bones rub directly against one another, causing pain and inflammation. Most cases develop as a result of abnormal rubbing within the joint, caused by joint instability (e.g. after ligament damage), damage to or abnormal cartilage development, or damage caused by trauma (e.g. fractures).

### Treatment Options

It can be very upsetting to see your once active dog begin to limp or show signs of pain when moving around, but there are things you & your Vet can do (both medically & in the home) to decrease your dog's discomfort & increase their mobility.

- Weight control to reduce pressure on joints
- Regular low impact exercise e.g. swimming
- Supportive warm bedding & non-slip flooring
- Protection from cold weather to keep joints warm
- Quality nutrition & dietary supplements
- Physiotherapy & Hydrotherapy
- Veterinary prescribed medication