

The ideal conditioning program prepares the body for optimal shape and strength and maintains the body at this level. At the same time, the conditioning program works to minimize the damage that occurs during activity or performance. A poorly conditioned dog is very susceptible to soft tissue damage or joint injury. The goal should be for a long-term healthy body condition for every patient and, for athletes, a long, productive career not just an occasional outing. The conditioning program should be designed to fit your pet's lifestyle, training, and work or athletic requirements.

Various exercises can be implemented into a conditioning program. The following are examples of exercises for canine conditioning:

- **Underwater treadmill:** Hydrotherapy utilizes the properties of water, such as buoyancy, hydrostatic pressure, viscosity, and resistance to improve physiological function. This exercise is excellent for patients that have arthritic pain, weakness, or neurologic disabilities and dogs that just love the water and/or need a challenge in muscle strengthening.
- **Agility exercises:** Obstacle course work challenges proprioception, increases range of motion, and aides in strengthening of different muscle groups. Multiple obstacles or challenges can be incorporated into the obstacle course, much like an agility course.
- **Physioball exercise:** Ball exercises can be implemented to focus on core and limb strengthening and body awareness. These exercises are challenging for the pet throughout the entire body.