

# Take Home Instructions: *Wheelbarrow Exercises*

## What is a wheelbarrow exercise?

Wheelbarrowing is an active therapeutic exercise. This exercise is performed by picking up the dog's back legs and the dog is moved forward at a slow, controlled pace.

## Why were wheelbarrow exercises prescribed?

Wheelbarrowing is designed to improve the use and strength of the front limbs.<sup>1</sup> The exercise also helps develop coordination and balance.<sup>2</sup>

## When are wheelbarrow exercises recommended?

Wheelbarrow exercises are usually recommended when a dog can consistently walk with minimal lameness.<sup>2</sup>

## What are the exercise guidelines?

Lift the dog's rear limbs either at the knees or abdomen. We will instruct you about the appropriate height. Move the dog in a forward direction in slow, controlled movements. Support their body with a sling if necessary. A muzzle is recommended if the dog shows any signs of resistance to the exercise.<sup>2</sup> Specific instructions for your pet are listed below, including how often and how long to perform the exercise each week. As your dog improves, we may recommend performing the exercise on inclines, such as a ramp or hill.<sup>1</sup>

## What are the safety considerations?

Stop treatment immediately if your pet shows signs of severe discomfort, such as growling, snapping, or yelping.

## Instructions for your pet:

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To perform the dancing exercise properly, pick up your pet's back legs and guide your dog forward, as seen here.

1. Bockstahler B, Levine D, Millis D. *Essential Facts of Physiotherapy in Dogs and Cats: Rehabilitation and Pain Management*. Babenhausen, Germany. 2004. BE VetVerlag. p 66.

2. Millis DL, Levine D, Taylor RA. *Canine Rehabilitation & Physical Therapy*. St Louis. 2004. Saunders. p 256.

Information provided by:  
NOVARTIS ANIMAL HEALTH US, INC.  
Greensboro, NC 27408



### Veterinary Clinic Contact Information

Clinic Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Veterinarian's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_