

Notes :

Sorry for the delay- I am not sure what happened initially! Attached are stretches and core exercises to help develop a strong core to protect Phoebe's back. All exercise should be slow and controlled without any discomfort. If Phoebe seems reluctant or uncomfortable with any exercise please discontinue and let me know!

Core muscles have two main functions: to stabilize and mobilize.

1. They stabilize the body by helping the dog hold its posture (such as a level topline) and absorb sudden forces that could cause injuries.
2. They mobilize by contributing to rapid movement, force and power. They create dorsal, ventral and lateral flexion as well as rotational movements of the body, and they coordinate all movements between the front and rear limbs.

Exercises in standing position are often more difficult than they seem, compare to planks in human exercise. You can also add difficulty to the 2 and 3 legged stands you can lure head in different directions with treats to change center of balance further engaging core.

Other options to change balance and engage core are to add a child mattress on ground or balances discs under feet.

The walking exercises in circles and figure 8s can also be down in backwards walk to increase coordination, strength, balance and proprioception. All walking exercises should be slow and controlled, especially the stairs to prevent injury.

The cavalettis do not have to be professional equipment- you can use broom/mop handles or pool noodles.

There are a lot of options for exercises- I would focus on a few at a time to keep Phoebe interested and focused. The cookie stretches can be done in a sequence or resetting between each.

When Phoebe seems sore I would do more stretching than core strengthening. You can also incorporate heat with stretching and massage.

Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns! You should be able to view the program from any smart device or computer.

1 Hip PROM



The patient is placed in a comfortable position lying on its side. Position your body so that you are behind the back limbs. To perform hip flexion, the upper hand is placed on the upper portion of the pelvis. Place the other hand on the back portion of the upper thigh. Be certain that the hip joint is supported to avoid any undue stress to the joint. Begin by slowly and gently flexing the hip joint. The other joints of the limb should be allowed to remain in a neutral position (a position as if the animal were standing). Then, extend the hip joint by maintaining the upper hand on the upper portion of the pelvis and the lower hand on the front portion of the thigh. In each direction, go as far as possible until the patient shows initial signs of discomfort, such as tensing the muscles, moving, turning the head toward the therapist, or trying to pull away, but do not cause undue discomfort.

Sets: 1 Reps: 5-15 Freq: up to daily

2 Hot pack on back



After heating, place the hot pack over the back of your neck; if uncomfortable, allow it to cool until it is comfortable to your touch. Wrap the hot pack in a towel or similar cloth and apply it directly to the back, or in a particular location of the back, as directed or for 15 to 20 minutes. Check the skin every 5 minutes to be certain that there is no excessive redness of the skin. Also check for any discomfort to the dog. If either is noted, discontinue.

Freq: as needed for chronic pain

3 Thoracolumbar massage



Position the dog comfortably (usually laying down) and be sure it is relaxed. Gently stroke and knead the muscles along the sides of the thoracolumbar area. This should never be painful for the dog. This massage can be done for as long as 10-20 minutes so make sure you are in a comfortable posture as well.

Sets: 1 Reps: 5-15 Freq: up to daily

4 Balance disc rear limbs



To encourage weight bearing on one or both rear limbs, or to improve balance, place the rear limbs on the disk and have the dog maintain balance. If this is too easy, shift the weight of the dog or rock the disk back and forth.

Sets: 1 Reps: 15-20 Freq: 3-4 x a week

5 Turning in circles (pivoting)



Using a toy or a treat, have the dog keep their front legs on the disk or platform and encourage them to turn or pivot in circles. Repeat in both directions.

Sets: 1-2 Reps: 10-15 Freq: 3-4 times a week

6 Figure of 8



Using a treat or a toy lead the dog through a figure of 8 pattern through your legs as shown.

Sets: 1-2 Reps: 10-15 Freq: 3-4 times a week

7 Side stepping



Standing on one side of the dog (facing towards the dog), slowly take steps towards the dog in order to encourage the dog to move in a sideways manner. It may help to use a command such as "side" or "sidestep" and praise/reward when the dog takes steps sideways. Start with 6-10 feet in both directions and gradually increase the distance as able.

Sets: 1-2 Reps: 5-15 Freq: 3-4 times a week

8 Sit to stand



Using a treat or other cue, the dog is placed in a square sitting position. The dog is then allowed to push up to a standing position. Be certain that the dog sits and stands squarely and symmetrically. Placing an affected leg against a wall or having the dog sit in a corner helps to encourage symmetrical sitting and standing.

Sets: 1-2 Reps: 5-15 Freq: 3-4 times a week

9 Walking backward



Have the dog walk backward.

Sets: 1-2 Reps: 10-15 Freq: 3-5 times a week

10 Circle walking



The owner walks the dog on leash in progressively larger or smaller circles as directed by the therapist.

Sets: 1-2 Reps: 10-15 Freq: 3-5 times a week

11 Sideways over obstacles



Put obstacles on the ground for the dog to walk over. You can use pool noodles, wood 2x4, cavaletti rails, etc. Stand on the sideways from the dog, facing the dog. Have the dog walk sideways over the obstacles.

Sets: 1-2 Reps: 10-15 Freq: 3-5 times a week

12 Rear limb three legged stance



A rear limb is lifted to shift the center of gravity and increase weight bearing on the other 3 limbs. If the animal pushes back excessively, the limb may be gently pulled to the side to alter the center of gravity back to the other limbs.

Sets: 1-2 Reps: 10-15 Freq: 3-5 times a week

13 Two legged stands diagonal



Lift both diagonal limbs of the dog to force them to stand on the remaining two legs. Make sure they do not fall over. Start with a few seconds and gradually increase the time in the exercise.

Sets: 1-2 Reps: 10-15 Freq: 3-5 times a week

14 Walking forward on Ball



Keeping the forelimbs on a therapy ball or peanut, the ball is slowly rolled forward and the dog walks behind it. One person stands in front of the dog and other behind it to keep the forelimbs on the ball or peanut until the dog becomes used to the exercise.

Sets: 1-2 Reps: 10-15 Freq: 3-5 times a week

15 Walking Backward on Ball



Keeping the forelimbs on a therapy ball or peanut, the ball is slowly rolled backward and the dog walks behind it. One person stands in front of the dog and other behind it to keep the forelimbs on the ball or peanut until the dog becomes used to the exercise.

Sets: 1-2 Reps: 10-15 Freq: 3-5 times a week

16 Walking with forelimbs on peanut



Using a toy or a treat to coax the dog onto the peanut with their forelimbs, walk forward encouraging the dog to slowly walk forward too as well as keeping their forelimbs on the peanut. If able to, the dog can also walk backwards.

Sets: 1-2 Reps: 10-15 Freq: 3-5 times a week

17 Cookie stretches forward



Using a treat or a favorite toy, have the dog follow the object, stretching his neck forward. Hold the stretch for 10-15 seconds.

Sets: 1-2 Reps: 10-15 Freq: daily

18 Cookie stretches to the chest



Using a treat or a favorite toy, move the object to encourage the dog to bend its neck towards its chest. Hold the stretch for 10-15 seconds.

Sets: 1-2 Reps: 10-15 Freq: daily

19 Cookie stretches to the side



Using a treat or a favorite toy, have the dog follow the object, turning the head and neck to the side. Hold the stretch for 10-15 seconds.

Sets: 1-2 Reps: 10-15 Freq: daily

20 Cookie stretches to the ribs



Using a treat or a favorite toy, move the object to encourage the dog to bend its head and neck toward the ribs. Hold the stretch for 10-15 seconds.

Sets: 1-2 Reps: 10-15 Freq: daily

21 Cookie stretches to the hip



Using a treat or a favorite toy, move the object to encourage the dog to bend its head and neck toward the hip. Use the other hand to stabilize the dog's pelvis on the side to prevent it from moving. Hold the stretch for 10-15 seconds.

Sets: 1-2 Reps: 10-15 Freq: daily

22 Cookie stretches hock



Using a treat or a favorite toy, move the object to encourage the dog to bend its body toward the hock (ankle). Use the other hand to stabilize the dog's pelvis to keep it from moving. Hold the stretch for 10-15 seconds.

Sets: 1-2 Reps: 10-15 Freq: daily

23 Side crunch



Have the dog laying on his side. Have him lift the head and neck up toward the ribs. You may use a treat or toy to entice him to do the movement.

Sets: 1-2 Reps: 5-10 Freq: 3-4 times a week

24 Beg on a wobble disc



With the dog sitting on a wobble disc/balance board, have him come from the sitting position to a beg position in a slow controlled manner.

Sets: 1-2 Reps: 10-15 Freq: 3-5 times a week

25 Begging for core exercise, crouched



Starting with the dog in a sitting position, use a treat or a toy and entice the dog to come up to a begging position keeping the rear limbs crouched. Hold the begging position for a few seconds if possible.

Sets: 1-2 Reps: 10-15 Freq: 3-5 times a week

26 Sit to stand



Using a treat or other cue, the dog is placed in a square sitting position. The dog is then allowed to push up to a standing position. Be certain that the dog sits and stands squarely and symmetrically. Placing an affected leg against a wall or having the dog sit in a corner helps to encourage symmetrical sitting and standing.

Sets: 1-2 Reps: 10-15 Freq: 3-5 times a week

27 Step stretch



While sitting on the stairs in front of or standing beside the dog, have the dog place the front legs on the first or second step. The back legs should remain on the ground. Use treats/praise to keep the dog in this position as directed.

Sets: 1-2 Reps: 10-15 Freq: 3-5 times a week

28 Give paw in elevated stand



Have the dog stand with their forelimbs on an elevated surface. Have the dog give you their paw.

Sets: 1-2 Reps: 10-15 Freq: 3-5 times a week

29 Belly lift



Have the dog standing square. Tickle the abdomen to raise and flatten the back.

Sets: 1-2 Reps: 10-15 Freq: up to daily

30 3 legged stance (forelimb)



The sound forelimb is lifted resulting in the dog placing more weight on the affected limb.

Sets: 1-2 Reps: 10-15 Freq: 3-5 times a week

31 Cavaletti Rails (High)



Space the rails at an appropriate distance to allow for a single step between rails. The height should be at the maximal level that encourages as much flexion as possible.

Sets: 1-2 Reps: 10-15 Freq: 3-5 times a week

32 Slow hill descent



The dog is walked down a decline or hill at a comfortable walking speed that encourages weight bearing on all four limbs and results in strengthening and loading of the forelimbs.

Freq: 1-2 times a week

33 Slow hill (incline) climbing



The dog is walked up a gradual incline or hill at a comfortable walking speed that encourages weight bearing on all four limbs and results in propulsion (pushing off) with the rear limbs.

Freq: 1-2 times a week

34 Walking up Low Stairs



The dog is walked up stairs in a controlled fashion at a somewhat fast walk, being certain that the dog is pushing up the steps with each limb. Do not allow skipping steps or bunny hopping up steps.

Sets: 1-2 Reps: 10-15 Freq: 3-5 times a week

35 Walking up Steep Stairs



The dog is walked up the stairs in a slow and controlled fashion to encourage the use of all four limbs and propulsion by both rear limbs. Be certain that the dog pushes off with each limb, and does not skip or hop up steps.

Sets: 1-2 Reps: 10-15 Freq: 3-5 times a week