

A Bit About Me ...

I have been a small animal veterinarian for 11 years. I first saw a pet prosthetic while at a conference overseas in 2008. I was amazed at how they were helping our furry patients and have been interested in this area ever since.

In 2013, I embarked on additional training in the United States so I could offer my injured patients more treatment options.

In 2014, I completed my training and have the qualification of Certified Canine Rehabilitation Therapist (CCRT). I am a member of the American Association of Rehabilitation Veterinarians (AARV).

In 2014, I returned to Colorado and pursued further training in orthotics and prosthetics for dogs.

To my knowledge, I am currently the only person in the North Island who has completed additional training in this field. It's a new and exciting field for New Zealand pets. It's great to now have options for pets that can't have surgery.

The company I work with overseas have been making orthotics and prosthetics for over 10 years now. They have a wealth of experience to offer and solutions for most problems. I look forward to working with you.

Stephanie Bonner
(BVSc, CCRT, PGCertSci)



pictured: Steph and her dog, Diesel, learning to swim

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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Orthotics & Prosthetics

What are prosthetics & orthotics?

An orthotic is a dynamic device providing support to a joint. Practically, this means your pet can run while wearing a custom made brace that supports their joint when their body can't support it anymore. **A prosthetic is a false limb replacement.**

When is an orthotic or prosthetic a viable option?

In most cases, surgery is still the best option as it is normally a permanent solution. However, when a pet can't have surgery, or your pet requires extra support post surgery, an orthotic can be a good option to keep your pet moving.

The orthotic can be fitted to support joints including the elbow and lower on the forelegs, or the knee and lower on the hindlegs.

The most common orthotic supports manufactured are for cranial cruciate rupture, followed by tarsal and carpal orthoses. There are many more we can have made, so please contact us if you think an orthotic or prosthetic device could help your pet.

Prosthetics are very new to New Zealand. There are a lot of 3-legged dogs here and most people feel they do fine. While most do cope, they can do better and walk or run further with a prosthetic. Prosthetics now give the old arthritic dogs an option if they need a partial amputation.

In order for prosthetics to work, we need to have half the tibia (shin bone) and radius (foreleg) present to secure the device comfortably.



What do we offer?

We offer orthotics as a “device + rehabilitation” package because teaching the dog to use it properly will give you the best outcome. The rehabilitation package includes the initial visit, a fitting visit plus two rehabilitation sessions to teach him/her how to use it. Some dogs need additional visits to help them adjust to their newly supported leg. These incur an additional cost.

The orthotic and prosthetic price can be given to you upon enquiry. There are too many support options to list!



ORTHOTICS & PROSTHETICS AVAILABLE AT

Pet Doctors, Hamilton
Total Physiotherapy, Pukekohe & Auckland

Frequently Asked Questions

Is my dog suitable? Success relies on a compliant dog that will allow the mould to be created and later, for the device to be worn daily. While most find it easy, others take longer to adapt. We also need owners that will slowly build up their dog's time in the device and come to rehab sessions to teach their dog how to use it comfortably and consistently.

What care is needed? Orthotics and prosthetics do need some special care. Hair needs to be removed from the Velcro regularly and they should be kept clean. They are taken on and off your pet daily. You will need to check for any rubs developing so we can make adjustments if needed.

Can my dog swim in it? Yes, absolutely!

How long do they last? The orthotics and prosthetics are very strong, so their life expectancy will vary depending on how well you and your dog care for it. A young active hunting dog, wearing it every day may need a replacement in 18-24 months. However, a sedentary old dog may never need a replacement.

Do we need regular checkups? We check the fit of all orthotic and prosthetic devices every six months to ensure they are still functioning correctly. You may need adjustments or replacement straps and buckles organised during these visits.

Are they available in colour? Yes! There are colours and patterns available. All sorts - even flowers or camouflage if that is more your dog's style!

We want to do it, what now? Contact us on email to start discussing your pet's case. If an orthotic or prosthetic device is appropriate, we will make an appointment for initial assessment and the mould to be made. From this appointment to delivery of your pet's device is normally 2-3 weeks.