

# HELPFUL TIPS

## to Get Your Pet Used to a New Wheelchair

### 1. Let Them Get Acquainted with Their Cart

As a pet parent, you have spent countless hours making sure you researched and chose the best wheelchair for your best friend. Buying a wheelchair was the right decision for you and your pet, but it can take time for your dog to understand what their new wheels are for.

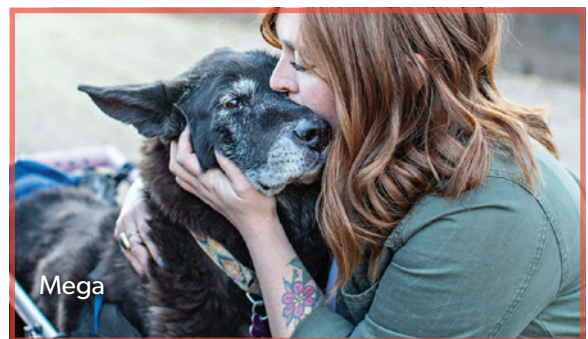
Some pets may need time to adjust to their wheelchair being around. Place the wheelchair in a room where your pet is comfortable and let them investigate it on their own. For skittish dogs, consider rewarding them with a treat when they go up to it or sniff it. This helps them to form a positive association with their new wheelchair.



Libby

### 2. Be Patient

Stay calm and slowly introduce your dog to their wheelchair. Understand that this can be stressful for both you and your pet, if at any time you feel yourself becoming frustrated, take a step back and take a break.



Mega

Getting your dog up on their feet and walking should be a fun experience for both of you. Make sure your dog tries their wheelchair for the first time, somewhere where they feel comfortable and safe. Begin in a wide, open space so your dog can adjust to their wheelchair and how it feels, without worrying about bumping into anything.



Delilah



### 3. Take it One Step at a Time

Don't overdo it the first time your dog walks in their new wheelchair. This is likely the first time your dog has been able to exercise on their own in a longtime. Understand your dog's limitations, even a few small steps in your backyard is a huge accomplishment for them. Don't expect them to be able to go on a long walk their first time out.

Take it slow and let them walk for a few minutes at a time so they don't get too tired. Five to ten minutes is perfect for their first time in their wheelchair. Slowly build up the amount of time they're in their canine mobility cart by adding a few minutes to each walk. This will help them to slowly build up their stamina and strength.

### 4. Encourage Them to Move

Ideally your dog should always associate their wheelchair as a positive experience. Encourage your dog with lots of praise as they take their first steps.



Some dogs are highly motivated by food, so bring treats along with you on your walk. If your dog isn't a fan of treats, try their favorite toy or bring their favorite person or dog with them for their first walk. Every milestone should be celebrated along the way. Your dog may not realize that it's ok for them to relieve themselves while using their wheelchair. Here are a few things you can do to encourage them to do their business:

- If your dog has a long tail, lift, and drape it over the back bar of their cart. This gets it out of the way and makes it easier for them to poop.
- Bring them to their favorite potty spot. Not only will this encourage them to go, but it makes them more comfortable.
- Praise and give them lots of treats when they relieve themselves to reinforce their actions.

### 5. Get the Right Fit

Getting the right fit to your dog's wheelchair will help to make them comfortable and encourage them to keep on moving. But how do you know if the wheelchair is adjusted correctly for your dog? A few minor tweaks can make a world of difference and help make your dog even more comfortable in their new wheels.



## Get the Right Fit *(Continued)*

### Here are some tips for a proper fit:

- A.** Knuckles should be in line with the hips.
- B.** Front harness D-Ring clips: clip into extenders behind shoulder blade. Back should be straight.
- C.** Side bar should run parallel to the ground through the center of the body. Side bars should end at the shoulder blade.
- D.** Toe pads should be just touching the ground, *or*
- E.** Toe pads put into stirrups above hock if dog is paralyzed in the rear legs.

*Width of frame should be set for the widest part of body (usually the chest).*



### What you should check:

1. Is the knuckle in line with the hip?  
When correctly adjusted the wheelchair knuckle should be in the center of your dog's hip.
2. Are the side extender bars too long or too short? The side extender should end behind your pet's shoulder blade. If it's too short your dog may look squished or have a curve to their spine. Your dog's back should be straight.
3. Does the side extender run parallel to the ground? The extender should draw a straight line through the center of your dog's body. If it's not, you may need to adjust the front harness a bit.
4. Check the wheelchair height, your dog's toe pads should just be touching the ground.
5. Wheelchair width: as a general rule of thumb, your dog's cart should be set to the widest part of their body, which is usually their chest.

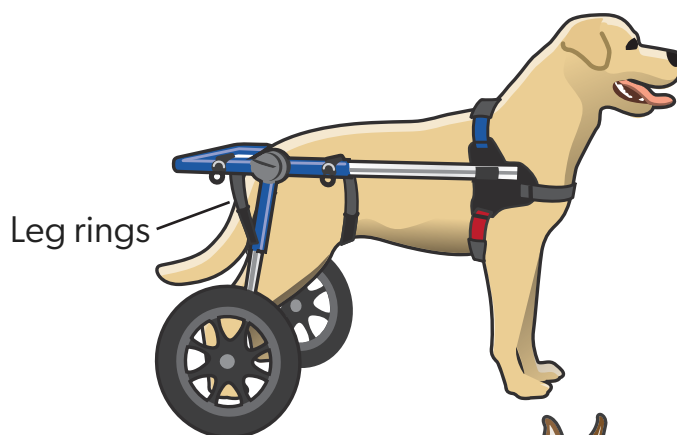
For side extenders angling upwards, loosen the blue strap and tighten the red strap. For side extenders pointing downwards, loosen the red strap and tighten the blue strap.

*Need help finding the perfect fit?*  
*Email our Wheelchair Experts at*  
[helpme@walkinpets.com](mailto:helpme@walkinpets.com)

## What You Should Check *(Continued)*

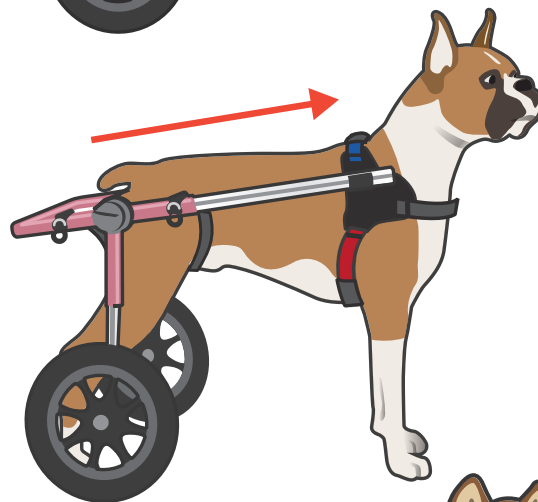
### Adjusting the Extender or Side Bar

To get the sidebar to run through the center of your dog's body: lower the rear leg rings and increase the height of the wheelchair.



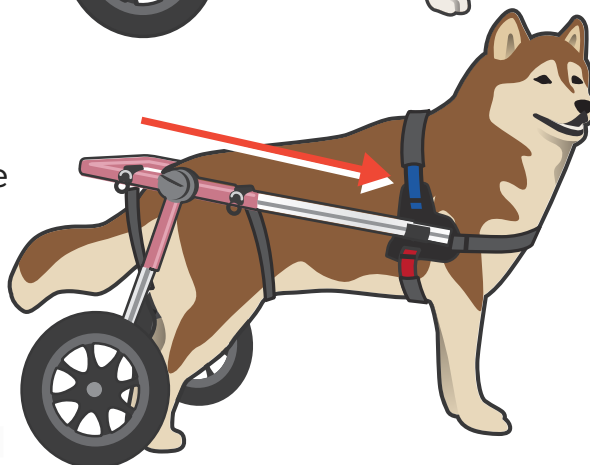
### What to do when the frame is angled upwards

If your wheelchair frame is angling upwards: loosen the blue strap (across the top of the back) on the front harness and tighten the red strap (under the belly) until the sidebar runs parallel to the ground.



### What to do when the frame is angled down

If your wheelchair frame is angling down in the front: loosen the red strap (under the belly) on the front harness & tighten the blue strap (across the top of the back) until the sidebar runs parallel to the ground.



Piper