

# Stiff Joints

As animals age they may be slower to rise due to stiffness, experiencing lameness from sore muscles or joints and even a little exercise or climbing stairs can cause pain. There are several things that you can do to minimise their discomfort.

**Diet:** The first step is to feed a natural diet - thereby ensuring an adequate intake of the nutrients required to support ligament and bone repair. There is some evidence that commercial pet foods are often over or under supplied with minerals and that the resulting imbalance is detrimental to the development and maintenance of joint and bone health.



**Supplements:** The second step is to add Vitamin C 500 - 2000mg per day depending upon size. Also important are additional A, D and E or Cod Liver oil.

**Herbs:** The following herbal remedies may be helpful - **Alfalfa** is extremely rich in nutrients and alkalising. It improves the appetite and supports the digestion and joints by balancing the over-acid system. Give **Alfalfa** as a herb or low potency homoeopathic. **Garlic** is also important for the joints and can be added to the diet.

**Homoeopathy:** There are many remedies which may be indicated and if you have limited success or problems choosing then seek help from the many excellent books that are available or from a vet or practitioner who specialises in Homoeopathy and alternative therapies for animals.

Acute symptoms with swelling, redness, pain and possibly fever responds well to **Belladonna**. **Rhus tox** suits inflammation, pain and stiffness that is most apparent when the animal gets up after a long rest. Once moving about it starts to loosen and feel better. **Bryonia** symptoms are much worse from movement, better from firm pressure and lying still. **Silica** is important in symptoms when the joint stiffness, pain and distortion gets worse as the animal gets older and can be given regularly with other indicated **Tissue Salts** to support the joints and calcium metabolism.

**General guidelines:** In addition these animals benefit from sleeping on a padded, raised bed, warmth and non-weight bearing exercise (e.g. swimming). It cannot be stressed often enough how important a natural, raw food diet is and what a turnaround can be seen once a change is made to this more nourishing food.

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**Repetition of doses:** As a general rule you should reduce the doses of a remedy as it starts to act and not continue once the situation has resolved.

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