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## **The Use of Chiropractic and Acupuncture in Canine Physical Rehabilitation**

*Speaker: Dr. Evelyn Orenbuch DVM*

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Summarized by: Donna Hegstrom

Dr. Evelyn Orenbuch is a practicing veterinarian, specializing in the use of Chiropractic and Acupuncture techniques in the rehabilitation of dogs. Her practice is currently located in the Philadelphia area. She has worked rather extensively with Agility and Obedience exhibitors, helping them maintain good health in their performance dogs. Dr. Evelyn has worked on several westies in the Philadelphia area and has improved their quality of life. She has helped geriatric dogs increase mobility and manage pain. Dr. Evelyn was a guest speaker at the William Penn Westie Club and demonstrated some of the relaxation and massage techniques useful for westies. Her presentation at this year's Health Seminar was informative and helpful to all who attended. A brief summary of her presentation follows.

Dr. Evelyn began her talk with a brief history of human physical therapy. Physical therapy practice in the United States evolved around two major historical events: the poliomyelitis epidemic of the 1800s through the 1950s and the effects of the ravages of several wars. The field of Canine Rehabilitation is relatively young and had evolved to a specialized field over the past 10-15 years. Rehabilitation is very common in the equine field of veterinary medicine and has since spread to other animals. Rehabilitation may be defined as the treatment of a physical dysfunction or injury through the use of therapeutic exercise. The application of various modalities are intended to restore or facilitate normal function or development. According to Dr. Evelyn the goals of canine rehabilitation are as follows:

- Increase range of motion
- Decrease pain
- Increase strength and mobility
- Increase proprioception  
(Knowing where your body position is in space)

In order to accomplish these goals, a variety of techniques and methods are utilized on the dog. They may include a variety of the following:

- Passive stretching and/or Active stretching
- Exercise / Massage
- Heat/Cold
- Laser – Ultrasound
- Chiropractic
- Acupuncture/Electroacupuncture

In discussing routine exercise verses conditioning, Dr, Evelyn emphasized that a 20-30 minute work out 3-4 times a week is a much better conditioning tool than just throwing ball. The longer time of exercise as well as “low impact” conditioning is much better than the high energy throw the ball routine. Shorter, more frequent walks are much better for the geriatric dog .Two ten minute walks a day is better than one twenty minute walk. Other forms of rehabilitation include swimming and the underwater treadmill. Both of these conditioning tools are usually found at an animal rehabilitation center. Dr. Evelyn uses these techniques in her practice as warm water is good for muscles and joints and buoyancy allows muscles to work with lesscompression of the joints, both during swimming and on the underwater treadmill.

Dr. Evelyn also uses chiropractic techniques in her practice. She discussed Vertebral Subluxation Complex (VSC), which is the lack of motion between two vertebrae in one or more directions. The vertebrae may be completely aligned or not. Listed below are some signs that Dr. Evelyn looks for in animals that may be displaying evidence of VSC.

- Gait Analysis / Sideways tracking
- Stutter stepping before a jump and/or An unwillingness to jump
- Change in behavior
- Stiffness when getting up or lying down
- Difficulty going up steps
- Tail held to one side
- Roached back
- Head held abnormally

In addition to applying chiropractic techniques to the above mentioned symptoms, acupuncture may be used in conjunction with chiropractic methods or by itself. In canine rehabilitation, acupuncture is used for pain control and increase blood flow to the area. Electro-acupuncture is great for nerve damage found in back disc disease.

Dr. Evelyn emphasized the importance of finding a qualified Rehab professional. There are two certifying schools: the University of Tennessee and the Canine Rehab Institute in Florida. A list of rehab services around the country can be found in the Able Pet Catalog. Contact can also be made through the American Academy of Veterinary Acupuncture of the American Veterinary Chiropractic Association. Thank you Dr. Orenbuch for a most informative seminar.