



How it works

Allowing your dog to move, run and jump; giving them strength and power are around 700 muscles, a network of connective tissue (fascia) as well as tendons and ligaments.

Injuries to any of these can display themselves as:

Lameness – caused by:

- a muscular issue such as a strain leading to scar tissue
- ligament sprain such as a cruciate injury
- an orthopaedic issue such as hip / elbow dysplasia or spondylosis

Spasm – caused by a trigger point (hyperirritable taught band known as “knots” – very painful)

Cramp – involuntary muscle contraction

Soreness / stiffness – from an orthopaedic issue such as arthritis, osteochondrosis

Behaviour changes such as not wanting to:

- go on walks - get in / out of the car
- go up / down stairs
- get on / off the sofa

Depression

To name only a few, all of which can be treated using massage therapy.

A knock on effect occurs throughout the body if muscular injuries go untreated e.g. not weight bearing on all 4 limbs or posture and gait adjustments occur as overcompensation occurs.

This enters the dog into a strain-restrain cycle, occurring as an area of old injury becomes weak and more prone to injury.

What we actually do:

- We pinpoint injuries
 - Release painful trigger points to reduce muscular tightness / tension
 - Remodel scar tissue
 - Lengthen short muscles to improve range of movement
- Produce visible results in 1-3 sessions
- Treat the WHOLE body – so not only the injured area is addressed, overcompensating areas are too
- Relieve pain and soreness.

I do this by manipulating muscles, tendons and connective tissue.



Aim of Massage and Benefits

Massage influence the body's natural healing process by encouraging fresh blood and lymph to flow around the whole body, therefore increasing oxygen and nutrient supply to muscles, as well as carrying waste products, such as lactic acid and toxins away.

Massage has many benefits to the dog, as it does in humans:

It improves:

- flexibility
- muscle tone
- range of motion
- circulation
- coat condition
- gait
- posture
- temperament
- mobility issues which you may see as:
 - unable to get up / down stairs
 - unable to get in / out of car
- age related disorders producing stiffness / soreness
- unwillingness to exercise
- poor performances in competition (throughout a range of activities)

Supports orthopaedic conditions such as the below by dealing with areas of overcompensation:

- arthritis
- hip dysplasia
- luxating patella
- spondylosis
- Resolves or improves lameness
- Gives non-invasive pain relief
- Decreases recovery time after injury or surgery
- Helps working dogs prepare for and recover from, strenuous training and competition

And it does this by:

- treating areas of muscular strain (pulled muscles) which limited normal movement
- reducing and remodelling inhibiting scar tissue
- releasing fascia so muscles can move without restrictions
- releasing painful trigger points and areas of spasm
- breaking down knots and adhesions which can inhibit movement
- lengthening short and tight muscle o treating areas of overcompensation
- increasing circulation of blood, lymph and therefor the supply of oxygen and nutrients
- influencing the removal of metabolic waste and toxins, boosting the immune system
- calming or stimulating the dog via the nervous system



What your dog gets during a massage

First Session (lasts 1.5 hours)

30 minute consultation prior to 1 hour massage treatment, looking at:

- lifestyle
 - o exercise
 - o diet
 - o medical history
 - o results expected

Also including:

- gait analysis – watching your dog move to assess areas of pain / stiffness
 - in following treatments to observe improvements / changes
- posture analysis – observing how your dog holds its body
- palpation – Full body examination with my hands
 - I feel for injury such as strains / scarring / soreness / trigger points / spasm / heat / cold

This not only gives me the chance to get to know about your dog but get to know them and allow them to become comfortable with me. This is followed by a 1 hour massage, each being tailor made to match your dog's requirements, giving them most beneficial treatment.

You stay with my while your dog is treated, allowing me to explain what I find, what I am doing and why. This is Followed by an explanation of my findings. Subsequent treatments are determined on several factors such as activity, expectations and injuries found and last 1 hour.

The healing crisis

The healing crisis is a cleansing and purifying state which occurs as your dog's body responds to their treatment by dispelling toxins and metabolic waste, allowing it to return to its natural balance and equilibrium (homeostasis).

Your dog should be:

- Keep quiet for 24-48 hours after their treatment
- Given a light meal that evening
- Allowed to rest
- Allowed constant access to water

It is normal for dog to be quiet, tired and lethargic after first session.



About me

Highfield Canine Massage which is part of the Canine Massage Guild and I specialise in the canine muscular system and its associated injuries. I am qualified through the Therapeutic Canine Massage Diploma, a course ran by the renowned Canine Massage Therapy Centre Ltd, and externally accredited with Ascentis; a national awarding body, approved by Ofqual; the regulator of qualifications, examinations and assessments in England and vocational qualifications in Northern Ireland.

My Training

I am trained in 4 disciplines of canine massage and have an in depth knowledge of the canine anatomy and physiology:

- Swedish – warms tissues
- Sports – locates and treats injuries (breaks down scar tissue / adhesions / promotes increase in range of movement)
- Deep manual releases
- Myofascial release – release restricted fascia (fascia is connective tissue running from the dog's head to tail, enveloping everything in its path e.g. muscles and organs, and holding it in place. It supplies the muscles and organs with fresh blood and nerve signals, and allows everything internally to slide smoothly against each other without friction) – If restrictions occur the muscle can't move as well as normal and ischemia occurs (reduced oxygen and nutrient levels), so in effect the muscle is being strangled.

I am also trained in:

- Injury rehabilitation
- Soft tissue manipulation
- Injury identification
- Gait and posture analysis
- Advanced palpation skills – allowing me to detect strains (pulled muscles), trigger points, adhesions, sprains and areas of overcompensation, all of which can often be hidden by the body, and follow with the appropriate treatment.
- Canine Anatomy and physiology – including muscle origins / insertions / actions and muscle isolation
- Othopedic / neurological conditions, skin problems and lymphatic complications awareness, so if I detect anything untoward I can refer your dog to the vet for the best care and tests.
- Client care and clinician skills
- Giving aftercare advise / home care planning
- Providing veterinary reports upon treatment completion
- Business awareness
- Massage theory and the law



What makes me different?

I specialize in myofascial pain syndrome which is often overlooked as the cause of behaviour and mobility changes.

A full body treatment is given each session, allowing me to take the time to become familiar with your dog's body and giving their muscles time to soften and relax. This can then reveal issues that would normally be hidden by the hypertonic / tight muscle, that would usually take a few treatments to soften and reveal their issues.

I work best practice by only seeing a dog a maximum of 3 times before making an informed decision as to whether your dog is responding to their treatment. If they aren't then I refer back to your vet or another professional I think may be able to help. If they are showing improvements then between us we can discuss maintenance sessions to maintain their peak condition.

CPD – Continuing professional development

As a member of the Canine Massage Guild I am required to attend approximately 40 hours of CPD a year to ensure my knowledge is constantly expanding and my skills are up to date and relevant. I also abide by a code of conduct and professional ethics, which can be found at – <http://www.k9-massageguild.co.uk/content-2.asp>

Working together and the law

I work jointly with other practitioners such as your vet / chiropractor / hydro-therapists so we can complement each other's treatments.

The Law

I comply with the Veterinary Act 1966 and the Exemptions Act 1962 by seeking Veterinary Consent before treating your dog. I will always refer back to your vet for diagnosis should any concerning issues arise as I understand the importance of veterinary referral.

I adhere to the Data Protection Act 1984 to safeguard client details. Records will be held for one year and then archived and held for a further 3 years, after this time they will be destroyed. Where possible information will be held electronically and electronic folders and files backed up at regular intervals.

Cost

Initial consultation £35 – Lasting 1.5 hours, including 30 minute consultation and 1 hour massage treatment

Following treatments – £30 – Lasting for 1 hour.

I have a clinic at Moor House Farm, County Durham which is where I take all of my appointments but I am also available for club treatments upon request (mileage costs will be applied).