

The Miracle of Canine Aquatic Therapy

A testimonial from Spikey Burst and his mom

By Deb Burst

T rue, exercise and proper diet helps us all live a healthier and longer life. *But how do we give our pets the same level of care with our busy schedules?* We do try, but a quick walk around the neighborhood doesn't quite erase our pup's sedentary lifestyle. The Animal Health Clinic was the first veterinarian facility on the northshore to offer **Canine Hydrotherapy** which uses natural buoyancy to relieve pain, stress and rehabilitate dogs suffering from injury, obesity, arthritis, and surgical recovery. And what better way to cure those dog-day afternoons than pool side exercise in an underwater treadmill.

Your pooch is assisted by a technician who adjusts the water level, temperature and speed of the treadmill according to the dog's level of therapy. As Fido happily jogs inside a soothing oasis watching his K-9 friends romp about in the new bone-shaped doggy pool, he is building muscle and cardiovascular stamina along with a big dose of confidence. An added bonus is massaging jets that can be directed to hip joints or trouble spots stimulating circulation and reducing pain. *The therapy improves both their mental*

and physical well being. And for some, literally transforms crippled, defeated pups into vibrant canines.



Dr. Roberta Beckers and Spikey

and Tammy carried him to the examining room. At the age of 12 years old my dearly beloved Spikey, a chow/retriever mix, could no longer walk. His heart was in it, but the

If Spikey Burst could talk, well actually he does talk, he barks up a storm every week when he attends his hydrotherapy session. He would have a lot to say; after all it was only three months ago we had to wheel him in a wagon from the car up the stairs to the waiting

room. Dr. Paige

poor darling's back legs could no longer support him due to severe arthritis in his hips. Weighing in at 65 pounds I could no longer hold him up to go to the bathroom at home and my husband and I just didn't have the heart to say the words, to make that decision. Spikey was not ready to give up and both Dr. Paige and I could see it in his eyes. *"He's really healthy,"* she would say. *"He's the perfect candidate for the canine hydrotherapy."*

He had been on pain meds and vitamins for years, along with the premium health food for seniors, daily half mile walks and as a last resort, steroids. We talked about the price of all the meds and

"You've done everything you can do," Dr. Paige assured me, but we both knew he needed a change.

side effects of the steroids and realized the weekly therapy sessions along with adequate injections would run the same price, if not cheaper than his current regiment. But more importantly the treadmill was a more natural and healthy way to treat my Spikey Baby. ➔



Spikey during an underwater treadmill session.

When I brought him in for the therapy sessions, Dr. Beckers and Dr. Einck both counseled me on the adequan injections, a medication with virtually no side effects that helps build muscle and eliminate muscle atrophy.

After just one session, he was a different animal, limping a little but walking on his own. I replaced the so called healthy dog biscuit treats with raw carrots, began weaning him off the steroids, and for one month

“Today, it’s like the old days... he drags me through the roadside tundra and an occasional mud puddle. Now I’m losing weight! “

he received a dose of adequan twice a week. In two months time, he lost 11 pounds, and is med free except for a monthly adequan injection. He is building muscle, runs around like a puppy, and every week jumps out of the back of the RV anxious to start his therapy session.

Spike and I have been walking for 12 solid years, twice a day, and when our walks became a chore for the two of us, it was devastating. Those lively 15 to 20 minute jaunts had turned into a 60 minute nightmares. He would collapse sometimes falling flat on his face, and at times, he and I would both sit down on the ground, completely defeated.

Today, it’s like the old days... he drags me through the roadside tundra and an occasional mud puddle. Now I’m losing weight!

Animal Health Clinic

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So, I appeal to all the pet owners who believe pills are the answer to please, please, reconsider. *There are alternatives, healthy solutions that can add precious years to your dog’s life.* And why wait until your dog is ill, do it now,

help that young one burn off some energy or rev up your bored pooch. What better gift than a play date on the treadmill. Promise, you’ll be rewarded with tons of kisses and a good night’s sleep for both you and your pet.

Spikey and I owe the Animal Health Clinic doctors and their staff a great deal of gratitude. They did more than save Spikey’s life, they mended a broken heart, mine!!

Benefits of Aquatic Therapy

Reduces Pain

Builds muscle

Increases blood flow to painful joints

Increases activity level

Strengthens Endurance

Improves mood

