

Cart Considerations

RETHINKING MOBILITY CARTS FOR PETS

Many people consider Orthotics, Prosthetics and/or Carts for pets as *last* resorts. However, a great deal of research demonstrates that getting humans and animals up into as natural positions as possible, moving and interacting with others and their environment significantly improves quality of life and aids in orthopedic and/or neurological support and, importantly, recovery.

These benefits include, but are not limited to, the following.

- Seeing and interacting with the world in an upright position (chronically laying down actually alters the brain's interpretation of visual cues)
- Helping to maintain or build strength without over loading the body
- Re-establishing/improving psychological drive and determination ("will to *live*") to get up and move
- Among many others!

Sometimes people perceive pets in assistive devices like orthotics, prosthetics, carts, etc as "a little lazy" with the use of their affected limb(s) as sometimes they use the limb less. However, decreased limb use in an assisted device simply indicates their psyche takes over as they are so motivated to get around and interact, that they ignore their disability and just *go!* **This does *not* distract them from still doing physical rehabilitation as well.** In fact, it helps improve their physical rehabilitation. It is important to schedule both psychological exercises in the cart to facilitate motivation and to do physical exercises that facilitate recovery. These different goals will have different device set ups or require you to work with your pet in a different way to promote adaptive use of the limb(s) or back. It is important to follow the directions your rehab vet prescribes to help re-build appropriate, adaptive motion, neurological function, muscle and strength for your pet's recovery.

CART OPTIONS

We highly recommend for Walkin' Wheels carts by HandicappedPets (<https://www.handicappedpets.com/dog-wheelchair-quad-adjustable-wheelchairs-for-dogs-with-disabilities/>). These carts are readily adjustable and accommodate most pets. Sometimes carts specifically customized for your pet are necessary for a proper fit.

We do a complimentary cart measurement for VSC rehab and hospital patients for the Walkin'Wheels carts. You can also follow the instructions on the website. The company is very good and friendly, please feel free to contact them directly. *For other cart brands, there is a cart measurement fee.*

When we have them available (we have a limited supply), we can sometimes rent the Walkin'Wheels cart to patients for one month for either 1) one month of cart rehabilitation exercises or 2) to determine if your pet will accept the cart and do well in it. This gives you and your pet some time to be sure they will be comfortable in it. Sometimes, one month is all they need for some additional rehabilitation strategies. In cases that need a longer recovery time, purchasing a cart is more cost effective.

For both rented and purchased carts, we charge a cart fitting fee. Our rentals do require a replacement cost deposit, which will be returned if the cart is returned on time and in good working order. Check with your pet's insurance company to determine if they will cover a cart purchase and the logistics required to do so. Often this requires a formal prescription and purchasing the cart through a veterinarian.