



Arthritis and Stairs by CAM

Stairs are one of the most challenging areas for the arthritic dog and their owners. By far the best solution is to avoid them if at all possible but in many cases, this is not possible. Where the dog is small enough and the owner is fit to do so, carrying the dog up and down stairs is a good solution. Where this is not possible there are some adaptations that may help.

Top tips

- Ramps. These may be permanent i.e. fixed concrete or wooden, or portable. Portable ramps are usually only suitable for ramping a couple of shallow steps and may be purchased from companies that supply equipment for people with disabilities. Whatever the ramp it requires a non-slip surface for safety. Your dog may need gentle training to feel confident using a ramp.
- Stair gates are very helpful to prevent dogs going up or down stairs. There are now lightweight barriers available specially made for use with dogs and these do not necessarily require screw fixation to the wall. Do your research to find the correct height and width for your space.
- Stairs with no carpets are a particular hazard, ensure staircases have a secure covering. Single steps will benefit from the application of anti-slip tape.
- Harnesses and slings. These may be used to assist the dog to balance and control their movement on the stairs. They should not be used to lift the dog in. Harnesses are ideally Y shaped at the front, padded, well-fitting and adjusted for each individual dog. Slings can be used where a dog has significant difficulties controlling their hind limbs, but again should be used carefully and not merely to carry their back legs.

Canine Arthritis Management is a non-profit organisation, please support them by visiting their on line shop for some amazing products that will benefit your arthritic dog, your dog and yourself!

www.caninearthritis.co.uk