



Weight Control - Is Your Dog Overweight?

A common sight we see to often at Dorset Aqua Dogs is the overweight dog; the sad thing is that in many cases the owners haven't noticed.

Excluding those animals with clinical reasons for being overweight, the rest typically fall into one of two groups. The first group are those that are habitually fat through being victims of general overfeeding, too many treats, a lack of exercise, or a combination of all three. Whether you wish to admit it or not, you will generally know if this relates to your dog, and your vet will have probably pointed it out at every visit. Whether you wish to address it or not it's also down to you, as you can be sure that your dog won't do anything voluntarily. However, just for a moment consider that if you don't do anything about it, you are severely increasing the chances of your dog having joint problems, developing arthritis, and you are generally shortening it's life...brutal comments, but none the less true!

The second group, surprisingly, are those which have 'put on the kilos' as a result of the condition for which they are coming for hydrotherapy.

Often dogs placed on strict exercise regimes as part of the treatment for their condition, or as part of their post-operative rehabilitation. This may vary from a major reduction from their normal levels of exercise, to no exercise at all for a period of time. Either way the amount of 'fuel' required for the amount of exercise they are on will be significantly less than they have needed beforehand.

Unfortunately, many owners fail to consider this and continue to feed the dog the same amount as before the restriction. The result being that the dog slowly puts weight on which goes unnoticed. By the time it does finally get noticed by someone, you have a situation where:

- a. Getting the weight off poses more of a problem than normal as the dog's exercise levels are probably still reduced.
- b. It may well be having an effect on the speed and quality of the dog's rehabilitation, especially if the condition is joint related. In principle the same occurs to the older dog as their exercise levels reduces as they become older and more arthritic.

The easiest way of controlling your dog's weight is by not letting it get fat in the first place. Be aware of the dangers if your dog is put on a reduced exercise regime, reduce their food straight away. For those that have let things get out of control act now. Always feed your dog for the weight they should be not the weight they are. Your veterinary surgery will be more than willing to offer advice or have a word with Sarra Dellou RVN as she offers weight loss clinics here at Dorset Aqua Hydrotherapy.

Whatever the case, just think of your dog's health and wellbeing as they deserve it.