

Stretches

These active stretches allow the dog to choose how far they will stretch and are best used after a brief (5 min) warm-up of walking or jogging.

◇ **Play bow**

Tips: Treat placement is key for the lure, place it low and push toward the dog. Use your legs as a tent to lure the dog's front end down to the ground while keeping his back end in the air. You can also "capture" it if they do it naturally.



◇ **Counter stretch**—extend hind end

Tips: After the play bow, place your arm under the belly and in front of hind legs to help keep the dog stationary while you lure him forward. Having their feet on an elevated surface may help keep them from stepping forward.



◇ **High-5**—stretching the shoulder

Tip: Start targeting low and work your hand up higher as they become more flexible, be sure to do it on both sides.



Stretching Exercises

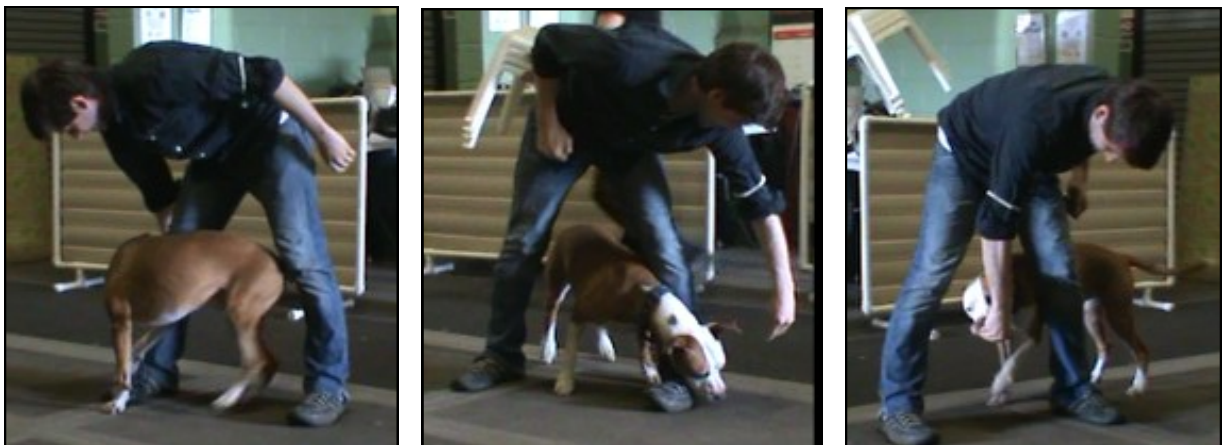
◇ **Side bend** - touch nose to shoulder and hip while standing

Tip: Begin having them touch their nose to their shoulder and work towards the hip as they become more flexible. This can be performed with a lure or trained as a behavior.



◇ **Figure 8**

Tip: Begin with a treat in each hand and lure around your left leg, feed treat from right hand as they come forward between your legs. Then lure around right leg and feed from left hand.



◇ **Paws Up**

Tip: When their feet are up on the prop slowly lure their head up for a stretch of the lower back.

◇ **Frog**

Tip: Capture it if they naturally extend their legs out behind. Otherwise, have them crawl over a folded towel or balance discs and reward as legs extend behind (note: dogs that are very tight in their hip joints may not be able to fully extend)



Body Condition Scoring

Excess body weight leads to arthritis and shortens the life span of your dog.

Ideal body weight means that you should be able to see a tuck in the abdomen behind the ribs (a waist) and you should be able to feel your dogs ribs without having to push in (similar to running your fingers across the knuckles of a relaxed hand).



Body Awareness (proprioception)

◇ **Feet in a box**

Tip: Teach the dog variations including front feet only, back feet only, and all 4 feet.

◇ **Poles** - Walk through poles arranged randomly or in patterns.

◇ **Diagonal stand** - body awareness and strength

Tip: Teach this by paw targeting or physically lifting the feet. Do not lift the feet above the height of the elbow or the knee.

◇ **Side stand** - body awareness and strength

Tip: You can start by having them walk close to a diagonal surface that allows them to place the right fore and hind feet on the surface while keeping the left fore and hind on the ground, then reverse direction so the left side is up and the right side is bearing the majority of weight. Increase the angle of the incline as they progress.

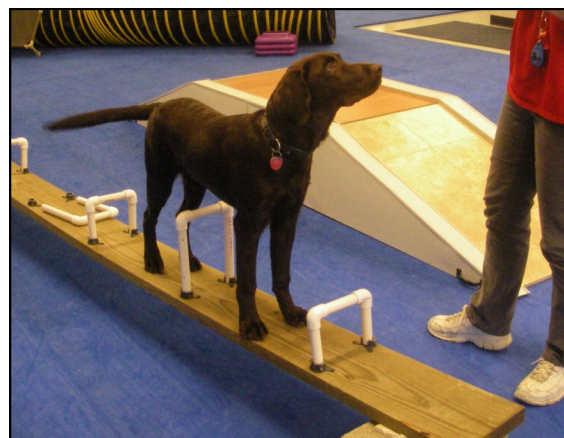
◇ **Perch work** - spin

Tip: Have them put their front feet on a raised surface (the height of their wrist). Start with something solid, large and ideally round then gradually move to a smaller surface. Move your body to get them to move their rear feet. Eventually they should be able to spin 360 degrees in both directions with their front feet planted on the surface

◇ **Walk through a ladder**

Tip: try different directions: forward, backward, sideways.

◇ **Wicket walk** - raised plank with variable height “wickets” to step over



Strength Building

o **Crawl**

Tip: Another opportunity to use your legs as a tunnel to teach this exercise. Start in a down and be sure their hind end stays down for the duration.

o **Walk backwards**

Tip: Once you have them moving confidently backwards, add walking backwards through a ladder on the ground (this builds body awareness too) ADVANCED: handstands!

o **Sit to stand**

Tip: Remember their front feet are not supposed to move. Lure under their nose to make their hind end pop up. You can also use a prop to block their front end from moving.

o **Down to stand**

Tip: Front feet do not move. Lure them up slowly remembering this is a combination of upwards and forward motion.

o **Chipmunk**

Tip: The key to this sit up and beg is to keep their haunches on the ground. Use your arms to prop their front feet on until they are strong enough. You can also stand behind them and lure them to position so they have something to lean against.

o **Wobble board - body awareness and strength**

Tip: You can use a board or plank balanced on a disc, be sure that there is adequate traction and start with controlled movement of the board so that the dog is not frightened by the sudden movement or noise.

o **Tugging**

Tip: To avoid neck strain, pull in line with the dog's neck.

o **Roll over**

Tip: Capture it or lure it. Be sure that the hips roll to the side before expecting them to initiate the roll. Practice on both sides.

o **Balance disc**

Tip: Start aiming for 15 seconds of just their front feet with out any shaking (they are completely stable). Then try their hind feet. Ultimate goal is to get all 4 feet on the disc (this requires excellent body awareness). You can also work with two discs, one for the front and one for the back legs.

o **Side stepping**

Tip: Step laterally with each front foot and progress to hind Feet. Then progress to stepping laterally down from an elevated firm surface to an elevated unsteady surface

o **Push ups**

Tip: With back feet fixed, a straight back and slight bend in elbows, nose touch to the ground. Progress to elevated back feet on stable then unstable surface.

