



What is the OrthoPets Hoppy Vest™

The OrthoPets Hoppy Vest™ is a custom mobility device for animals missing or without function of their thoracic (front) limbs. This device is used as a transition to the OrthoPets Wheelie Vest™. A sturdy plastic vest lined with comfortable foam or neoprene is fabricated from a fiberglass impression of the animal's chest. OrthoPets' technicians then add flexible skids to the bottom of the vest. With training our patients learn to bounce along on the skids creating more mobility and comfort in every day life. Some of our patients even learn to snow "ski" on the skids!

How does the OrthoPets Hoppy Vest™ improve quality of life?

Animals missing or with non-functional thoracic limbs often appear to "get along great." They learn to stand and hop-walk on their pelvic (back) limbs or learn to tripod with their chest and pelvic limbs. However, long term this can create back and neck chronic pain syndromes leading to pain and sometimes premature death. Imagine the neck strain experienced by looking up at the world always. Imagine bouncing on your chest or balancing on just 2 legs to move around each day. The OrthoPets Hoppy Vest™ allows our patients to find horizontal again bringing the pelvic limbs and chest closer to level. As the animal learns to bounce in the vest he finds mobility and pain relief!

Orientation to the OrthoPets Hoppy Vest™

At OrthoPets our rehabilitation team has developed techniques for orienting patients in the OrthoPets Hoppy Vest™. Here are some tips to get you started. Our team is available by email, phone, or virtual appointment for further assistance.

Goals –

Build confidence,
Dedicate weight shift to the chest by way of the vest
Re-align pelvic limbs beneath the pelvis
Encourage forward movement in the device
Transitions: sitting, righting

General tips -

1. Treats and praise encourage acceptance. Always work slowly.
2. Sessions should be short at first, just a few minutes in the vest with verbal and food reward only if there is no struggling/wiggling. Do not end the session until a moment when the animal is calm, then quickly treat, praise and take out of the vest
3. Meals in the vest are a great way to link good experiences to being in the vest.
4. Moving forward. Use food treats as motivation by holding treat in front of the animal and encourage neck stretching to reach for treat. As this becomes habit move a bit further away to encourage pushing or hopping. Other playmates can be motivators too. With supervision allow familiar dogs or cats to interact with your animal encouraging movement in the vest.

Important:

Best results are achieved with the guidance of a certified canine rehabilitation professional (CCRT or CCRP). These specially trained individuals will be able to use these guidelines to tailor a specific restorative rehabilitation program for your patient. If a certified professional is not available in your area you may schedule a virtual appointment with our rehabilitation team here at OrthoPets.

Transition to the OrthoPets Wheelie Vest™

Once the OrthoPets Hoppy Vest™ is mastered the next step to full mobility is conversion to the OrthoPets Wheelie Vest™. Contact OrthoPets when you are ready to transition. A custom wheel assembly will be mounted to the vest in place of the skids. By following the recommendations above you can train your pet to cover more ground, be more interactive, and more comfortable for life!