



**canine arthritis  
management**

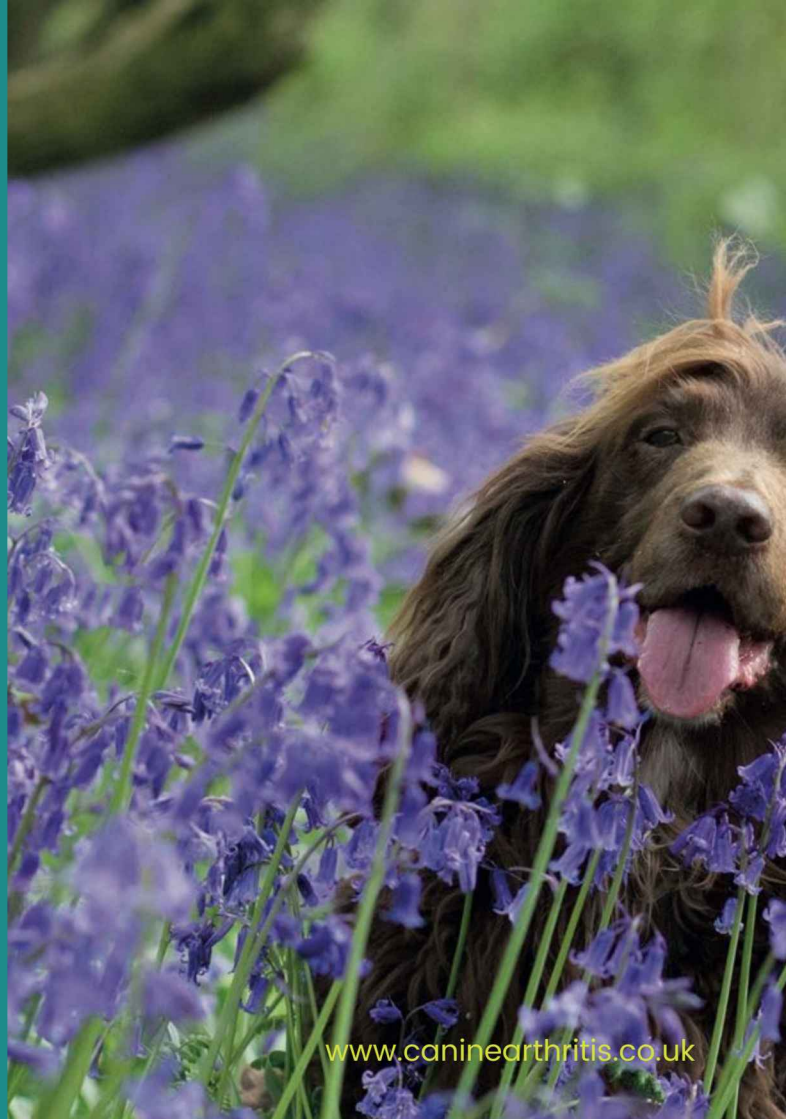
**HOUSEHOLD HAZARDS  
LIVING WITH AN ARTHRITIC DOG**



The home environment can present many hazards for an elderly or arthritic dog. Their condition will leave them less able to safely negotiate obstacles that they managed so easily before. Arthritis is a complicated progressive disease that causes not only pain, but also weakness, loss of balance and a reduced ability to accommodate slips and falls. Preventing further injury is an essential component of a multi-modal approach to successfully manage an arthritic dog.

This guide will walk you through the most common household hazards and give you ideas for how to adapt them.

**#yourdogmoreyears**







**“HE NEVER LIMPS OR MAKES A SOUND IF HE SLIPS,  
SO THESE STAIRS CAN’T BE CAUSING HIM ANY HARM!”**

Dogs do not routinely express discomfort and pain in the way we might expect them to do so. Vocalising, or laying where fallen are behaviours not generally expressed by dogs. Instead they will return to what they were doing as quickly as possible. This can be confusing for owners. They assume that the accident did not cause pain or injury. However, these trips and tumbles can be catastrophic on a single occasion, or can accumulate over time to serious musculoskeletal damage.

**AVOIDING INJURIES IS MORE EFFECTIVE  
THAN MANAGING THEM.**

# DOORWAYS AND THRESHOLDS

Steps, slippery plastic ledges and laminate flooring can lead to doorway nightmares for your arthritic four-legged friend.

The thresholds to your property are “non-negotiable resource pathways”, meaning your dog must use them regularly to enter or leave the property in order to perform essential daily routines such as toileting or going for a walk.



# THRESHOLDS...

Slips and trips over obstacles such as these can lead to repetitive strain injuries, and a worsening of their condition. Taking simple steps to minimise the chances of them catching their feet can slow the progression of the condition.

Watching to see whether your dog effortlessly clears steps and doorways or hesitates, falters and struggles is advised and adjustments made as required.



# DOG FLAPS

This dog flap represents an “assault course” for an arthritic dog.

Stepping through a small opening onto a slippery doorstep will be challenging for a dog who is weak, and unbalanced.





# THERE ARE SIMPLE SOLUTIONS

- Reduce the height of the steps
- Add a simple ramp
- Place rubber mats strategically either side of the threshold



# THERE ARE SIMPLE SOLUTIONS

- Access to dog flaps may need to be restricted and an alternative route provided
- Non-slip tape applied to slippery doorsteps, and door frames
- Accompany them, and use a harness for extra support and guidance

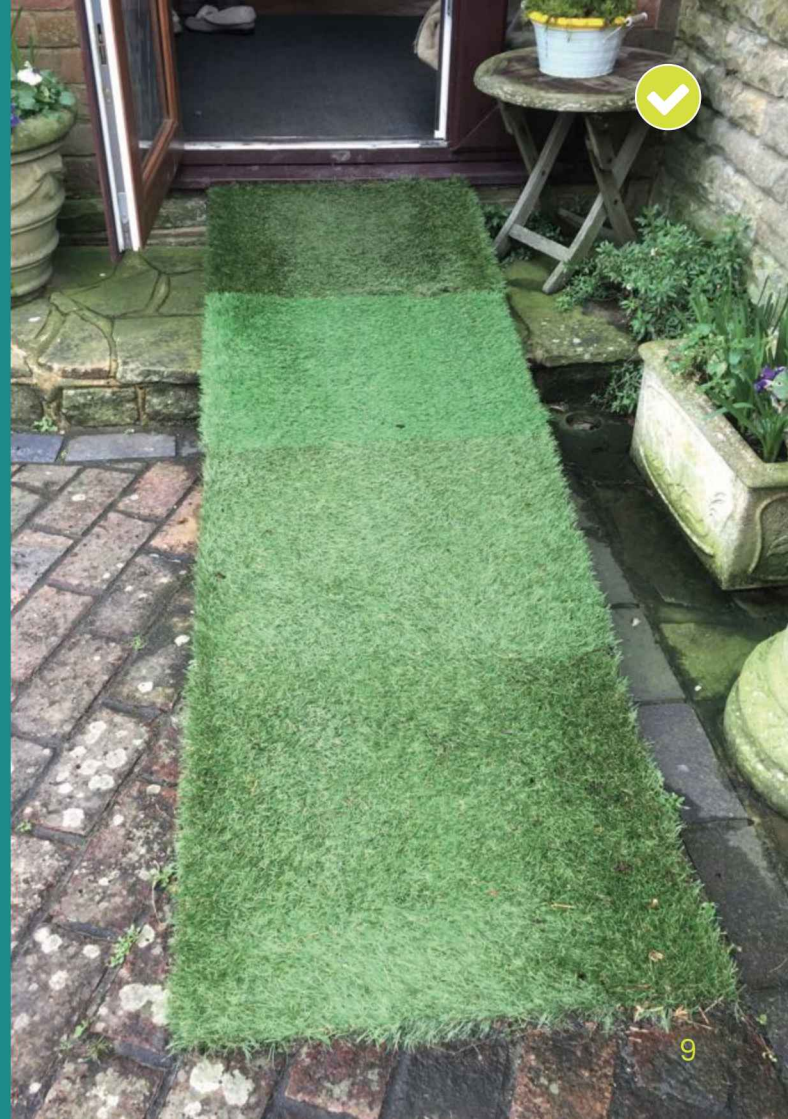




# RAMPS

A purchased or home made ramp can be very effective at minimising slips and trips and ease difficulty of certain access points.

Ensure the ramp is not a slip hazard itself, especially when wet.



# CAM ANTI-SLIP TAPE

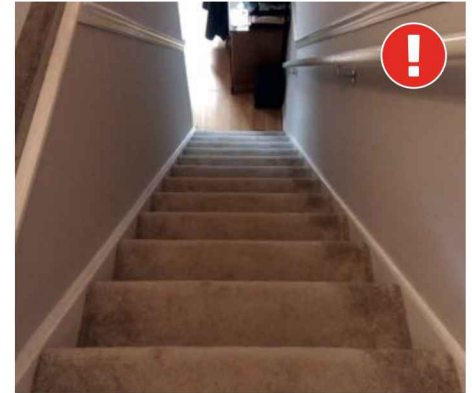
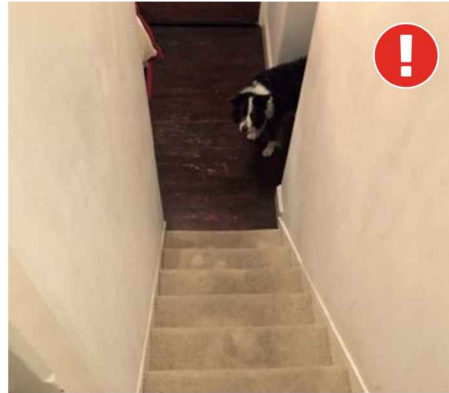
CAM Anti-slip Tape is clear and colourless but allows greater traction and is suitable for use indoors or outside.

To order some non-slip tape please email: [shop@caninearthritis.co.uk](mailto:shop@caninearthritis.co.uk)



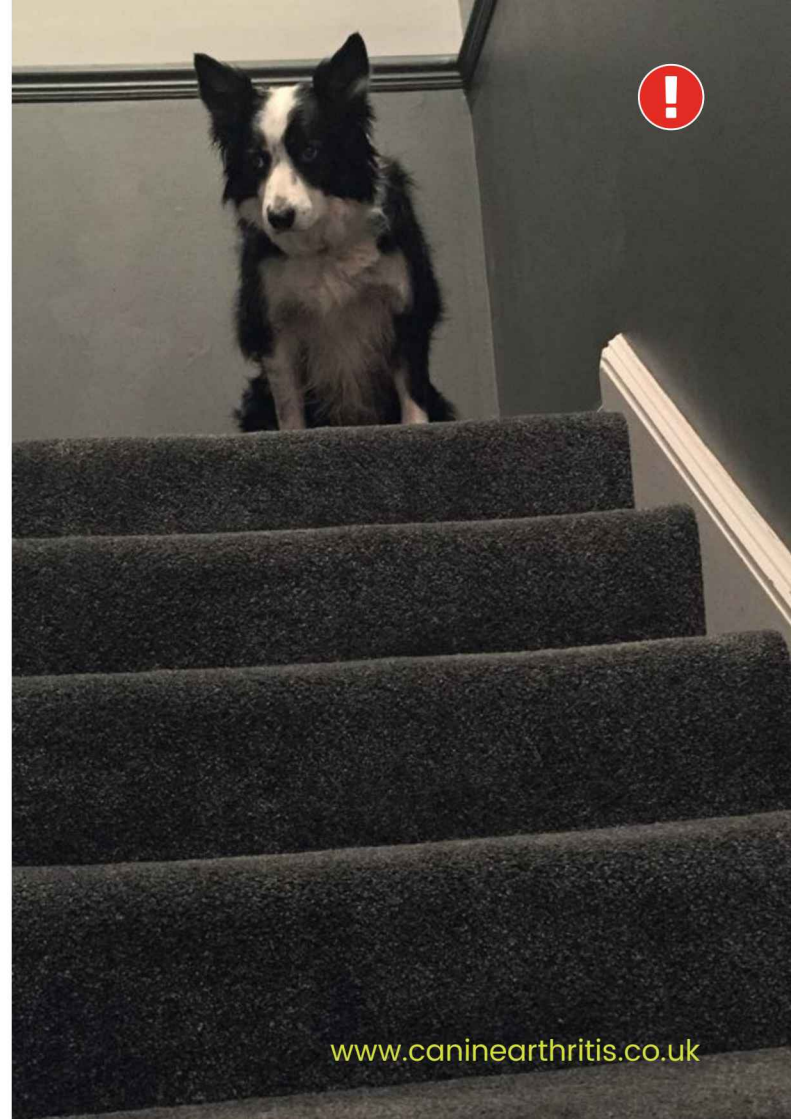
# STAIRS

Restrict unsupervised access to stairs. Uncontrolled descents can lead to injuries as well as catastrophic falls.



# STAIRS ARE A REAL DANGER TO YOUR DOG

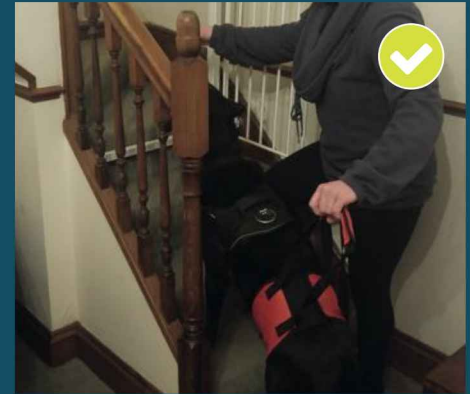
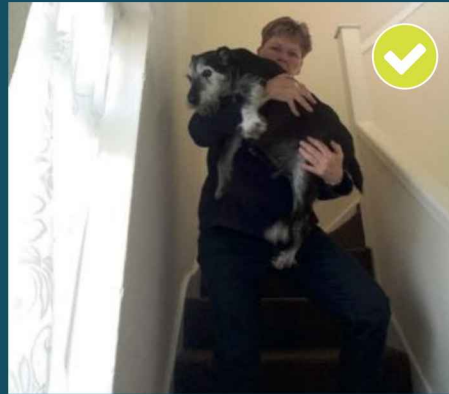
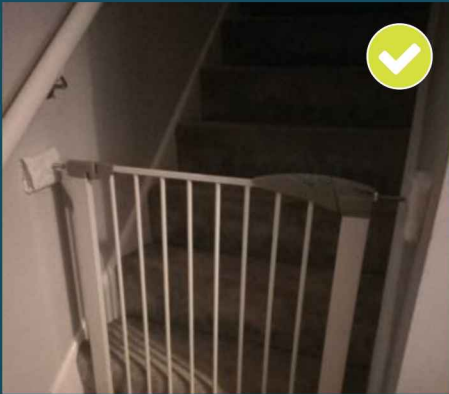
Arthritic dogs may not have the strength, balance or the control to safely navigate stairs. Their descent is often fast and dangerous, and owners regularly misread this as enthusiasm.





# SOLUTIONS FOR MANAGING STAIRS

- Restrict access by using a stair gate
- Carry your dog if possible
- Help your dog up and down with a harness



# SLIPPERY FLOORS

We love clean, shiny floors of all varieties, such as wood, laminate, lino or tiles. They are so easy to clean, we wear our rubber soled shoes on them so fail to realise how dangerous they can be.

Dog's footpads offer little grip, especially the hard, smooth pads of the older dog. Instead, dogs rely on engaging their claws, which they cannot do on our favourite floors.



# SLIPPERY FLOORS

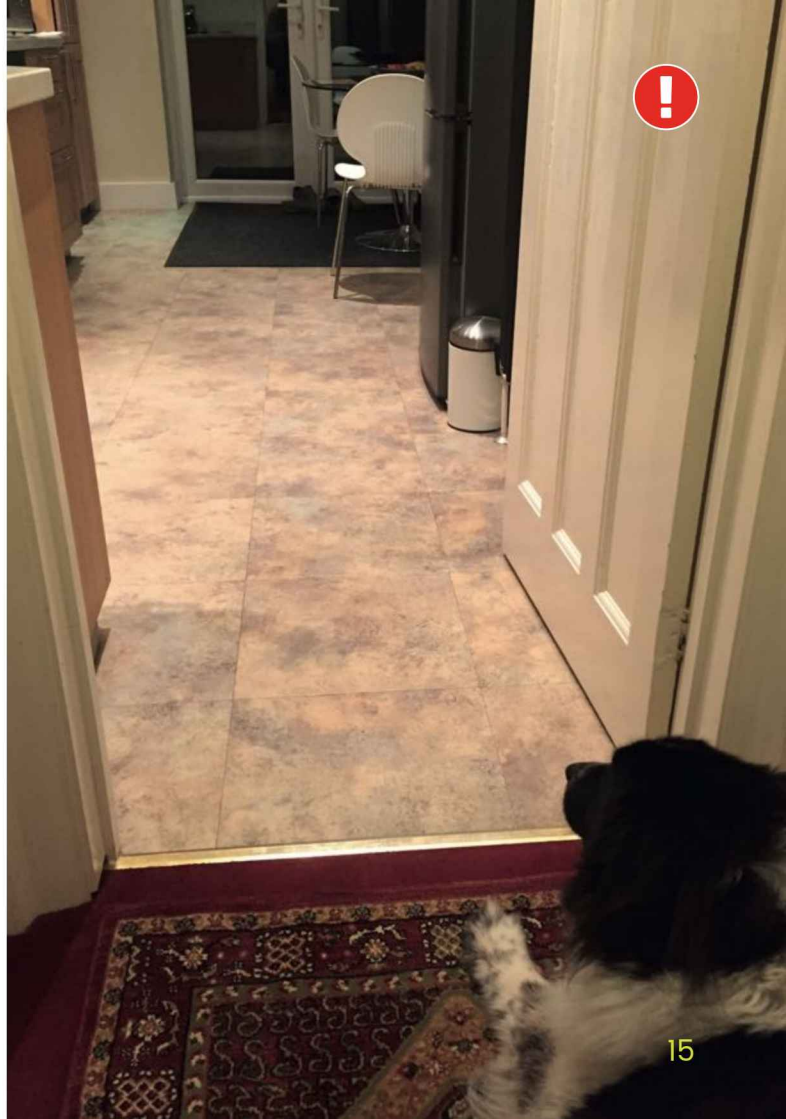
Does your dog put a lot of effort into getting from a lay into a sit because they can not get a grip on the floor?

Does your dog slip when turning?

Do they avoid the slippery floors or walk carefully across?

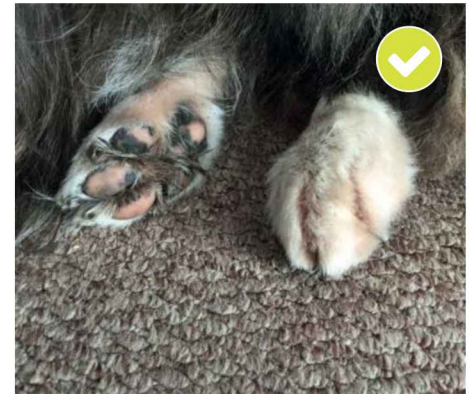
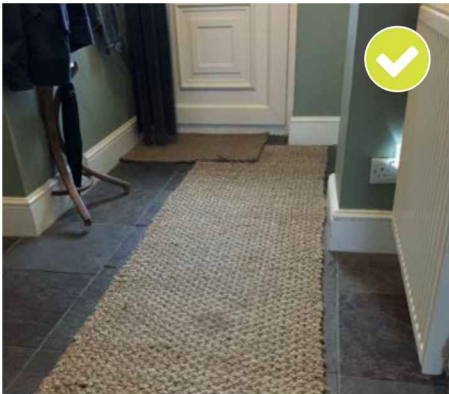
Avoiding repeated slips and injuries is better than increasing their pain medication to cope with the damage done.

[info@caninearthritis.co.uk](mailto:info@caninearthritis.co.uk)



# REDUCING THE SLIP FACTOR

- Allow your dog to safely navigate around the house by using runners and mats
- Interlocking foam tiles can be very useful to prevent slips
- Restrict access to areas that cannot be modified
- Keeping your dogs feet trimmed and nails short can help

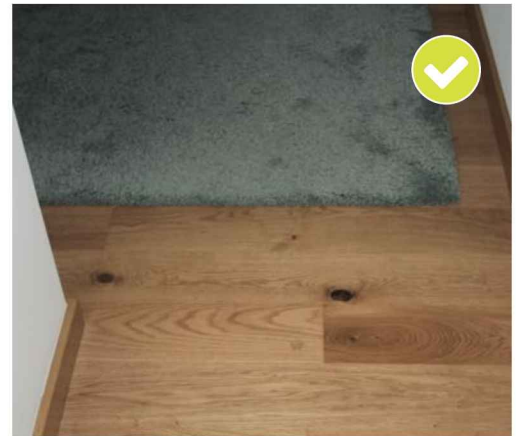
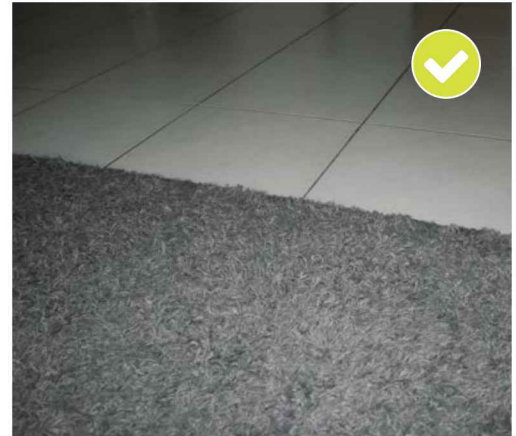




# REDUCING THE SLIP FACTOR

DO NOT UNDERESTIMATE HOW EFFECTIVE REDUCING ACCESS TO SLIPPERY FLOORS IS TO REDUCING THE PAIN AND PROGRESSION OF ARTHRITIS.

Simple mats can easily blend in and not be unpleasant on the eye. Remember you can get used to the sight of a rug, your less-able dog will not get used to a slippery floor.



# SLIPPERY FLOORS...

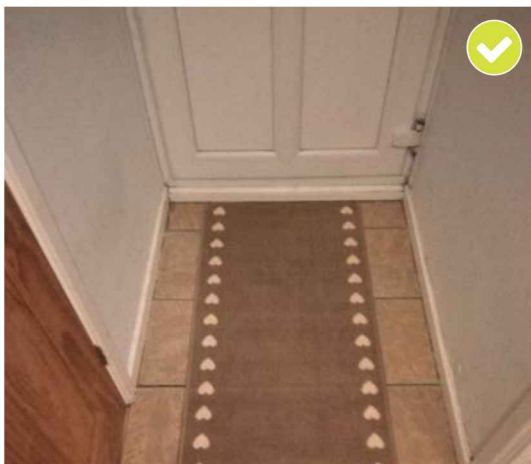
We often overlook how dangerous slippery floors can be because we walk on them in shoes.

Slippery floors tend to exist in high footfall areas where people are likely to wear shoes. If we were to wear socks, and not shoes on these surfaces, we would risk the same accidents that our dogs face daily.



# LOTS OF SOLUTIONS TO SLIPPERY FLOORS EXIST

- Focus attention on major walk ways, especially high-slip regions such as entrances and exits. Don't forget - wet paws can be more likely to slip!
- Don't forget the key locations that your dog hangs out, such as the kitchen, especially at dinner times!

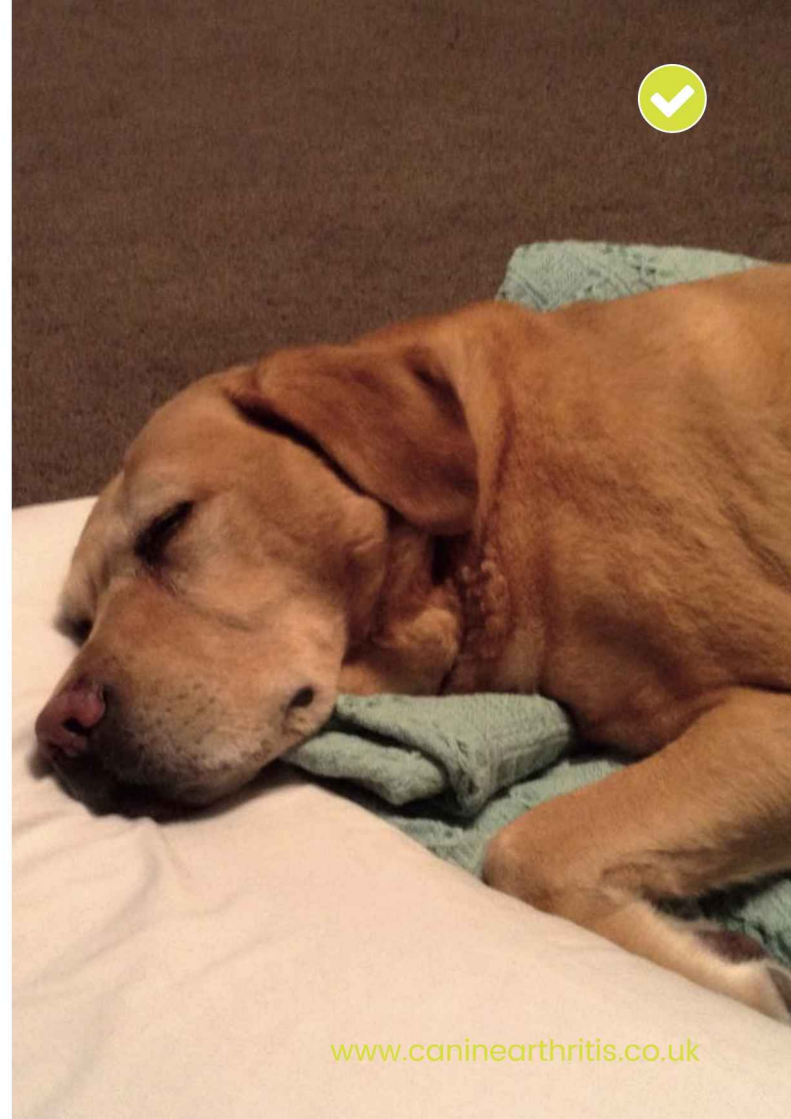


# SLEEP AND RECUPERATION

Old dogs need to sleep... lots!  
It provides essential recovery time.

Provide your dog with a suitable sleeping  
area away from draughts.

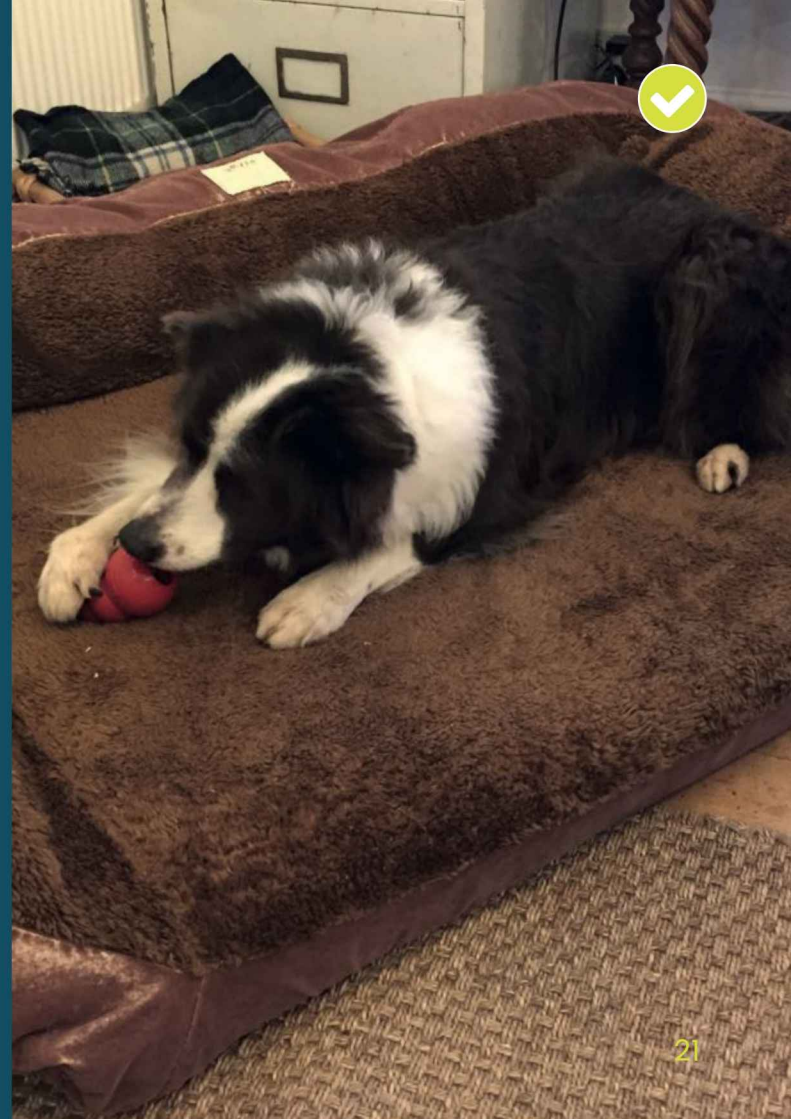
A memory foam bed with an easy  
access front and supportive sides  
is perfect.





# COMFORTABLE SLEEP

- A suitable firm memory foam bed should be big enough to allow your dog to fully stretch out
- It should be safe to stand on and have predictable edges
- It should be easy to get into for weak legs
- Avoid loose covers as they can present a trip hazard
- Don't fill the bed with toys as there will be no room for your dog

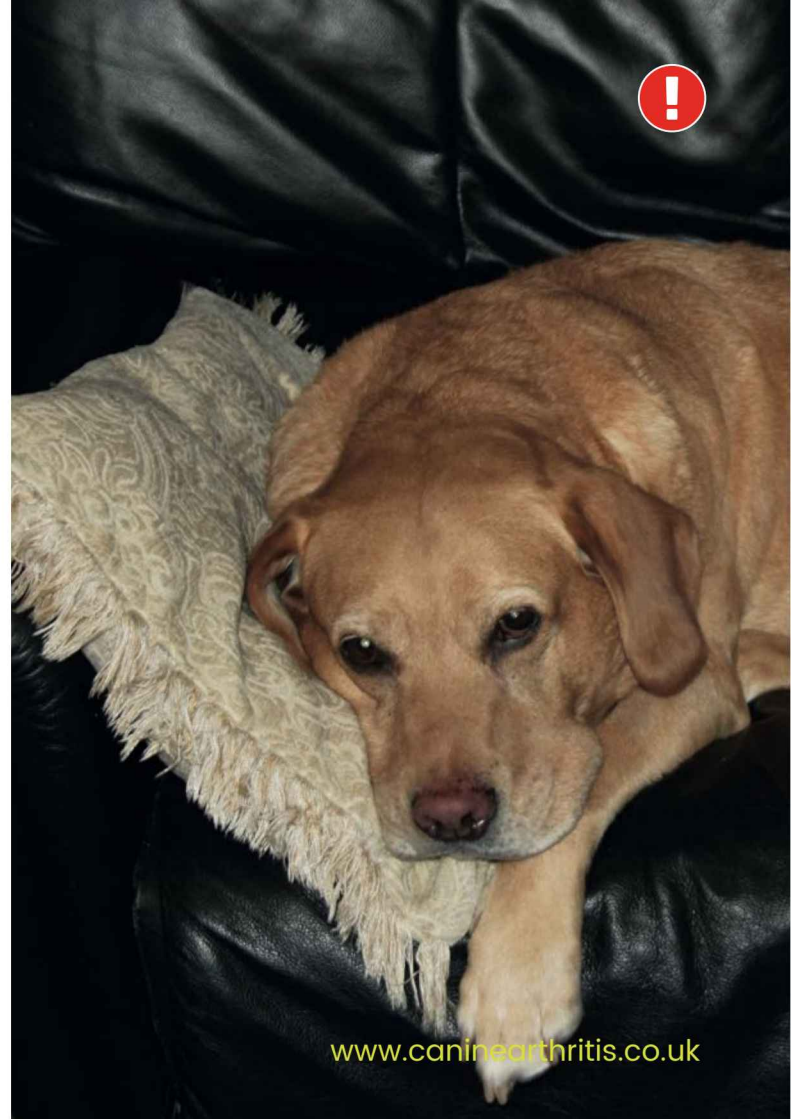


# SOFA SURFERS

Some dogs love sitting on the sofa but jumping up and down can result in injuries, especially if onto slippery surfaces.

Providing easy, safe access such as a foot stool or a step can minimise these risks.

Definitely make sure they are not jumping down on to a slippery surface, use a rug in front of the sofa.



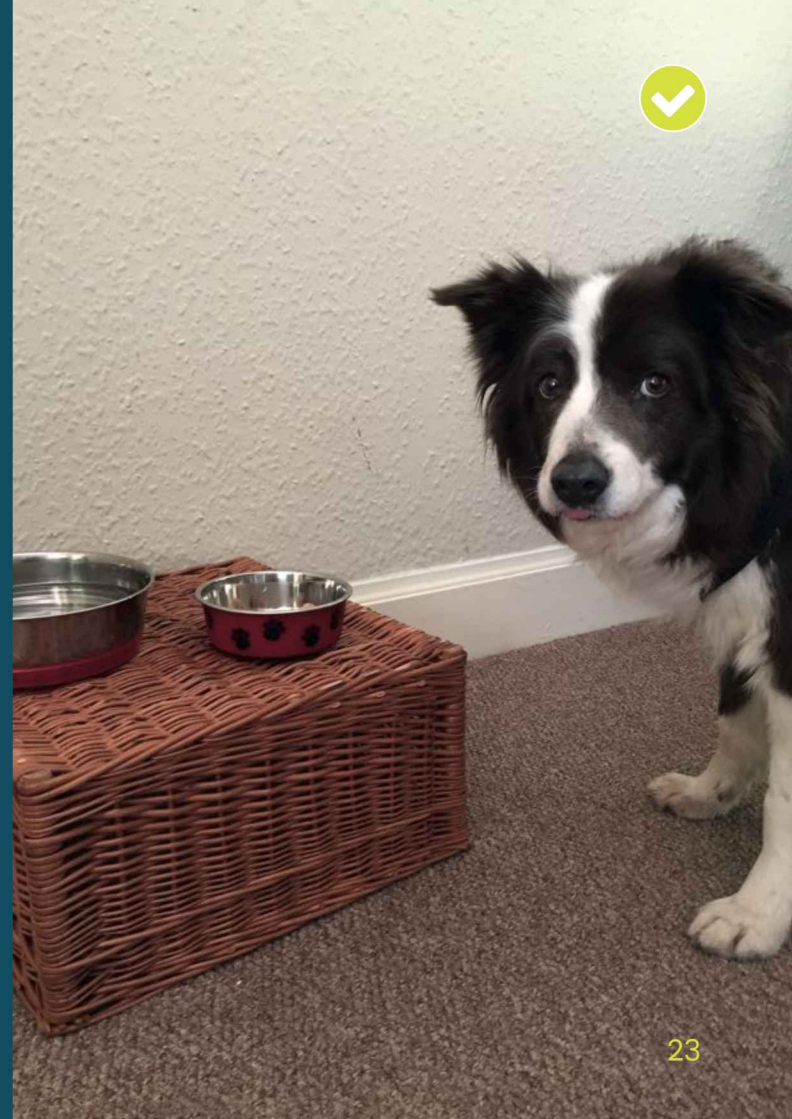
# TEA TIME

Leaning forward to reach a floor level bowl can be uncomfortable for arthritic dogs. They may be stiff and sore through their neck and shoulders. Or they may not be able to bend their elbows.

Consider raising your dog's food and water bowl to make access easier.

Homemade solutions are just as good.

Don't forget to place a non-slip mat in front.

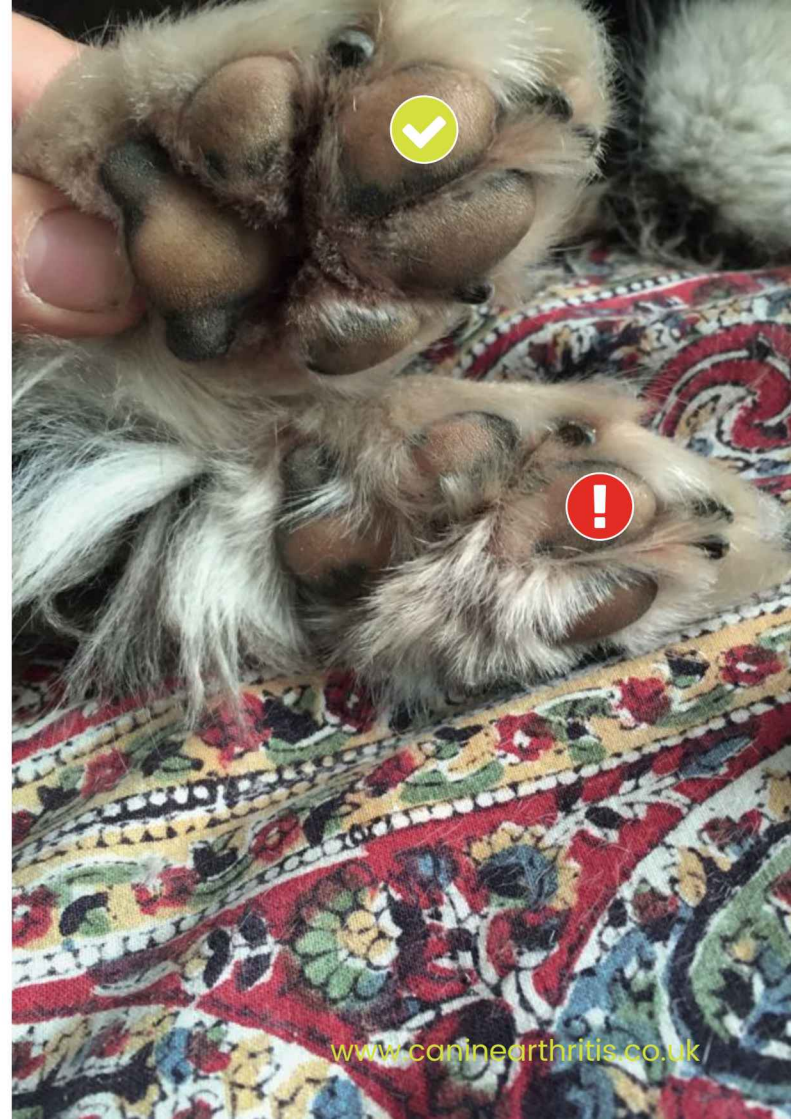




# FOOT CARE

Dogs can get arthritis in their toes which makes walking painful!

Attending to your dog's foot care is essential when managing arthritis. Give your dog better traction by keeping the hair trimmed and nails clipped.





# GETTING OUT AND ABOUT

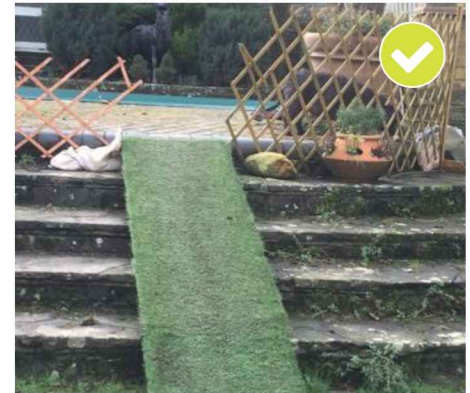
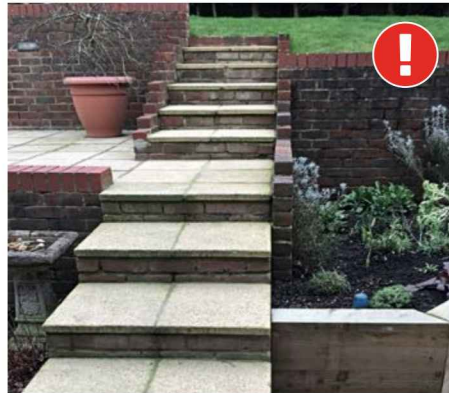
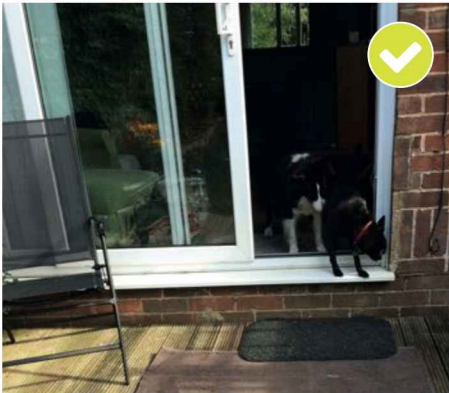
Most dogs love spending time outside. It provides a great source of interesting sights and smells.

Having arthritis should not prevent a dog from spending time outside. Being outside safely adds to their quality of life.



# THE “SAFE” OUTDOORS

- Patio steps, slippery decking, deep shingle paths and uneven surfaces can be real hazards for arthritic dogs
- Ramps can be made for difficult steps
- Rubber matting can be laid on slippery wooden decking
- Access to difficult areas can be blocked

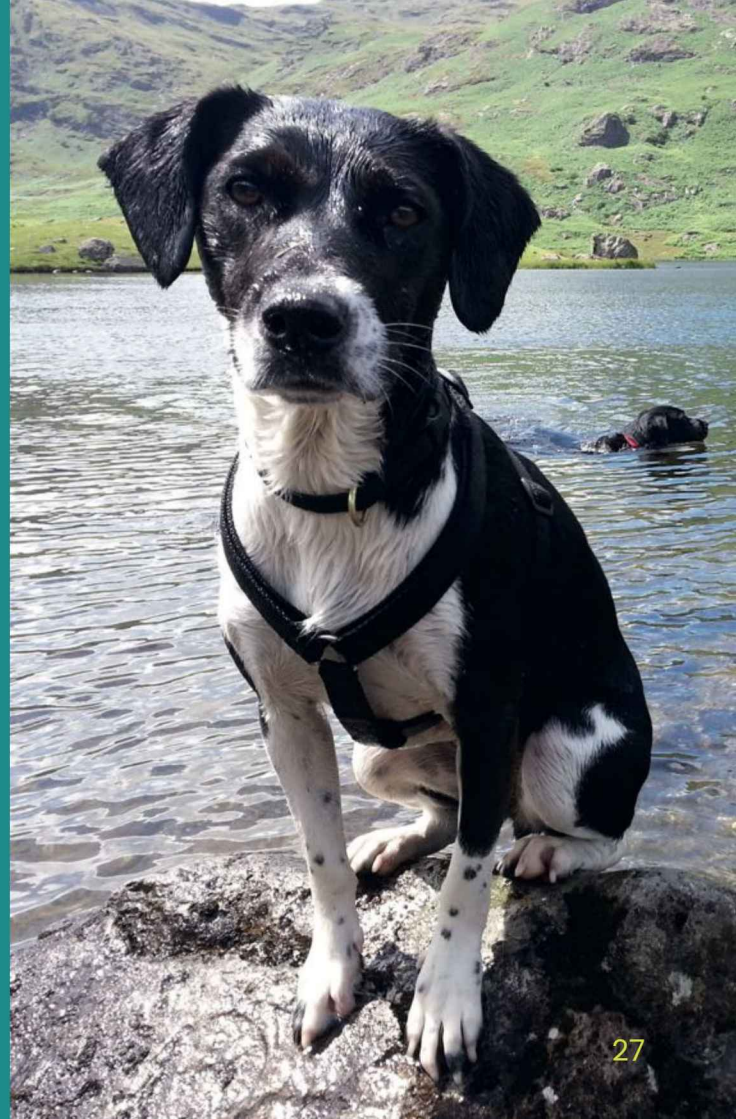


# MINI ADVENTURES

New places to walk, short journeys to the park, and little trips away are excellent mental and physical stimuli for arthritic dogs, but they often require motor transport.

Arthritic dogs should not be encouraged to jump in or out of vehicles. Instead they benefit from being lifted in, helped in with a harness or guided using ramps or steps.

Take care with their possible lack of balance on ramps, and keep a hand on them at all times.





# TRAVEL COMFORT

Providing suitable bedding in the car can provide cushioning from the bumpy roads, and allow your dog to manage the bends.





# MULTIDOG HOUSEHOLD?

- Consider walking your arthritic dog separately so they don't feel they have to try and keep up with the youngsters.
- Divide your walk into 2 sections, and only do one section with the less able, whilst fulfilling the more able dog's needs.
- Or consider using a buggy for when your weaker older dog shows signs of tiring, but still wants to be out.



# MULTIDOG HOUSEHOLD?

- Take care when playing games with your younger dog that are less suitable for your arthritic dog, as the excitement at the time may be followed with discomfort later.
- Minimise rough and tumble situations on walks or at feeding time as your arthritic dog may be less able to cope.
- Ensure there are enough beds for all dogs in the house.



# REMEMBER ANTI-SLIP TAPE

Remember... anti-slip tape can be applied to just about anything!

It can be used just about anywhere! CAM advises that it is used strategically in high risk areas such as door frames, thresholds, and on steps.

To view more of our anti-slip products head to the website:  
[www.caninearthritis.co.uk](http://www.caninearthritis.co.uk)

To purchase some CAM anti-slip tape please email: [shop@caninearthritis.co.uk](mailto:shop@caninearthritis.co.uk)

[info@caninearthritis.co.uk](mailto:info@caninearthritis.co.uk)





The intention of CAM is to provide resources to help change owners, vets and the public's perception of how to diagnose and treat chronic pain in animals, which will then lead to improved lives for the dogs and their owners.

Find out more online...

[info@caninearthritis.co.uk](mailto:info@caninearthritis.co.uk)

[www.caninearthritis.co.uk](http://www.caninearthritis.co.uk)



Canine Arthritis Foundation is our free online community for owners and professionals to discuss all things canine arthritis related and more.

Sign up for free  
and come join the conversation.

[www.cam-foundation.co.uk](http://www.cam-foundation.co.uk)

**Copyright 2020 Hannah Capon. All rights reserved.**

This booklet is protected by UK and international copyright laws.

Reproduction and distribution of the presentation without written permission of the sponsor is prohibited.

© Copyright 2020 Hannah Capon