

Easy home modifications for painful pets

Pets experiencing pain may need adaptations in their environment. Depending on the reason for your pet's pain, it may help to make changes in their environment to make your home more comfortable for them. Consider these changes to ease their way:

- Consider carrying small dogs up and down stairs.
- Block stairways as necessary.
- Use area rugs to protect pets from slipping and sliding on hardwood floors or tile.
- Raise food and water dishes so the pet doesn't need to reach down to eat and drink. This can be done with specialty dishes or by simply placing a crate underneath existing dishes to reach the desired height.
- Modify your living spaces to spend time with the pet. For example, if you usually watch TV downstairs but it's too difficult for the pet to manage the steps, consider carrying the pet or choosing a different room for family time to enjoy time with your furred family member.
- Put their conveniences at their level. As cats grow older, you may need to place food and water dishes on the floor rather than a counter. If this poses a problem for other pets, such as dogs that like to graze in the cat's food, consider baby gates, cat doors, and other modifications to provide a safe spot for the cat to take care of business.
- Use ramps as necessary. These can be convenient for pets who need help to get in and out of the car or to climb up on acceptable furniture, such as a couch or bed, depending on your preference.

Source: Sharon DeNayer, practice manager, The Downing Center for Pain Management, Windsor, Colo.

