

PRESS RELEASE

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Editor note: Watch video of a rehabilitation session with the goat at:
<http://youtu.be/LWTyrPTU8qY>

Goat undergoes physical rehabilitation *Non-invasive approach is used to improve the recovery of zoo animals*

SEATTLE—Hot packs, ice treatment, massage, exercise ball, laser therapy...is this a physical therapy session? Close, but not for a human patient. These applications are part of a physical rehabilitation session for a domestic goat living at Woodland Park Zoo.



The goat, a 7-year-old male named *Waldo*, is undergoing physical rehabilitation to help alleviate pain and improve his range of motion. Last year, Waldo was becoming more reluctant to move and showing signs of front and rear limb weakness. Following a thorough assessment by the zoo's animal health team, which revealed compressed disks in his neck and lumbar spine, the goat was put on a physical rehabilitation program as part of a comprehensive treatment plan.

At the zoo, physical rehabilitation is used to help alleviate discomfort from an injury or surgical treatment, to improve circulation or range of motion and coordination, and to enhance life quality. It is particularly beneficial for treating age-related changes, such as arthritis, and can help reduce the need or amount of other medications.

Waldo is currently under a prescribed program of massage, stretching, weight shifting on an exercise ball, laser therapy, and ice (cryotherapy) and heat (thermotherapy) treatments. The zoo's senior veterinary technician, Harmony Frazier, and the goat's lead keeper, Diane Abbey, lead the rehab team for Waldo and apply physical rehab a few times a week in hourly sessions. Cavaletti rails, designed to help promote muscle strength and coordination in dogs, are also used for the goat. "It's the equivalent of hurdles for the four-legged," said Frazier.

One of the zoo's veterinary technicians even made a custom "apron jacket" for the goat, designed specifically to hold ice or heat packs to lie over the goat's targeted muscle groups, lumbar and shoulders.

As a result of the rehab sessions combined with comprehensive medical care, Waldo has made remarkable and positive progress, said Frazier. Initially, Waldo was reluctant to stand. Within the first week of rehab, his attitude changed remarkably. "He became very engaged and alert. The attention on him has had a very positive effect. The sessions clearly changed his perception and increased his motivation. While his condition is permanent and likely to become progressive, he will continue to be assessed on a regular basis and all components of his treatment, including physical rehab, will be adjusted as needed to maintain his health quality," explained Frazier.

Physical rehabilitation has long been used on human patients but is relatively new for animals in zoos, noted Frazier, who last year became certified in veterinary physical rehabilitation at the University of Tennessee Veterinary School. Frazier also was the first veterinary technician in a zoo to become a certified canine rehabilitation practitioner and, most recently, became nationally certified in animal massage. "Most veterinary technicians have had cases where they have performed some form of rehab therapy but I had an interest in understanding what is actually happening within the tissues and body systems so I can better apply these modalities to enhance the welfare of exotic animals," said Frazier. "Taking these courses allows me to translate this discipline to the animals living at our zoo and improving the quality of their lives."

Other animals that have received physical rehab techniques at the zoo include a penguin, gorilla, opossum, snowy owl, flamingo, patas monkey, an arctic fox, an elephant, western

pond turtles and numerous waterfowl. "By combining training techniques with physical rehab, we have numerous possibilities ahead of us for helping our animals lead even better lives," added Frazier.

Waldo lives in the zoo's Family Farm where children can meet him up close in the Contact Area. "He's so good with the kids," said Abbey. "It's rewarding to do something for him in return."

Visit www.zoo.org for information about Woodland Park Zoo and a schedule for the Contact Area.

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