Recognising compensation in Canine Amputees

A full limb amputation in canines is almost always a life-saving procedure. While it allows you to spend more years with your dog, losing a limb comes at a cost.

To help your dog live their best life, recognise compensation strategies early and give your dog the support they need to prevent injuries.

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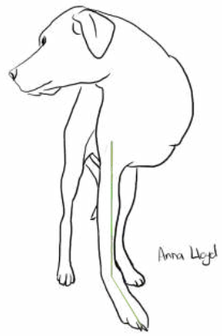
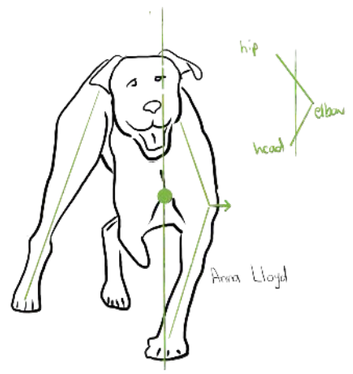
HYDRO & VETERINARY PHYSIO



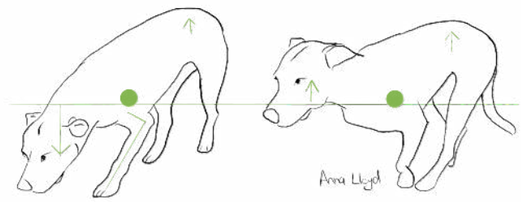
The carpus

When we look at the carpus from the side, the foot appears flattened or as if it is sinking.
We may also see a bend to the inside when we look at the carpus from in front.



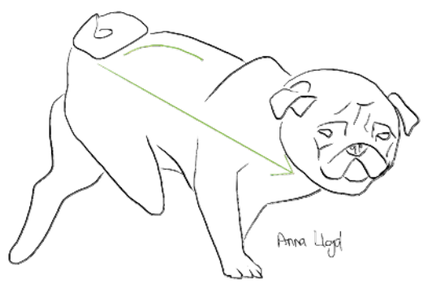
Curvature of the spine

We can see that the dog's hips lean towards his right, the shoulders and elbow towards his left, and the head and neck towards the right as the spine curves in compensation.



The head and neck bob

Amputees will have a large head rise and fall as they walk or run. This places strain on the spine and fatigues the core muscles.
As they fatigue, the chest lowers.



The lumbosacral junction

The lower back or the lumbosacral region becomes rounded. This becomes noticeable as the chest sinks down and is an indication of compensation.