

Pets in their home environments

Introduction

We tailor our own home environment to make living and daily tasks as easy and as comfortable as possible. But do we consider the impact of this environment on our pets?

For our pets, the difficulty of walking from one room to another or eating a meal can vary greatly depending on the environmental factors at play.



Flooring

Imagine walking on a slippery surface, such as ice. You would slow your pace, take much smaller strides and increase the muscle tone through your trunk to make you more stable and prevent falling.

On slick flooring, dogs and cats will act similarly but when they engage in play or move quickly, maintaining muscle strength is much more difficult and can lead to overstrain and soreness, especially where there is already joint disease or weakness.



Jumping

Jumping onto and off sofas, beds, worktops and in and out of the car increases concussive force through a joint.

Jumping is a normal movement and can be part of play or exercise, however, it can be problematic when done repetitively.

When jumping, the force through the forelimbs can be up to 4.5 times the body weight of the animal (depending on the speed and height of the jump). Repetitive exposure to excess force can lead to acute injury and/or long term degeneration.



Our guide to... Pets in their home environment

Feeding

Feeding from the floor can provide neck joint and muscle activity and encourage stretch further along the spinal muscle groups. In dogs and cats who have difficulty with neck movement or generalised mobility, raising and securing feeding bowls and providing a mat to stand on can make consuming their meals much easier.



Sleeping

Bedding should provide adequate soft support to prevent pressure areas and allow enough space for change of position during sleep periods. Positioning beds away from drafts and raising bedding up off cold floors can help to reduce post rest soreness in older dogs.



Helpful Tips

- ✓ Mats or carpet runners in areas where your pets play or walk provides grip
- ✓ Where possible, lift cats and small dogs on and off sofas (and in and out of cars for dogs)
- ✓ Ramps can provide an alternative to prevent repetitive load when jumping in large dogs
- ✓ Feeding from raised and secured bowls can make meal times easier for elderly pets
- ✓ Ensure bedding is supportive with enough room to change position during sleep
- ✓ Stair gates can avoid uncontrolled running up and down stairs



At Davies Therapy and Fitness Centre, as part of our clinical assessment, we will discuss with you your pets home environment in order to get a better understanding of the challenges they may face.

To find out more about us visit
www.vetspecialiststherapy.co.uk.