

EVERYDAY DOGS, SPECIAL OWNERS

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Photos by Britt Croft Photography

Snoopy: A story of patience & trust

Snoopy's story starts when she was surrendered to the SPCA by her owner. She lost all trust in people, and her prospects weren't good. Mary Lou, a dedicated volunteer spent close to a year patiently sitting with her and slowly working until she was able to touch her. She hoped Snoopy would improve



and be adopted but she only trusted Mary Lou so eventually she brought her home. Snoopy is a wonderful dog at the farm, with three other dogs, and she is relaxed, confident and happy. Not so though when she has to go the vet. She cannot be touched and needs sedation for any procedure or treatment. Needless to say Mary Lou tries to minimize the visits so as not to traumatize Snoopy.

Snoopy was playing ball when she landed on her rear leg and completely tore the cranial cruciate ligament in her knee. Normally with a full cruciate tear knee surgery is recommended but due to Snoopy's fear and the inability to provide the necessary follow up care,

conservative treatment was chosen. Providing rehabilitation to an animal that doesn't want to be touched is a challenge. Our first goal was to gain Snoopy's trust. My assistant Maggie Brown has a wonderful way with dogs and pretty soon Snoopy was taking treats and performing the exercise program with her. Since the exercises are fun Snoopy quickly became relaxed and now enjoys her treatments. She even lets me pet her and feed her treats with my white coat on!

To provide pain relief we treat her knee with the cold laser. This painless, non-invasive therapy speeds healing and reduces inflammation which made it possible to discontinue oral pain medication. One of the most effective treatments we provide for joint injuries is walking in the underwater treadmill. We were concerned how Snoopy would take to this, especially the first time as we need to hold them during the training process. Luckily she loves water and took to walking in the water immediately. Now water treadmill walking and the physioball exercises are her favorite things. Snoopy comes for therapy weekly and Mary Lou and her husband perform Snoopy's home care exercises and leash walks daily.

When trying to heal a torn cruciate without surgery having dedicated owners like Snoopy's are crucial to a successful outcome. These patients need months of exercise restriction, leash walks and a specific exercise program. I'm very pleased with Snoopy's progress, each week she has improved with no setbacks. After five months she is using her leg well with only a little limp, and she has developed trust in us and enjoys her treatment time. The great news is that Snoopy should soon be back to running free.

Aiken Pet Fitness and Rehabilitation can be reached at (803)-226-0012 or found online at www.petfitnessandrehab.com.

