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# Knee Brace

## Fit and Care Instructions

Thank you for helping your dog walk comfortably again by choosing a custom leg brace from My Pet's Brace™. Our knee brace provides an effective solution for ACL/CCL injuries by controlling the side to side movement of the knee joint and preventing the tibia from sliding towards the front of the femur. Please follow the instructions below and contact us if you have any questions or concerns regarding your dog's brace or progress.

**Step 1:** Make an appointment with My Pet's Brace or your local veterinarian/rehabilitation professional to assist with the fitting of the brace.

**Step 2:** Watch the fitting video on our website at: [www.mypetsbrace.com/training-videos](http://www.mypetsbrace.com/training-videos).

**Step 3:** Read and follow the Fit and Care Instructions below.

### Wearing Instructions

- An ACL/CCL tear is a significant injury and will take 6-9 months to heal while wearing the brace.
- Unless otherwise instructed, use a gradual break-in schedule to allow your dog to become familiar with the brace. Start with 3 hours on the first day and increase by an additional 1 hour per day as tolerated. These do not have to be continuous hours and can be broken up into small segments. Your dog should be supervised during the break-in period.
  - a. The break-in schedule allows your dog to adjust to wearing the brace, builds their skin tolerance to the brace and allows the pet family to practice putting the brace on and taking the brace off.
- After the break-in period, wearing times should build up to 8-14 hours a day. Put the brace on in the morning and take it off at night.
- Your dog should never wear the brace at night or when they are crated.
- Following use, remove the brace and inspect the skin. There may be some skin redness where the brace is in contact with your dog's leg since the goal of the brace is to control and restrict certain motions. Redness should dissipate within 15 minutes. Discontinue use of the brace if there are any signs of significant hair loss, blisters, or sores and contact My Pet's Brace.
- For the first 3-6 months, your dog may not bear full weight on their injured leg even while wearing the brace. Every dog's injury and progress are different.

### Activity Level / Restrictions

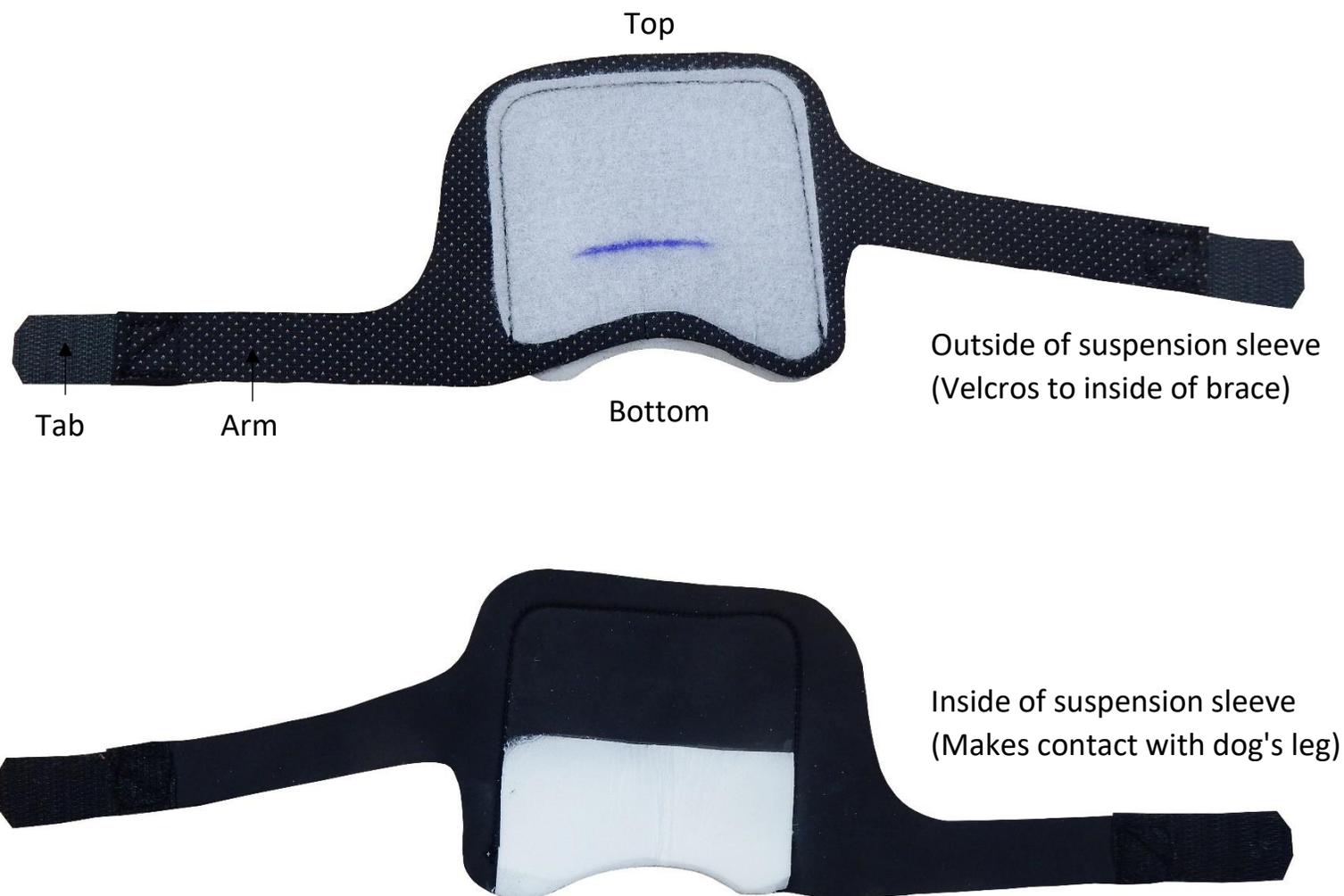
- For the first 2-3 weeks, take 2-3 short 10-15 minute leashed walks per day. Limit stairs as much as possible. If going up more than three stairs, use a sling or towel underneath the abdomen to help them up the stairs.
- Gradually increase walks as tolerated.
- The brace must always be on when your dog is outside, even if it's only for a few minutes.
- No dog or ball playing for the first 4 months.
- The brace can be worn while swimming. After your dog is done swimming- take the brace off, rinse the brace off with fresh water if in salt water, thoroughly dry the brace and your dog's leg, re-powder the suspension sleeve, then put the brace back on.
- Dogs that sleep all day and are not aroused easily, can use the brace only when they are outside.

## Cleaning the Brace

- The brace can be cleaned with a wash cloth and mild soapy water. Make certain all soap residue is removed and the brace and your dog's hair is completely dry before re-applying.
  - Remove hair/dirt from the Velcro with a wire brush, brushing in one direction on the hook portion only.
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## Fitting the Brace

- 1) Your dog can be standing or lying during the fitting. Initially, lying down may be easier.
- 2) This is the suspension sleeve.



- a. When you receive the brace, the suspension sleeve is already attached to the brace with Velcro. It has a line that shows the approximated height where the sleeve should be attached to the brace. Typically, it is not necessary to remove the sleeve from this position/brace. See *Adjustments and Modifications* section for more information.
- b. **Liberal powder the inside of the suspension sleeve and its arms with cornstarch or baby powder DAILY. If your dog is highly active or there is high humidity, powder the sleeve more often.**

3) Flex the knee joint slightly and apply the brace as high as possible in the groin.



4) Place the cutout of the suspension sleeve towards the front of your dog's leg. Starting with the inside arm, pull the arm around the back of the hock and secure the Velcro tab to the bottom front of the suspension sleeve, below the line. Repeat this action with the outside arm.

- a. The sleeve should be snug, but not so tight as to cause swelling or interference with the motion of the Achilles tendon. For dogs 50lbs or greater, you should be able to fit your pinky finger between your dog's leg and the straps of the suspension sleeve (less than a pinky width for dogs under 50 pounds).
- b. If the tabs overlap on the white Velcro, trim the black Velcro tabs as needed.



For demonstration purposes only, here the suspension sleeve is shown unattached to the brace.

- 5) See picture A below. Tighten the bottom back strap of the brace. Center the foam Achilles tendon pad over your dog's Achilles tendon. The Achilles tendon pad goes above or over the straps of the suspension sleeve. There are two different styles of Achilles tendon pads, pictured below. Both function the same way. For medium to large size dogs, you should be able to fit one finger between the strap and the leg of your dog. Less than a finger for smaller dogs.

Achilles Tendon Pad – Style A



Achilles Tendon Pad – Style B

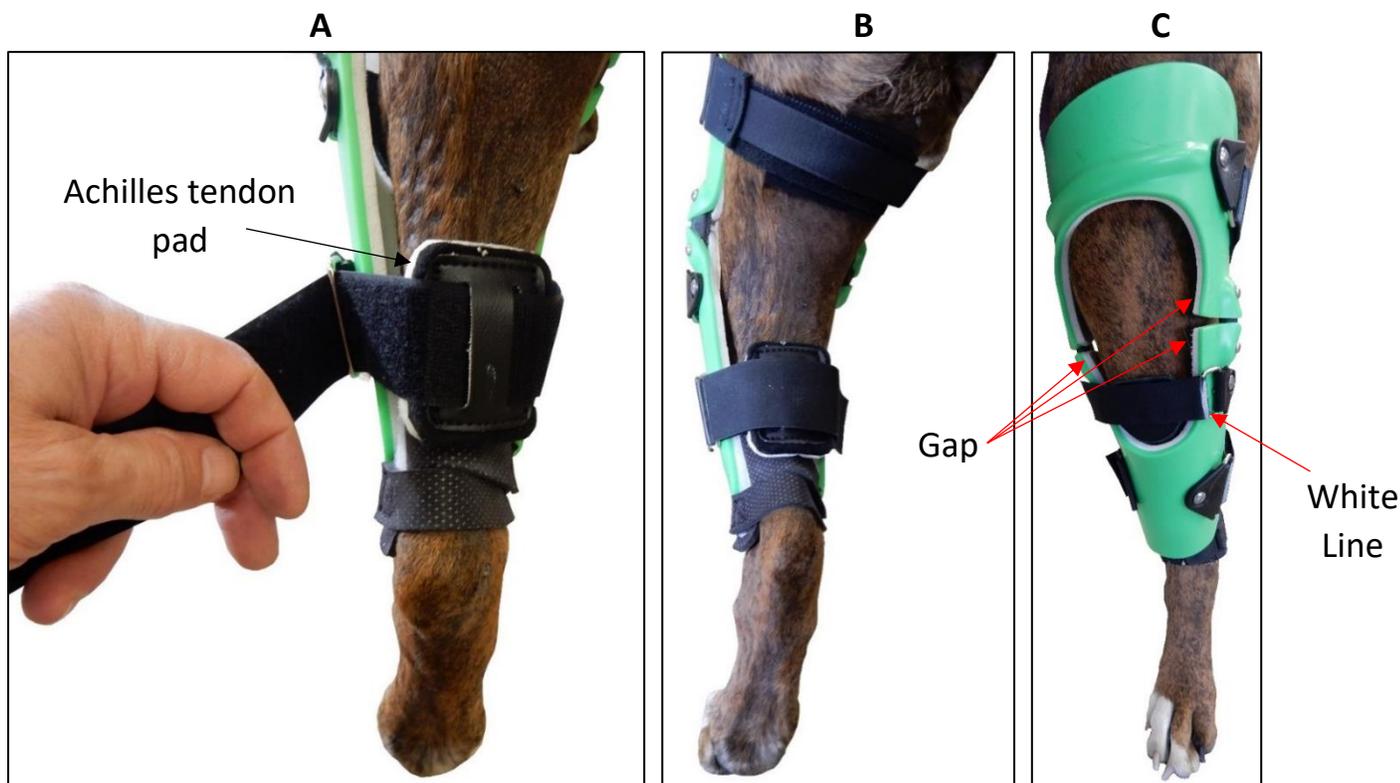


- 6) See picture B below. Tighten the top elastic strap. You should be able to fit one finger between the strap and the leg of your dog. Less than a finger for smaller dogs.

Some tall dogs have an extra strap that goes around the back of the leg. You should be able to fit one finger between the strap and your dog's leg.

- 7) See picture C below. The front middle strap is pre-adjusted based on the model of your dog's leg. The white line indicates how tight the strap should be and it does not need to be changed.

- a. **Around your dog's knee- a gap will be visible between the brace and your dog's knee. This is normal. This strap is not very tight and will only touch your dog's knee when the knee is in full extension.**
- b. On very small braces, the knee strap is a split design. This strap is pre-adjusted and does not need to be changed.



- 8) The brace is now on. Encourage your dog to walk slowly. Initially, they may hesitate to bear weight on the leg or sit because they are not used to the restriction from the straps. They may wide step or act like they're kicking sand. After a few minutes to several days, your dog will become comfortable wearing the brace. Every dog's adjustment time is different.
  - a. During the first few minutes in the brace, some knuckling or walking on the top of their foot is normal. If knuckling is consistent, the arms of the suspension sleeve may be too tight and can be loosened.
- 9) The brace may slide down slightly, but the straps of the suspension sleeve should not slide below the hock. You may need to adjust the straps once your dog is in a standing position and if going for long walks.
  - a. If the straps of the suspension sleeve slides over the hock- tighten the arms of the suspension sleeve and/or the bottom strap as seen in picture A on page 4.
- 10) On a regular basis, inspect your dog's skin for any irritation. Inspect the brace for signs of wear. Straps and padding may need to be replaced over time. This is normal wear on the brace. If you were mailed the brace or visited the Morgantown, PA office, call 610-286-0018 for replacements or repairs. Call 724-338-4889 if you visited with the Pittsburgh Office.



## **Removing the Brace**

- 1) Starting from the top, unhook the Velcro of the top back strap, bottom back strap and the suspension sleeve. On the suspension, pull from the outermost tabs. Pulling from the arms may cause them to tear.
- 2) Do not remove the suspension sleeve from the brace itself.
- 3) Do not remove/un-Velcro the middle front strap.

## **Adjustments and Modifications**

During the fitting process, adjustments are often needed to obtain the most exacting fit. Sometimes, these do not become obvious until the brace has been worn for several weeks. If adjustments are needed, please contact us to discuss. If you were mailed the brace or visited the Morgantown, PA office, call 610-286-0018. Call 724-338-4889 if you visited the Pittsburgh Office. We will most likely request a picture or a video of your dog walking (taken at dog's eye level) be emailed for us to evaluate. Modification costs and replacement parts are covered under our warranty during the first 90 days after original delivery of the brace.