

Arthritis Checklist

Dogs (check any appropriate boxes):

- Hesitates/slow on stairs
- Uses both back legs together on stairs
- Sits crooked (hips to one side)
- Slow to sit/slow to lie down
- Slow to get up, stiff after getting up
- Troubles getting up on slippery floors
- Tires on walks/reluctant to walk as far
- Walks stiffly
- Hesitates/needs help getting into the car
- Rarely jumps around during play
- Muscle tremors (like shivering)
- Excess panting, even when at rest
- Restlessness, can't settle down and relax
- Limping, even occasionally

Cats (check any appropriate boxes):

- Not as good about using the litter box
- Starts to leave stools uncovered or outside the litter box
- Spends more time than usual lying or sitting
- Coat is poor (greasy, unkempt, knots)
- Hesitates/slow/stops to rest on stairs
- Moves slowly and carefully
- Avoids/walks carefully on slippery floors
- Spends time hiding/in private
- No longer wants to be petted/touched
- Doesn't want to play much at all
- Rarely jumps onto furniture/counters
- Acts like he wants to jump but hesitates
- No longer climbs up to higher perches

If your dog or cat shows any of the above symptoms, he may have arthritis and should be evaluated. Notice that symptoms in cats are mostly changes in behavior, while symptoms in dogs tend to be more measurable and physical. Many of these symptoms develop gradually.

Eventually they will worsen, but many pets suffer in silence for a long time. For dogs, signs of pain include muscle tremors (shivering), licking joints, excess panting, restlessness, and limping.

Treatment can make your pet happy and much more comfortable – you'd be surprised at how much more they'll be able to do! Treatment plans usually include weight loss, exercise therapy, vitamin supplements, medications, and modifications of your pet's home environment.

