



Canadian  
Physiotherapy  
Association

Association  
canadienne de  
physiothérapie

Position Statement

## Physiotherapists and the Practice of Animal Rehabilitation

The provision of treatment to animals by physiotherapists is a practice that is growing nationally and internationally. Physiotherapists who treat animals use interventions that are based on the knowledge and skills gained in the education and practice of physiotherapy but supplemented by post-graduate education and training specific to the treatment of animals. There are an increasing number of education and research programs in both universities and veterinary colleges<sup>1</sup>. The body of published research into animal rehabilitation is growing and a number of international scientific conferences are held annually.

In Canada, provincial physiotherapy legislation restricts use of the terms 'physiotherapy' and 'physiotherapist<sup>2</sup>' to the treatment of humans and may not be applied to animals. Members are advised that animal rehabilitation is not included within the practice requirements for maintaining annual registration. The Canadian Physiotherapy Association (CPA) supports title protection and acknowledges that physiotherapists treating animals must adhere to existing provincial regulatory requirements related to use of these practice and title terms. By extension non-physiotherapist practitioners should not describe their practice as 'animal physiotherapy.'

### National Office

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<sup>1</sup> CPA Background Paper on Animal Rehabilitation November 2010

<sup>2</sup> The terms physiotherapy and physiotherapist are considered synonyms for physical therapy and physical therapist respectively and will be used interchangeably in this document.