Preparing Your Home for Orthopedic Surgery

For fracture repair, patellar luxation correction, lateral suture stabilization, FHO, and other orthopedic procedures, home preparation makes recovery smoother and safer. Most dogs will need **6–8 weeks of controlled activity**, but exact timelines vary by procedure.



01 Set up a safe recovery space

Create a comfortable, confined recovery area where your dog can rest without running, playing, or jumping. Confinement is especially important in the early weeks, even if your dog starts feeling better quickly.

GOOD OPTIONS

- **Crate or kennel:** Room to stand, turn, and lie down.
- **Exercise pen:** Small, secure, and stable.
- **Small gated room:** With **good, stable footing** and no accessible furniture for jumping.

INSIDE THE SPACE

- Supportive, washable bedding
- Fresh water in easy reach
- Non-slip flooring and no clutter
- Enough room to rest while wearing an E-collar

02 Keep stairs to a minimum

Arrange for your dog to stay on **one level of the house** whenever possible. Use baby gates to block staircases and choose the easiest route outside for bathroom breaks.

If a few entry steps are unavoidable, use a short leash and light support. Do not allow your dog to go up or down stairs unattended.

03 Have support ready

Depending on the procedure and your dog's comfort, a sling, large towel, or **Help 'Em Up Harness** can help you steady your dog during the first days at home.

USING A BATH TOWEL

- Fold a large towel lengthwise into a wide strip.
- Place it beneath the abdomen just in front of the hind legs, unless your veterinary team advises otherwise.
- Hold both towel ends in one hand and the leash in the other.
- Use only light upward tension — enough to catch your dog if they slip, not to carry their full weight.

> **We particularly like the Help 'Em Up Harness** for larger dogs or dogs that need repeated support throughout the day.



Light support can make standing and walking safer during early recovery.

04 Improve traction

Hardwood, tile, and laminate can be challenging after orthopedic surgery. Place **rubber-backed runners, rugs, or yoga mats** along the path between the recovery area and the outside door.

Make sure rugs lie flat and cannot slide.

05 Prevent sudden activity

Do not allow running, jumping, rough play, chasing, or off-leash activity. Keep your dog off beds and sofas and use a short leash for every outdoor trip.

If you have other dogs at home, **take them outside separately** from the recovering dog and separate them whenever play could become too energetic.



Stable footing and blocked stairs help protect a healing limb or joint.

06 Plan short bathroom breaks

Choose a flat, nearby bathroom area and keep every outdoor trip short, calm, and on leash. Use your towel, sling, or harness as needed to maintain balance.

07 Prepare for an E-collar

We recommend an appropriately fitted **E-collar for every dog** until the incision has healed. Make sure your recovery area gives your dog enough space to rest while wearing it.

08 Keep recovery calm

Dogs often feel better before they are fully healed. Keep the routine calm, provide quiet companionship, and use low-key enrichment that does not encourage too much movement.

If your dog is anxious in confinement or difficult to keep quiet, **let your veterinarian know**. Medication may be helpful.

09 Plan the ride home

Plan a safe trip home after surgery. Do not allow jumping into or out of the vehicle. Use your towel, sling, or harness to steady your dog, and consider a **secured travel crate** if another helper is not available.

Important reminder

Recovery timelines vary depending on the surgery performed. Follow the discharge instructions, activity plan, and rehabilitation recommendations provided specifically for your dog.

Your pre-surgery home checklist

Work through these items before your dog's orthopedic procedure so you can focus on helping them recover safely once they are back home.

- [ ] Set up a crate, exercise pen, or small recovery room with stable footing.
- [ ] Arrange for your dog to stay on one level of the house.
- [ ] Have a large towel, support sling, or Help 'Em Up Harness ready.
- [ ] Choose a flat, nearby bathroom area with minimal steps.
- [ ] Plan separate outdoor trips for your other household dogs.
- [ ] Plan safe transport home with support and, if useful, a secured crate.
- [ ] Provide comfortable, washable bedding and easy access to water.
- [ ] Block stairs with secure baby gates where needed.
- [ ] Place non-slip runners or rugs along walking paths.
- [ ] Prevent access to beds, couches, and other jumping opportunities.
- [ ] Have an appropriately fitted E-collar available.
- [ ] Arrange assistance and supervision for the first days of recovery.

Examples of procedures this guide applies to
Fracture repair, patellar luxation correction, lateral suture stabilization, FHO, implant removal, and other orthopedic surgeries.

THE GOAL

A safe space. Good footing. Steady support.

These simple changes at home help protect your dog while the limb, bone, or joint heals.

Remember: Feeling better does not mean fully healed. Follow the discharge instructions provided for your dog.