

Exercise Dos and Don'ts During Heartworm Treatment

The goal of heartworm treatment is to kill the worms—with a medication called melarsomine—so they can be gradually absorbed by the body. **This takes time.** If your dog's heart rate is elevated through exercise, dead and dying heartworms can be pushed into blood vessels where they form life-threatening blockages.

The amount of exercise that's safe depends where your dog is in the treatment process.



Phase 1: 1-2 months

Phase 2: 2 months

Phase 3: 1-2 months

One to two months prior to receiving melarsomine therapy, dogs start a medication regimen that prepares them for the rigors of treatment. While some gentle activities are allowed, keeping dogs calm and quiet is very important.

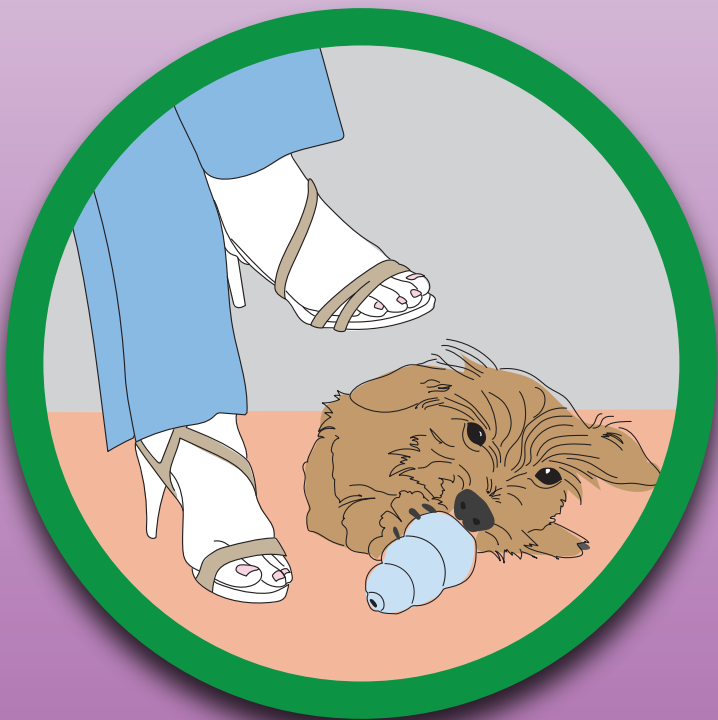
In this phase, dogs receive melarsomine treatment in a series of injections at specific intervals. During treatment and for the four weeks immediately afterwards, avoiding ANY exertion is vital.

Following the immediate post-treatment period, dogs continue to recover. Activities can gradually be resumed, but vigorous exercise must be avoided.

- **Short, leashed walks** are okay but vigorous walking and running are not
- Keep your dog in a kennel or small room when he or she can be **supervised**
- Replace playgroups with **in-kennel enrichment** and **on-leash activities** to keep dogs mentally stimulated without taxing them physically

- Limit walks to your dog's **potty breaks**, but keep walks short and keep him or her on a leash at all times
- Provide audio and visual enrichment and let your dog **socialize with the family**—from the safety of a kennel
- If you have a high-energy dog, talk to your veterinarians about whether **sedative medications** may help

- Slowly re-introduce **leashed walks** but continue to avoid vigorous walks, runs and rowdy playgroups
- Give your dog **breaks from the kennel** for short, unsupervised periods indoors
- Continue to make sure your dog gets plenty of **mental stimulation** via family time, toys and voice command training



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For tips on keeping your dog calm AND happy during heartworm treatment, see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LjX-QnxBD6E>



www.heartwormsociety.org



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