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Beloved Carlisle dog, Jasper the Lab, on the mend – but faces another challenge



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Reporter



4 comments

After a lifelong struggle and a near-fatal infection, one brave Labrador is finally on the road to recovery.

Beloved “gentle giant” Jasper has experienced health difficulties since he was just two years old, which caused him to become overweight and in need of two full hip replacements.

And after spending more than £25,000 on treatment for their adored pet, [Carlisle](#) couple Elaine Jakins and Steve Buckle were forced to ask the Cumbrian community for help – raising more than £14,000 since August 2020.

To his owners’ delight, Jasper received a hip replacement in November, and a full elbow fusion in January.

But his second surgery almost ended in tragedy, as the nine-year-old developed an infection that “nearly cost him his life”.

“The specialist and clinical team worked an absolute miracle on him,” Elaine said. “If it hadn’t been for their dedication and care, and Jasper’s determination to stay with us, he wouldn’t be with us today.”

Despite the terrifying experience, the operation was a success, but due to the damage caused by the infection, the loveable Lab is having to learn to walk again – with the help of Browns Vet Physio and Northwest K9 Hydrotherapy, at Townfoot Industrial Estate, Brampton.

Jasper attends multiple sessions each week, and is also given physio tasks to complete at home, and Elaine and Steve couldn’t be happier with his progress. Elaine said: “Mel at Browns Physio and Teresa and Jayne from Northwest K9 Hydrotherapy have been absolutely amazing – they have literally brought Jasper on in leaps and bounds.

“With their knowledge and care, Jasper is doing better than we could ever have hoped for. To survive what he went through was a miracle, let alone learning to walk again.”

But it’s not just his owners who are thrilled with Jasper’s progress, as Mel Brown – of Browns Vet Physio – is also proud of the “wee fighter”.

“When I first met Jasper he was withdrawn and lethargic,” she said, “but now he has a zest for life, and is wagging his tail a lot and enjoys disappearing into the garden.

“He is a really special boy, and it’s great to see him looking happy and having fun, and sometimes he’s reluctant to leave the clinic as he loves it so much!”

At his physio sessions, Mel addresses any compensatory problems in his muscles, and provides physical exercise to encourage him to put weight on his surgical leg, improving his proprioception and balance.

And while his recovery is going better than his owners' dared to hope for, Jasper is currently unable to receive his second hip replacement or elbow fusion, and instead requires a Stem Cell Treatment costing £3,000 – with Elaine and Steve issuing a desperate plea of further support.

They said: "We would like to thank absolutely everyone who has been involved in Jasper's story and his recovery, and to the massive dog Instagram community who have given us the most overwhelming and mind blowing support in Jasper's journey. "Everyone has raised a staggering amount already that has paid for Jasper's treatment so far. "We know everyone is pushing for us to reach this final goal, and £2,500 is what stands between Jasper and his last chance at a happy pain free life."

They added: "If we can't get this treatment, everything Jasper has been through and fought for will be for nothing, as his remaining joints will become the same as the others."

The couple also added a word of thanks to Capontree Veterinary Centre at Brampton and team member, Dan Lewis, who has been "incredibly knowledgeable and supportive" throughout Jasper's treatment.

Mel of Browns Vet Physio is also doing her bit to keep Jasper and all other injured dogs to recover, and explained that physiotherapy is suitable for a range of conditions, including osteoarthritis, elbow and hip dysplasia, cruciate ligament repairs, neurological problems and more.

The clinic offers a selection of various treatments to build strength, muscle mass, improve balance, provide pain relief and others.

But for those who aren't based at Brampton, Browns Vet Physio also works on referrals from vets in the surrounding area, with Mel also covering Cumbria and Scotland to provide physiotherapy to horses as well as dogs.

For more information on Mel's physio services, visit www.brownsvetphysio.co.uk or email brownsvetphysio@gmail.com.

To follow Jasper's story, visit his Instagram [@jaspersnewhips](https://www.instagram.com/jaspersnewhips), and to show your support, visit his [JustGiving page](#).

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