

# Certification Program in Canine Rehabilitation

## *The Canine Rehabilitation Institute*

Janet Van Dyke, a veterinarian specializing in orthopedics and sports medicine, felt that many of her canine patients would benefit from physical rehabilitation. But it was her “Baby Boomer” clients – with their own injuries and aging joints – who convinced her that the demand for canine rehabilitative services was sure to increase. They felt that, since physical therapy improved their level of function, their four-legged companions would benefit from the same treatments.

“After talking with colleagues, I realized there was clearly a need for more professionals trained in canine rehabilitation,” said Dr. Van Dyke. “I was confident the timing was right, so I decided to develop a certification program that combined the science of veterinary medicine with the hands-on approach of physical therapy.”

Dr. Van Dyke envisioned a challenging curriculum where students worked closely with their instructors and classmates. She reached out to experts in canine orthopedics, neuro-rehabilitation, and sports medicine, and spoke with individuals running the most successful rehabilitation centers in the United States and Canada. From this impressive group, she put together the first faculty of the Canine Rehabilitation Institute (CRI).

Since the first students arrived in 2004, the CRI has certified more than 125 veterinarians, physical therapists (PTs), veterinary technicians, and physical therapist assistants. Courses are held in two locations – West Palm Beach, Florida, and Fort Collins, Colorado, where the CRI is working in partnership with the Colorado State University’s College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences.

The CRI classes are small (25-student

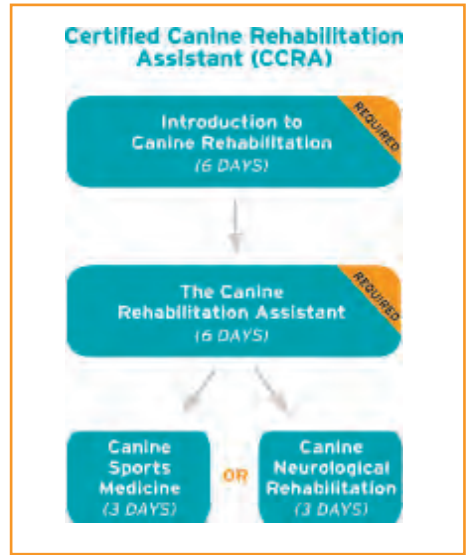
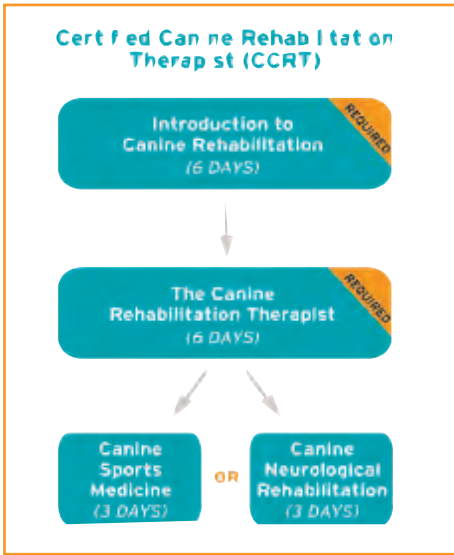


max) so that every student gets extensive experience with dogs. The instructors enjoy teaching, and most have managed busy referral practices so they understand the business aspect of canine rehabilitation.

The CRI offers two certification programs and both are AAVSB R.A.C.E. approved.

**1) The Certified Canine Rehabilitation Therapist (CCRT) Program** is for licensed veterinarians and PTs, and includes two required courses and one elective. CCRT candi-





dates cover anatomy, physiology, and biomechanics. Instructors review common canine injuries and conditions, and students learn to evaluate patients and create treatment plans. Manual therapy, therapeutic exercise, and treatment modalities including LASER, ultrasound, and electrotherapy, are introduced. Students also learn how to integrate the rehabilitation specialty into an existing practice.

**2) The Certified Canine Rehabilitation Assistant (CCRA)**

Program is for licensed veterinary technicians and physical therapist assistants. CCRA candidates take the introductory course together with CCRT students, then the Canine Rehabilitation Assistant course, and an elective. Students learn to assist in basic orthopedic and neurological evaluations, and how to administer therapeutic exercises for strength, weight-bearing, and flexibility. In addition, they receive hands-on experience with modalities and review rehab-specific documentation and client education.

Amy Kramer, a PT from Santa Monica, California, came to the CRI when she decided to switch to canine rehabilitation after practicing with human

patients for 16 years. “The hand-on labs at the CRI were invaluable to me as a practitioner applying human techniques to canines,” she explained. “In every course, veterinarians and PTs were encouraged to share ideas and work together.”

In 2006, Kramer and Dr. Jessica Waldman, a veterinarian, opened the California Animal Rehabilitation – a 2,600 square-foot state-of-the-art rehabilitation facility. Their practice is a now a primary referral source for area veterinarians who recognize the important role that rehabilitation can play in the healing process. Kramer and Waldman are currently seeing an average of 25 patients a day and plan to expand to better serve the needs of their clients.

In addition to the two certification programs, the CRI offers many opportunities for continuing education. Current offerings include Canine Sports Medicine, Nutrition in Canine Rehabilitation, Aquatic Therapy, Splinting and Bracing, and The Business of Canine Rehabilitation. Visit the Canine Rehabilitation Institute’s website at [www.caninerehabinstitute.com](http://www.caninerehabinstitute.com) for course descriptions, dates, and registration.