

# THE LOAD QUESTIONNAIRE: A VALUABLE TOOL TO IDENTIFY, EVALUATE & MONITOR OSTEOARTHRITIS

## Introduction

Ways of objectively assessing chronic pain due to osteoarthritis (OA) in dogs are few and far between – especially in general practice. Clinicians often have to rely on subjective assessments of mobility and quality of life, creating disparities in interpretation and making monitoring of the patient especially challenging.<sup>1</sup>

The **Liverpool Osteoarthritis in Dogs (LOAD) questionnaire** is an objective, convenient, validated, and reliable tool to help veterinarians determine the severity of OA in dogs, monitor disease progression, and assess response to treatment. It is recommended you use LOAD for any dog that has, or is suspected to have, OA.<sup>2,3,4</sup>

Elanco is providing you this tool as part of our commitment to bring our customers value-added programs to support your practice.

## Implementation

Clients should complete their first LOAD questionnaire when their pet presents to the clinic for a suspected joint disorder. Implementing LOAD into your practice is simple, and can be done in a number of ways:

### 1. Prior to arrival

- Email owners a PDF version of LOAD and instruct them to bring a completed, printed version to their visit or email it to the clinic.

### 2. Upon arrival

- Have owners complete a printed or electronic version, if they haven't done so before the visit.
- This allows you to establish a baseline for treatment before the consultation begins.

### 3. During consultation

- Pre-load the LOAD questionnaire onto your laptop or tablet and complete it with the owner at their visit.
- This allows you to answer any questions owners may have, which can expedite the process.

**To obtain printed and electronic versions of LOAD, contact your Elanco Animal Health Representative.**



# How to use the LOAD questionnaire

LOAD consists of easy-to-answer questions and takes about 5 minutes to complete. There are two separate questionnaires:

- 1. Mobility Survey:** To be completed at both initial and follow-up visits. This is the LOAD questionnaire, which is a 13-item clinical metrology instrument used to assess canine articular disorders like OA. Individual question scores are summed to provide an overall "LOAD Score" suggestive of the animal's disease presence and severity.
- 2. Lifestyle Survey (optional):** To be completed at the initial visit only. This survey is optional and provides background questions to establish the patient's history.

## Instructions for survey completion

Be sure to provide owners with the following instructions to ensure LOAD is completed correctly:

- Record your responses for each question based on your best judgment.
  - Completing the questionnaire is crucial in helping us evaluate your dog's condition; it may be repeated at follow-up visits.
- If completing the print version, return it to the clinic staff for scoring.
- If completing the electronic version, it can be printed and brought in at your visit, or sent by email to the clinic.
- The same owner should complete the questionnaire each time to ensure consistency.

## Calculating the LOAD score

For print versions, a member of the clinic staff needs to calculate the score manually, as shown below. For electronic versions, the score is auto-calculated by clicking the "LOAD Score" button.

**Scores range from 0-4 (from left to right), with 0 representing a healthy animal and 4 representing extreme disease. For example: No effect = 0, Mild effect = 1, Moderate effect = 2, Severe effect = 3, Extreme effect = 4.**

Manually insert the scores corresponding to each selected answer in the right-hand box, as shown below. Add up all the scores and insert the total score in the box at the bottom of the questionnaire.

13. What is the effect of your dog's lameness on his/her ability to exercise?

No effect

Mild effect

Moderate effect

Severe effect

Extreme effect

3

Thank you once again for completing this questionnaire.  
Please return the form to a staff member. If you completed the form electronically, please save it and email it back to the hospital.

For office use only

Manually insert the scores (0-4, from left to right) corresponding to each selected answer in the right-hand box. Scores are added together and the total is inserted in the final box at the bottom of the questionnaire.

LOAD Score = 24

For electronic use, clicking the "LOAD Score" button will tabulate the score once. Reset is not available for this function.

## Interpreting LOAD scores

Based on the overall LOAD score, you can gauge the presence and severity of articular disorders like OA. The higher the score, the more severe the disease; the lower the score, the less severe the disease, as shown below:



**Note:** The LOAD score is a recommendation only. Each pet should be carefully evaluated by a licensed veterinarian and the diagnosis of OA confirmed. Treatment should be carefully considered and discussed with owners to determine the best course of action.

### References:

1. Epstein M., Rodan I., Griffenhagen G., Petty M., Robertson S., Simpson W.. 2015 AAHA/AAFP Pain Management Guidelines for Dogs and Cats. Journal of American Animal Hospital Association 67. 2015 Epstein M et al JAAHA 2015 67 (v1.0) Pet owners assessing behavior is valuable. 2. Hercock CA, Pinchbeck G, Giejda A, Clegg PD, and Innes JF (2009). Validation of a client-based clinical metrology instrument for the evaluation of canine elbow osteoarthritis. Journal of Small Animal Practice 50, 266–271. 3. Walton MB, Cowderoy E, Lascelles D, and Innes JF (2013). Evaluation of Construct and Criterion Validity for the 'Liverpool Osteoarthritis in Dogs' (LOAD) Clinical Metrology Instrument and Comparison to Two Other Instruments. PLOS One 8(3): e58125. 4. Muller C, Gaines B, Gruen M, Case B, Arrufat K, Innes J, Lascelles BDx.. (2016). Evaluation of clinical metrology instrument in dogs with osteoarthritis. J Vet Int Med 30:836-846.

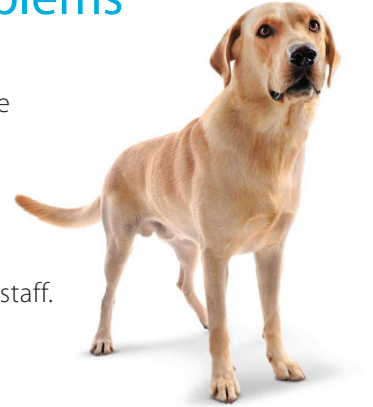


# Liverpool Osteoarthritis in Dogs (LOAD)

## Owner questionnaire for dogs with mobility problems

Thank you for completing this questionnaire. By doing so, you are providing us with valuable information about your pet. This will help us better evaluate their joint health to determine the best course of action to help them live a healthier, happier life.

Please answer all questions to the best of your ability. Select only one answer per question unless otherwise requested. If you have any questions, please ask a member of our hospital staff.



### Your information

Owner's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Pet's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Today's date: \_\_\_\_\_

#### For office use only

Reference limb:

LF ☐

RF ☐

LH ☐

RH ☐

**Reset**

### Background

#### 1. How long has your pet been suffering with his/her mobility problem?

☐

Up to 6 months

☐

6-12 months

☐

12-24 months

☐

24-36 months

☐

More than 36 months

#### 2. Has your dog been diagnosed as suffering from any other health problems in addition to his/her orthopedic disease?

☐

No

☐

Yes

Please list these if you can:

#### 3. If you can, please list any medications that your pet is currently receiving, stating when he/she received the last dose of each:

## Lifestyle

**1. In the last week, on average, how far has your dog exercised each day?**

☐ 0-1 km
 ☐ 1-2 km
 ☐ 2-3 km
 ☐ 3-4 km
 ☐ More than 4 km

**2. In the last week, on average, how many walks has your dog had each day?**

☐ 0
 ☐ 1
 ☐ 2
 ☐ 3
 ☐ 4
 ☐ More than 4

**3. What type of exercise is this?**

☐ Always on leash
 ☐ Mostly on leash
 ☐ Mostly off leash
 ☐ Always off leash
 ☐ Working

**4. Are there particular days of the week upon which your dog has significantly more exercise? (Tick more than one box if necessary.)**

☐ Monday
 ☐ Tuesday
 ☐ Wednesday
 ☐ Thursday
 ☐ Friday
 ☐ Saturday
 ☐ Sunday

Reset

**5. On what sort of terrain does your dog most often exercise?**

☐ On level grass
 ☐ In woodland
 ☐ On street
 ☐ Over rough hill ground

**6. At exercise, how is your dog handled?**

☐ Walk on leash
 ☐ Walk off leash
 ☐ Trot
 ☐ Run freely

**7. Who limits the extent to which your dog exercises?**

☐ You
 ☐ Your dog

Thank you once again for completing this questionnaire.

Please return the form to a staff member. If you completed the form electronically, please save it and email it back to the hospital.