

# A-TraC DYNAMIC BRACE® Application Instructions

**REMOVE THE BRACE AT LEAST EVERY 48 HRS to check for irritations and to give your dog a break from the brace. When the Brace is off, your dog needs to be under your complete control.**

Each time you apply the Brace reward your dog with verbal praise & his favorite treats before, during and after application. Also, using his favorite treats, entice him to walk. Do this at least for the first week of Brace wear. This will make the dog associate Brace application and walking as a pleasurable experience. Be patient! Every dog is different and some dogs take longer to adapt to wearing the brace.

**REMEMBER YOUR DOG NEEDS YOUR HELP AND SUPPORT TO GET WELL.**

**HE IS COUNTING ON YOUR PATIENCE AND PERSEVERANCE TO HELP HIM THROUGH THIS DIFFICULT TIME**

## 1. Find, identify, & lay out all brace components. (See color pictures to identify brace components on inside of package insert)

- Brace and Cuff or 2 Braces. ( If 2 Braces are supplied there will be no Cuff )
- Harness
- Fleece Protector or other cushioned material.
- 2 Tethers with swivel snaps on each end & a buckle in the center or 2 Small Tethers with a swivel snap on one end and a Tri-slide along each Tether
- Tension Rods ( two matched sets for each brace; one LROM & one TROM set). The LROM Tension Rods are already in the Rod Pockets.
- 2 Small double sided hook & loop Binding Strips. These may be stuck together and appear as one but this is not the case.

**Check all components to make sure they are all present and in working order. Tug on all straps, connect all buckles and snaps to make sure that all parts are sewn on well and that all fasteners work properly. If not call us immediately at 800-443-4055.**

**Select a clinical protocol ( from the "Clinical Protocols" form included in your package) that is most appropriate for this dog. If you are not a veterinarian you should discuss this with your veterinarian.**

## 2. Take the color illustration out of the bag (Front package insert), and lay it out in front of you. This illustration will help you identify the names of the various parts of the brace as they are discussed below.

- Place the Caudal Brace Straps through the Caudal Brace Buckles and tack them down to the loosest possible position (*Picture 1*)
- Connect the Brace to the opposite Brace or Cuff via the two Abdominal Straps that connect by a metal snap. (*Picture 2*)
- Depending upon the clinical protocol that you have chosen, open the Rod Pocket Flap at the bottom of each Rod Pocket, insert an LROM rod or a TROM rod into the Rod Pocket on each side of the Brace/s (none go into the cuff). The flat side of the rod goes next to the dog. (*Picture 3*) The end of the rod that you insert is only important for the TROM rods. The TROM rods should be inserted with the arrow (on flat side of the rod) going into the rod pocket first. **Note: LROM rods are usually found already inserted into the rod pockets. Change to TROM rods if you have bilateral Braces.**
- If not already attached place the fleece segment around the Anterior Chest Strap. There is a hook and loop connector on the inside of the fleece. Match up the hook & loop connector on the inside of the fleece to the one on the front of the Anterior Chest Strap and press into place. (*Picture 4*)
- Now close the fleece around the Anterior Chest Strap by adhering the hook and loop connectors on the outside edges of the fleece. (*Picture 5*)
- Stick one Binding Strip to the bottom of the left Dorsal Brace Strap (hook side up), so it is centered under the back of the buckle. Stick the second Binding Strip to the bottom of the left Dorsal Brace Strap, directly under the snap at the end of the strap (hook side up). (*Picture 6*)

## 3. Applying The Brace (See the numbered pictures on the inside and back page of the package insert)

- Place the Harness over the dog's head. The Anterior Chest Strap and Fleece should sit above the dog's front legs. The Girth Strap should hang over the dog's back with the Central D-Ring directly over the dog's spine. (*Picture 7*) Now connect the Girth Strap Buckle. Tighten the Girth strap by pulling on the loose end until it is snug to the dog's chest. You should be able to get 2 fingers under the Girth Strap.
- Connect the Central Tether to the Central D Ring of the Harness using the Swivel Snap for both the Large and Small Tethers. Shorten the Large Tether to a Length of 1 inch to 4 inches short of the dog's back legs depending on the size of your dog. (*Picture 8*). Wait to shorten the Small Tether.
- Gently lift the dog's legs up and place them through each Brace or the Brace and Cuff.
- Connect the Dorsal Brace Buckle, (*Picture 9*) and pull on the loose end of the female side of the buckle to tighten the Dorsal Brace Straps over the dog's back. Continue tightening the Dorsal Brace Strap to work the Brace's or Cuff up the legs of the dog. Stop when you have the Cuff and one Brace (or you have two Braces) about 1/2" to 3/4" below the top of each leg with a small amount of slack at the Dorsal Brace Strap so it can be moved forward with the tether.
- With the Brace already on the dog connect the Larger Central Tether to the Dorsal Brace Strap's Central D Ring with the Swivel Snap. (*Picture 10*). Also with the Brace on, If using the Small Central Tether place the free end of the Tether up through the Central D Ring. (*Picture 10a*) Next run the free end of the Tether up through the near slot in the Tri-Slide and then down through the far slot of the Tri-Slide (*Picture 10b*). The Tether can be shortened by continuing to pull the free end of the Tether through the Tri-Slide. Both Tethers should hold the Dorsal Brace Strap at a forward angle (*Picture 10*) to prevent the Brace from going backward over the dogs rump.
- Next tighten down the Caudal Straps of the Cuff or one of the two Braces (if you have a brace for each leg). If you have a Cuff, tighten these straps first. The Cuff should be just below the top of the leg and the straps should be mildly snug. When you pull on the Caudal Brace or Cuff Straps to tight them you will begin to feel resistance at that point pull just slightly more. This will just make the straps mildly snug and just conform them to the leg. **The straps should just conform to the leg not constrict the leg.** (*Picture 11*)
- Now finish tightening the Dorsal Brace straps to bring the Brace up in its final position. This will need to be quite tight. The Brace will usually stop moving up when the Stifle Joint is in the Stifle window. The position for the Cuff is about 1/4" to 1" below the top of the thigh depending on the dog's size and leg contour. The final position for a Brace is when the stifle or knee joint is sitting in the Stifle window. This position is usually about 1/4" to 1" below the top of the thigh depending on the dog's size and thigh contour.
- At this point the brace should maintain its position without slipping down the legs even though the Caudal Brace Straps on one side have not been tightened.
- Close the Binding Strips around the Dorsal Brace Strap at both locations, making sure they are snug. (*Picture 12*)

**Please Note: The Dorsal Brace Straps hold the Brace up, not the Caudal Brace Straps**

- The Tether may no longer be connected to the Central D-Ring (D-Ring which is located over the dogs spine). This naturally occurs from further tightening of the Dorsal Brace Straps causing the D-Rings to rotate. Therefore, at this time if necessary reconnect the Tether to the Braces D-Ring which is located most centrally over the dog's back.
- Now tighten the Caudal Brace Straps of the Brace on the remaining leg. (*Picture 13*) First tighten the middle strap (Buttress Strap), next the top strap, and last the bottom strap. Again these straps should be mildly snug (Just conforming the Brace to the leg) Do not over tighten! (**Once you are satisfied with the Garment and how it is fitting (perhaps after the dog has worn it for 1 or 2 days)**, mark all the straps on the Brace, Cuff, Harness and Tether to the proper length with a wax marker. After you have removed the Garments from the dog, cut them to the proper length. Leave enough length for a good connection to the material plus a little extra material for growth or increase in muscle size. The polypropylene material on the Tether, Harness, & right Dorsal Brace Strap will need to be sealed with an open flame to prevent them from unraveling. Using a match or lighter, seal the cut ends of the Harness, Girth Strap, and the loose end of the Tether and right Dorsal Brace Strap. **DO NOT TOUCH THE SEALED ENDS for at least 20 seconds until the ends have cooled. The Hook and Loop Caudal Braces and Cuff Straps do not require sealing and should not be sealed.**

**DO NOT ATTEMPT TO BURN OR CUT THE STRAPS OR TETHERS WITH THE BRACE ON THE DOG.**

### MODIFICATION FOR DOGS WITH SMALL THIGHS:

Please Note: No exchanges will be accepted if any permanent alterations are made to the product. Therefore, be sure of the fit before cutting the straps.

The following alterations will allow the Brace and or Cuff to fit your dog's thigh. If the brace is too big around the dogs thigh and you would like the brace to overlap itself for a snugger fit, perform the following operation. Pull the top Caudal Brace straps off of one or both sides of the Neoprene that they are adhered to. The strap is only sewn down to the rod pockets and is only stuck to the red fabric by a hook and loop connection. Place a piece of adhesive tape over the Neoprene in line with where both straps were previously adhered to the Neoprene. (*Picture 14*). This will prevent the strap from re-sticking to the Neoprene and will allow you to overlap the two sides of the Neoprene when tightening the Caudal Brace straps. Note: The tape needs to be as wide as the Velcro straps and the length needs to be the length of the Neoprene you wish to overlap.

### FOR SMALL DOGS WHEN THE TETHERS ARE TOO LONG

If the Tethers are too long to effectively hold the Dorsal Brace Straps in the proper position you will need to disconnect the buckle on the tether and remove the strap from the slots on the end of the male side of the buckle. (*Picture 15*) You should now be left with a swivel snap connected to a strap. Connect the swivel snap to the Central D-Ring of the Harness and then tie the other end to the Central D-Ring on the Dorsal Brace Strap. You can tie this end as short as required to pull the Dorsal Brace Straps forward towards the dog's head (Dorsal Brace Straps should be angled about 10° towards the dog's head).

**Any questions: See our instructional video on brace application at our website: [www.woundwear.com](http://www.woundwear.com)**