A CCL (cranial cruciate ligament) tear is a significant injury, and a brace will help limit the range of motion and provide rehabilitative support. For the first 3-6 months, your dog may not bear full weight on their injured leg, even with the help of the brace. While every dog’s healing process is different, a KVP Custom Orthotic Stifle Brace can significantly aide their recovery.

Our stifle brace provides stabilization for cranial cruciate ligament injuries by controlling the side to side movement of the knee joint and preventing the shin from sliding towards the front of the femur.

Before you begin the fitting, please take the time to inspect your KVP CO Stifle (Knee) Brace. There are three main components you’ll need to locate: the front shells, the straps and pads, and most importantly, the joint. This a tamarack joint, and it’s important to align the anatomical (knee) and mechanical (tamarack) joints so that when the brace is snug, your dog’s knee joint axis and the tamarack joint’s axis are aligned.

STEP 01
Loosen all straps (including the front tibial strap) before putting on the brace. Please make sure that there are felt pads on each of the straps. These pads can be completely removed for cleaning and/or for adjustment purposes. The “shell” of the brace will go on the front of your dog’s leg.

STEP 02
After loosening the straps and adjusting the pads, place the shell onto the front of your dog’s leg and tighten the first strap just above the hock, which is the joint below the knee. This is the main point of suspension for the brace.

STEP 03
Continue to tighten the straps on the back of the leg, moving upwards.

STEP 04
When all straps are securely fastened on the back of the brace, tighten the front strap just below the knee. Make sure the lower shell is lying flat against the shin. If it’s not, loosen the front strap and tighten the middle strap on the back of the brace. This will pull the shell closer to the leg. Once the front strap is correctly tightened, it can remain fastened, and only the three back straps will need to be regularly adjusted.

STEP 05
At this point, all straps should be snug, and your dog’s knee joint should be aligned to the brace. Examine your dog for any rubbing or pinch points around the groin area. The hock should bend at a 90-degree angle. It may take a few tries before you get it right. Make sure to follow these steps in order, and be sure to loosen all straps before attempting to fit the brace again (except for the front strap, once set correctly). Once the straps are tightened to a snug fit, draw a small mark using a permanent marker or Sharpie® so you’ll have a reference for reapplying the brace in the future.
Now that the brace is on your dog, **they may place their paw incorrectly, or “knuckle,” during the first 15 minutes of wearing the device.** Knuckling for any longer than this may indicate a pinch point. If this occurs, please contact your veterinarian or KVP CO for assistance.

During the initial adjustment period, your dog may favor one leg over the other, or kick their braced leg backwards. This is normal and will usually occur on and off for one to two weeks. **Please contact KVP CO if this behavior lasts for longer than two weeks.**

Regularly inspect your dog's skin for any rubbing or irritation, and inspect the brace for excessive signs of wear. Straps and padding may need to be replaced over time, as this is normal wear on the brace.

This brace may be worn in water, but use caution and **do not to leave the device on your dog while wet.** While the foam is non-porous and does not trap water, the straps and their pads will take time to dry. **We recommend that the brace be air dried only. Make sure that the brace is completely dry before re-fitting it onto your dog.**