



# Dodger's Digest

Official Newsletter of the Dodgerlist  
Web site & e-mail list group offering education and support  
for owners and dogs suffering from disc disease.  
www.dodgerslist.com

## Bright Outcomes

### Super Squeaky

#### An Underdog Tale

By Taryn, Lucille, & Peter Kutujian



Squeaky

I would be remiss if I didn't start out by telling you that our dachshund, Squeaky, has been a fighter from the very beginning. He was conceived by a mother that was unusually small and was unable to carry more than two puppies. Of those two puppies, one of them died, and the other one, Squeaky, lived on. Ever since he was a puppy, he has always marched to the beat of his own drum – and nothing in his life has ever been simple, but it's always been an adventure.

Everything was fine with Squeaky until one day, everything wasn't. After a typical day of playing in the yard and wrestling with his latest chew toy, Squeaky's back legs began to buckle, causing his lower half to suddenly collapse. He started squealing and we panicked – none of us knew what to

do. In the few seconds that elapsed until we came to our senses, we found that we had gone into crisis mode, gathering up the closest blankets and fumbling around the kitchen trying to find the car keys that had suddenly gone missing. The ride in the car was brief (our emergency vet center was less than 10 miles away), but it felt like the longest ride of our lives.

We didn't know what it was, but we knew something was deeply and irreversibly wrong. As we waited in silent frustration for the emergency staff to examine Squeaky, I couldn't stop thinking about how scary this must be for him. I couldn't help but wonder what was going through his mind, and if he thought we were leaving him and never coming back. The diagnosis was clear – Intervertebral Disc Dis-

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#### Who is Dodger?

Our inspiration. Dodger was euthanized possibly prematurely because his owner and vet were unaware of the latest treatments available both in traditional and alternative treatments for Intervertebral Disc Disease (IVDD).

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ease, or IVDD, had affected one of Squeaky's back legs. While our emergency doctor was explaining what IVDD was and what it meant for Squeaky, my family collapsed into despair. He might never get better? He might not be able to walk on his own? The paralysis may be permanent? This can't be happening. Wasn't he just playing with us an hour ago?

We listened as the doctor went on to tell us that Squeaky needed surgery right away, and that even with surgery, there was no guarantee that the paralysis in his back leg would improve. Squeaky would need to lose some weight, and he would eventually need physical therapy (something we didn't know until much later on in the process). All of the questions we had were beginning to pile up, tensions flared, and all the while, a little dog's life was in the balance.

Thankfully, my mother has been a natural researcher all of her life. When she needs information, she'll leave no stone unturned until she finds what she is looking for. Now confronted with this new and scary diagnosis of IVDD, my mother combed the internet for anything that could help explain what was happening to Squeaky, and what we could do about it. She found the Dodger's List website a few weeks into her search, and then we knew that we had the virtual village we needed to help us take care of our baby. We learned that a bassinet was



*Squeaky is his recovery suite*

the best way to contain and manage Squeaky's recovery process, and that an ACE bandage would hold up his back end just as well as an expensive sling made just for dogs. Rich with information, photos, and suggestions for improving quality of living, Dodger's List was like a giant embrace from caring and compassionate individuals who, like us, would do absolutely anything and everything to keep our animals healthy and safe.

About a year went by after Squeaky's surgery – his leg was improving, he was losing weight, and the fear that had gripped our family was beginning to fade. One day, we heard a cry – Squeaky's back legs had gone out again. A little more experienced this time, knowing that timing was crucial with IVDD, we rushed him to the hospital again, where we were told he now had calcification in his neck that was affecting his neurological functioning on the whole left side of his body. After a second surgery, Squeaky was back in recovery, and our family was truly and deeply shaken. It felt like being back at square one, with no reassurance from Mother Nature that Squeaky's genetic makeup wouldn't work against him a third time. This time around, however, our doctor recommended that Squeaky get physical therapy twice a week to strengthen his muscles and monitor his progress.

After two surgeries and several months of recovery, Squeaky met the love of his life – his canine rehabilitator, Giuliana. Squeaky is not very social, but something was definitely in the air the day he met Giuliana. They formed an instant bond; Giuliana had Squeaky doing exercises and playing in a way that we had never seen before! Each week, Giuliana would come to our home and help Squeaky work on rebuilding some of the muscles that had severely deteriorated due to IVDD.

We have read in many magazines and on websites (including Dodger's List!) that having your IVDD dog do physical therapy after surgery signifi-

cantly helps with recovery and muscle strengthening, and I can't agree more. The second time around, Squeaky's improvement was extraordinary; his whole body changed, becoming muscular and more capable of supporting its own weight. We have also had the benefit of working with someone like Giuliana, who has a lot of experience with IVDD and can tell if Squeaky's



*Giuliana G. Lerch, LVT, CCRP, Member IVAPM, IVARPT, Veterinary Medical Center of Long Island, working with Squeaky*

body is off when we might miss it. It has been almost two years since Squeaky had his second surgery, and he is getting stronger every day. His energy level is through the roof, he has a zest for life, and he is as feisty as ever! Looking back on the past few years when there were so many moments of uncertainty and frustration, we can't thank everyone at Dodger's List enough. Through their information and resources, we learned how to deal with IVDD as a family, and how to create the kind of life that, healthy or sick, every animal should have.



*Squeaky enjoying life!*

# Review of the Walkabout Back Harness

By Paula Milner

I recently conducted a trial with my dog, Clark, using the Walkabout Back Harness. The Walkabout company sent XS, S, and SM (small/medium) samples for us to try out. Clark is a paralyzed dachshund who weighs 17 lbs. and has a 6.25-inch thigh circumference. Size "SMALL" (according to the brochure sizing chart of 3"-8") was perfect with a finger's worth of ease for Clark's thighs. The retail price for a "small" Walkabout is \$37 plus \$10 shipping. [www.walkaboutHarnesses.com](http://www.walkaboutHarnesses.com)



*Sample harness I received to review*

Note: the brochure says the "cut out" should face the tail. However, I put the rear Walkabout with the cut out facing the head so there would be limited coverage of the penis at potty time. I could express both for urine and poop without having to take the rear Walkabout off. I also placed a strip of tape on the strap bottom near the hook velcro side to keep the strap from irritatingly grabbing onto the velcro. The harness worked and fit equally as well as designed with the "cut out" facing the tail.

I am very impressed with the Walkabout Back Harness' sturdy construction and high-quality materials. These are the points I like and why I recommend this product:

1. Very easy to get on and plenty of velcro length to adjust for good fit around the waist.

2. The cutout for the penis area is large enough and should not be objectionable for a male. My dog is paralyzed, so I can't say how a dog with bladder control would react at potty time. Some dogs just do not like anything touching.

3. The leg cutout has enough ease for my dog's legs plus the natural elasticity of neoprene does not constrict circulation.

4. It is not stated in the brochure, but the owner of the company indicated that the harness could stay on all day and the dog could scoot around in it. On smooth indoor hardwood, tile floors, or carpet, Clark could scoot easily and the harness provided skin protection and cushion. I would probably sew a frictionless, replaceable fabric patch, such as ripstop nylon, to the bottom to save wear and tear on an expensive Walkabout. One thing I noted is that the back/bottom of the harness does not extend enough to provide protection for the boney ischium of the back lower part of the hip bone when scooting. Note: this is with the harness with the "cut out" facing toward the dog's head and not as designed to be worn.

5. The harness would make an excellent tool for rehabbing a dog learning to walk again. I am 5'2" and could fully up stand up holding the Walkabout's handle. The handle length is not adjustable. The Walkabout fits quite well and I did not have any problem with my dog being able to run out of the Walkabout when walking outdoors. I would, however, recommend using a harness in conjunction with the Walkabout Back Harness for full safety and control when using it with a strong dog that is still under Conservative treatment or post-op crate rest.

6. The brochure asks for your dog's measurements in case the company needs to customize the harness to perfectly fit your dog. There is no charge to customize.

7. There is an optional \$25 suspender to connect a dog's own harness to the Walkabout to keep the Walkabout Back Harness from slipping down. I did not find that I would need to have a suspender because the Walkabout Back Harness stayed in position on Clark whether he was scooting or using it to walk outdoors.



*Harness as shown on [www.walkaboutHarnesses.com](http://www.walkaboutHarnesses.com)*

## “Share The Love”

*“It came to me that every time I lose a dog they take a piece of my heart with them.  
And every new dog who comes into my life, gifts me with a piece of their heart.  
If I live long enough, all the components of my heart will be dog,  
and I will become as generous and loving as they are.” Unknown*

Mary Shimshea’s Boston,  
Peanut, and Spirit (the cat )



Diane Smith’s Daisy  
turned 2 on Dec 31st!



Kellen Walker’s Ziggy  
as a flower girl



Brenda Johnson’s  
Billie Jean turns 9 on Mar 3rd



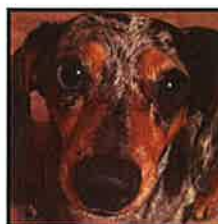
Christo Kriegler’s Milo



Cris Lewis’ Olympia



Connie Tootle Loring’s Ellie



Sherry Trent Baker’s Oscar



# Dodger's Digest

**Tell everyone you know about us.  
Together we can make a difference!**

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By

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**We would love to receive anything of dachshund interest for our newsletter, such as pictures, articles, poems, letters, and suggestions. Please send to:**

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