

was not created for humans at all, but for horses. In the early 1980s, horse enthusiast Dave Hansen, who was looking for a way to rehabilitate older horses, created the AquaCiser. Swimming didn't allow the horses the touchdown faze needed to restore their gate, but having them walk on an underwater treadmill produced the desired results.

A friend of Hansen's was an orthopedic surgeon, who was impressed enough with the technology to develop a similar (albeit smaller) treadmill for humans. To bring the story full circle, it was Ferno who bought the company that made the AquaCiser in the mid-80s, eventually ceasing production

of the horse treadmill, and instead concentrating on the human version. Now they're back on the animal side of the business.

Shields predicted that animal therapy products will account for approximately 10 percent of Ferno's sales, and they plan to develop other animal systems, including a possible return to the horse treadmill from whence they came.

"What comes around goes around," Ferno's Shields remarked. "That's kind of been our comment."

OTHER DESIGNS FOR CANINE THERAPY

While the K-9 Underwater Treadmill offers

a complete solution for canine rehabilitation, some therapists feel there is still a need for other designs in this newly emerging field. "The treadmill is good, it does definitely get dogs to start weight bearing and walking if they're very hesitant to use the limb," said Trish Penick a registered physical therapist and owner of Cutting Edge K9 Rehab (San Diego, Calif.). "But what I'm finding is that in a larger pool I have the added benefit of allowing dogs to swim and fetch. They think that we're playing while we're rehabbing and it adds a much more fun element to it."

Penick has been doing water exercise with dogs for about a year, and her busi-



TRISH PENICK MODIFIES EXISTING ABOVE-GROUND POOLS FOR HER USE IN THE REHABILITATION OF DOGS. PHOTO COURTESY OF CUTTING EDGE K9 REHAB (SAN DIEGO, CALIF.).



LARGER POOLS ALLOW DOGS ROOM TO SWIM AND FETCH, THINKING THEY ARE PLAYING WHILE ACTUALLY BEING REHABILITATED. PHOTO COURTESY OF CUTTING EDGE K9 REHAB (SAN DIEGO, CALIF.).