

# Turning your ideas into reality!



Here is a guideline for helping you move from your idea to a physical product.

## STEP 1

**Ideation phase:** The best products are those that solve a problem. Look around you and ask people what they are frustrated with – this can give you ideas for products. If you already have the idea for a product in mind, sketch out the design and list what type of customer could benefit from this. This will help you later with your marketing strategy!

## STEP 2

**Put on your thinking hat:** Before spending a lot of time and money on a product that won't be viable, look at it from many different angles. How much will it cost to produce? How much can it retail for? Can I make this myself, or do I need to hire someone to help me? How many do I think I can sell? Where are my potential customers located, so I know how to market to them? A great strategy called the 'Six Thinking Hats' by Edward DeBono goes through this process. <https://www.debono.com/six-thinking-hats-summary>

## STEP 3

**Make a prototype:** Once you've determined that it's worth pursuing at least a prototype version, then put together a rough version of your idea. Don't worry about it being perfect – you are just trying to get a 3-D idea of what it will look like. If part of the prototype requires skills you don't possess (such as sewing, metal welding, etc), look around for local small businesses who can provide you with those pieces of the puzzle. Think about how else the material can be used (i.e., for a specific shape of metal, look for local metal fabricators, custom muffler shops, etc. ). This is often more economical than starting with a contract manufacturing company. However, if the product is fairly complex, it may be worth finding a contract company to work with at the start, especially if engineering drawings or similar are required.

## STEP 4

**Test your product/refine:** Once you've made a fairly close estimate of your product, you need to test it out, to

- look for potential flaws/issues in the design,
- see how easy it is for a potential customer to use, and
- get feedback from others,

so you can see what needs to be changed or refined. Choose people you trust to test your prototype, so that your idea doesn't get stolen. At this point, you may need to decide whether to pursue a patent on your product. This generally is only for those products which are going to sell thousands of units, as patent protection can cost \$20,000-\$40,000.

## STEP 5

**Marketing:** While you are making final revisions to your prototype, start working on your marketing strategy. You need to build momentum and interest in your product before you are ready to sell, so that you're not left with a lot of inventory you've paid for and are just sitting on. Posting 'teasers' on your social media and talking about the product in general terms can start to build interest.

## STEP 6

**Release your product to the world!** Once you have some interest generated, figure out how you will retail your product – through your own company/website? On Amazon? Partner with another company selling complementary products? Set your retail prices and keep building awareness to help drive sales. At this point, you may need to partner with someone for a comprehensive and viable marketing strategy.

**If this all sounds overwhelming to you as a busy clinician, but you have this idea you want to bring to life, reach out to us! We have worked with other animal rehabilitation professionals to prototype and manufacture products and can give you the support you need.**

Canine Rehab Systems, LLC  
3787 Jacks Creek Rd  
Monroe GA 30655  
www.caninerehabsystems.com  
Lisa@CanineRehabSystems.com

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