

# Vet's Notes



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## HEALTH CARE

Let's look at a few of the easily overlooked items that can make all the difference to a greyhound's race performance, and post-race recovery.

### THE FEET

Nails should be filed just to the level of the pink "quicks". Avoid clippers close to race day as it is so easy to cut into the "quick" and cause pain bleeding, or infection. Nails that tend to split or break can be reinforced by painting with "Hard As Nails", or clear nail polish. Either will protect the nail surface, but neither will swab. Protect the pads from cracking or excessive wear by massaging with Lanolin, Neatsfoot Oil, or Lard. These are animal fats that will soak deep into the pads to make them supple and pliable.

### ANAL GLANDS

These can cause the greyhound to miss the jump from the boxes if they are impacted.

This is equivalent to infected haemorrhoids in people, so trainers can understand that any pressure on the tail area when boxing, will cause discomfort and could well result in loss of speed when leaving the boxes.

Gently express the Anal Glands each race day.

If unsure how to do this, see your vet or veterinary nurse for a brief tutorial on raising the tail and using your thumb and finger to "milk" the anus with a gentle squeezing action.

### SKIN PINCH TESTING

Should be conducted on every greyhound upon arrival at the track.

Gently take the skin over the middle of the back, in your thumb and finger, and lift it up.

The skin should snap back like elastic.

If it stays in a folded position, or, returns very slowly, then the greyhound must be dehydrated from travel, and/or, is suffering from anaemia.

Either way, performance will be reduced.

Try supplying a drink of water or electrolyte mixture and walking around for ten minutes before kennelling to allow absorption of the fluid, and an empty out to void any excess.

Also, have a simple PCV blood test, but no sooner than 48-72 hours after the race, to check out any degree of anaemia after the post-race blood changes have returned to a normal resting level.

## POST-RACE COOLING

This is important to prevent that eye disease Focal Multifocal Acquired Retinopathy (FMAR) which leads to night blindness and degeneration of vision.

So, cool the whole head area when washing the face and eyes to remove the sand.

There is also some misunderstanding about cool hosing along the back and general body area with the belief that this can "cook" the greyhound in some way.

This is not correct, but any greyhound that has developed a full or partial bout of Exertional Rhabdomyolysis (A c i d o s i s) during the race will have heat, pain, and discomfort when the muscles along the backline are touched or pressed. It is not the hosing that has caused the problem, but rather the trainer becomes aware of the symptoms when applying the hose, rubbing down, or drying the patient, and tends to incorrectly relate the hosing to the cause of these concerns along the back. The application of cool water to any section of the body after the race can only lead to minimisation of heat stress and a return to normal body comfort with less chance of kidney, lung, or muscle damage.

### MUSCLE TEARS

These are a constant problem with the racing greyhound, but your very first action upon returning the greyhound to the wash area is to apply cold hosing to the swollen, reddened section of muscle.

This is important both to minimise the bleeding and swelling by constricting the damaged blood vessels, and, to aid recovery by reducing the subsequent scar tissue formation within the injured muscle. After receiving advice and possible emergency treatment by the track veterinarian, purchase some ice from the local caft or garage and ice-pack the injury for another 30-60 minutes. This will be time and money well spent in the long road to a good recovery.

### FLY WORRIES

Can be a problem around the ear tips and any abrasion or wound on the body, but now, at last, a new product called Septicide has been developed by Virbac for treating these areas.

It contains an efficient antiseptic, plus anti-parasitic compounds that will repel flies and insects while promoting healing of superficial wounds.

It should be a good adjunct to any greyhound medicine kit.