

Maintaining your greyhounds toenails

Industry Practice Guide 7.0



Greyhound Welfare Code of Practice

Relevant Standards:

3.18 Participants must check the toenails of all greyhounds in their care regularly and if necessary, trim them to prevent overgrowth. **R**

A greyhound relies on its feet to propel itself around the track. Trainers need to take care of their greyhounds' feet and toenails to ensure top performance.

Long, untrimmed nails can affect a greyhound's stance, resulting in extra force being applied to the joints and ligaments in its feet and legs. This, in turn, can make the greyhound more vulnerable to injury.

Most greyhounds will wear down their nails naturally and will need little care. But if your greyhound has unusual nail wear, or is on soft surfaces most of the time, you may have to trim the greyhound's nails to ensure that they do not cause problems.

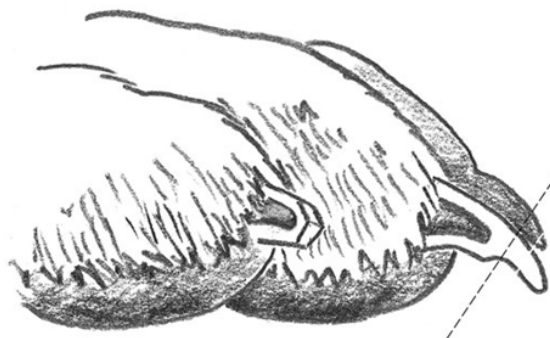
A good set of nail clippers is an essential tool in a trainer's kit. There are different styles of nail clippers available, including scissor-action clippers and guillotine-action types.



A greyhound's toenail consists of a living 'quick' and a hard outer material called the shell. The quick supplies blood to the nail and runs through the core of it. The shell grows down over this quick and extends past it.

Knowing where the quick ends is essential to ensure that you do not cut it by accident. Cutting the quick will cause pain and bleeding.

To locate the quick, have a look at the toenails and try to find a white nail. Usually the quick can be seen through the white nail as a pink area. Any trimming should be done to end below the lowest point of the quick.



Trimming the nails of a greyhound can be tricky if it has black nails. If there are no white nails, the safest thing to do is to turn the nail upside down and have a look at the underside of the nail. Usually you can see the nail extending past a central core area, and you can trim this section of the nail away quite safely.

As you approach the central core, you can nip small amounts off at a time until you are happy you have trimmed enough. It is always better to come back in a week and trim off a little more, than to cut into the quick and cause bleeding and pain.

Some trainers choose to use a small file instead of nail clippers. Filing the nails back can be an alternative to using clippers and is a quite efficient way to keep nails short.

The downside to this method is that it is possible to create a lot of heat in the nail bed which can damage the sensitive tissue, and it is possible to file the nail too far back, exposing the quick. Filing can help reshape nails that grow unevenly, or those associated with toes that have been damaged (such as 'sprung' toes) and where the nail no longer curls towards the ground.

Caring for your greyhound's feet

Greyhounds who regularly run on sand tracks can be prone to foot injuries, especially to the webbing between the toes and around the nail bed.

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Good foot care therefore includes checking the area under the feet, between the toes, and around the nail bases regularly.

Sandtoe

Sandtoe is inflammation or infection of the nail bed. It is caused by the nail digging into the sand while running.

The greyhound's nail beds may become swollen, reddened and sensitive to touch. Occasionally the skin around the nailbed may split and flare outwardly.

If sandtoe occurs, gently clean the area with an antiseptic solution, wiping in a direction down the nail away from the nailbed. After cleaning, antiseptic creams can be applied.

If the inflammation or infection does not start to heal within 2-3 days of applying first aid, or you are unsure, seek veterinary assistance. To protect the nail bed from becoming sore again, you may wish to wrap several layers of a 2-3 mm wide tape around the nail close to the nail bed to act as a sand-deflector. Firstly, ensure that the nail is clean, dry and free from any oily cream to ensure that the tape sticks.

Sandburn

Sandburn is an abrasion or cut of the skin on the underside of the foot.

Sandburn is typically caused by running on abrasive surfaces (e.g. sand), or a greyhound stopping/turning suddenly which can cause friction between the running surface and the foot.

Affected feet may be red, swollen and painful. Small cuts and burns require cleaning and treatment to avoid infection, using an antiseptic solution. Be careful to avoid any further damage or irritation while the area is healing. Large or deep cuts should be seen by a veterinarian.

If the sandburn is not starting to heal within 2-3 days after you start treatment, then seek veterinary advice.



NSW Government acknowledges the work of Greyhound Racing Victoria, which informed the development of this Guide.