



# EXERCISE AND RECOVERY FACT SHEET



Providing the appropriate and adequate level and frequency of exercise to racing greyhounds has been the topic of discussion for generations.



Many participants have their own opinion on how much and what type of exercise brings out the best in their dogs. Individual variation in a dog's response to exercise is well known and it is the astute trainer that adapts exercise programmes to suit each dog to get the best out of these individuals.

There is the need to have the greyhound fit for the distance over which it is to be raced, but it must be also acclimatised to the different stresses and forces that are applied to various parts of the greyhound's body during exercise, trialling and racing.

Without adequate pre-training ('miles in the legs') the muscles and tendons, bones and ligaments will not be adequately prepared for the race workload.

Changing the distance of runs, frequency of runs, or type of track on which racing is occurring (straights versus one bend or two/more bends) will alter forces being applied to these structures and re-adaptation and remodelling will be required to maximise performance and minimise potential for injury.

## RECOVERING FROM AN INJURY

While muscle and cardiovascular aerobic fitness can be improved relatively quickly, bone remodelling takes longer; and this may necessitate gradual introduction of any changes to minimise injury (e.g. metacarpal shin soreness in young greyhounds).

Convalescence from injury usually requires an alteration to or temporarily stopping of the usual amount and type of exercise that the greyhound would be exposed to.

The injured area may require specific treatments and specific physiotherapy exercises to regain range of motion, muscle, tendon or ligament strength, and to minimise pain on return to work.

- A muscle strain will recover quickly whereas a stress fracture in a metacarpal or metatarsal may take 12-14 or more weeks.
- Muscle tears may require several weeks of rest and rehabilitation.
- A minor toe sprain may require 3 weeks off but a complete rupture of

ligaments of a toe joint may require surgery and/or at least 6-8 weeks off.

- A complete bone fracture will usually require months off for surgery, rest and rehabilitation.

Rehabilitation exercise programmes are usually tailored to the type of injury, its severity, and the individual greyhound.

Returning to the usual level of exercise prematurely will result in further injury, often progression of the extent of the injury and could lead to a much more serious injury, one that compromises the greyhound's future race performance or at least a prolonged amount of time off racing.

So, it is important that careful consideration is given to the duration of time that a greyhound has off with injury.

It is important to know the extent of the injury and the potential for worsening of the injury if the dog returns to work too early.

*It is therefore important always that you seek veterinary advice regarding the length of recovery time, management options beyond rest and prognosis.*