

6 Canine Stress Signals to Watch For



Lip Licking – When a dog is anxious, she will often quickly stick out her tongue and lick her lips. It's usually just a fast, little flick. Watch your dog; this is one of the most common signals.



Turning Away- Often owners think a dog turning away is "blowing them off" and they intensify their demands on her, which is exactly what the dog was trying to avoid.



Half-Moon Eye - When a dog is calm and relaxed, you don't usually see much white around her eyes. The "half-moon" refers to the white arc that is often seen when a dog is stressed and trying to hold it in.



Moving slowly – Basically the dog is trying to model the behavior she'd like to see. She's trying to slow down and calm down in the hopes that everyone else will, too.



Yawning - This is often mistaken for contentment. The dog is surrounded by kids, and she lets out a big yawn. Isn't that sweet? Nope, it's a sign that she's in over her head and would appreciate your help.



Freezing - Watch out! Dogs typically freeze right before they snap or bite.

!!CAUTION!! Heat Can Be Deadly !!CAUTION!!

Every year, veterinarians treat dogs who develop heat stroke. Just like people, dogs who become severely overheated can become very ill and even die.

It's important to remember that your dog cannot remove himself from a dangerous situation. It's up to you, as your dog's guardian, to ensure he is not left in a place or put into circumstances where he may become overheated.

Signs that may indicate heatstroke in your dog:

- Panting or breathing rapidly, erratically, or excessively
- Drooling
- Difficulty standing
- Restlessness or disorientation
- Bright red gums, tongue, and inside ears
- Your dog lies down and is unable or doesn't want to get up
- Uncontrollable defecation or urination
- Anxious whining
- Lethargy
- Vomiting/Diarrhea
- Seizures
- Coma

If you notice any of the symptoms of heatstroke, it's important to take action immediately. The longer you wait, the more your dog's life is in danger. He may go into shock or even die. Get your dog out of the heat as soon as possible. If you have access to cool (not ice cold) water, pour it on him starting with the underside of his body (between the legs and the pads of the feet.) It is okay to give your dog very small amounts of cool water to drink, but do not let him gulp the water.

Contact your vet or emergency clinic right away.

Tips to help prevent heatstroke:

- Never leave your dog unattended in direct sunlight or in a closed vehicle, even if it's only for a few minutes. Even with the car running, while idling the a/c cycles so it may not be staying as cool as you think. In the excessive heat, the engine could actually stall which would turn the vehicle into an oven very quickly.
- Ensure your dog always has access to cool water and shade when outside in hot temperatures. Do not let him "sunbathe" when temps are high. He is not the best judge of how long he can safely stay out.
- The pads of dogs' paws can be sensitive to hot pavement, so walk in the shade or grass whenever possible. Pads can blister and any injury to a pad is very painful and requires a long time to heal. If it's too hot for you to go barefoot comfortably on concrete or pavement hot surfaces, your dog shouldn't be walking or standing on them either.
- Limit strenuous activity during the middle of the day when temperatures are the hottest. Exercise your dog during cooler parts of the day; in the early morning and late evening, not mid-day.
 - If you have not gradually built up your dog's conditioning to participate in activities like going for walks, chasing a ball, agility, etc., do not start these activities during extreme weather. Remember, they are retired now. During their career, they maintained regular exercise and training routines to keep them in top physical shape for racing. If you are not building up to and providing regular

conditioning at home, just because they still look the part of an active racer doesn't mean they have the stamina to act like one so be careful how quickly you jump into a new activity with your dog.

- For those who vacation at the beach, try to keep your dog from drinking too much salt water. This may lead to vomiting, and dehydration.
- Always have lots of fresh water handy - not just for yourself, but for your dog as well.

Products to help keep your best friend safe and cool:

- Everyone should have a child's rectal thermometer on hand for the dogs so you can check body temperature. Normal runs around 100/102°. Under normal circumstances, typically when it gets above 102.5°, the vet will start looking for a reason.
- If a dog is overheating, his temperature can easily be 104/105° or higher and that's a danger zone - the higher it climbs and the longer it stays up without treatment, the more likely permanent damage may be done. Begin cooling measures at home or in the car if you can and get to the vet ASAP. Call ahead if possible so they can be prepared to take action as soon as you get there.
 - It's always good to have your vet's number and the local emergency clinic's in your cell phone. You never know when something might happen away from home and you'll be glad you have the number handy.
- Kiddie pools are a great way to keep your dog cool if he loves water - just make sure to check the water temperature and change as necessary. What may look refreshing could be turning into an uncomfortably hot pool as it sits in the sun all day.
- There are cooling packs, scarves and cooling coats that you can wet and/or place in the freezer then put on the dog to help keep him cool. Check it often as the hot body of a dog can take the cooling power out of the material very quickly which will then defeat the purpose and likely add to the heat problem.
- Spraying the dog with cool water is helpful and most beneficial under the body, between the front & back legs and over his pads. Do not run cold water over your dog's head as this can contribute to the dog going into shock.
- If you can, get your dog into the house or a vehicle with a/c going to help cool him down. Using cool water soaked towels to lay over him can help - just be sure to check often as the heat from his body will warm the towels quickly. Rotate the towels often with freshly soaked ones so they remain cool.

The onset of heatstroke can be very rapid. Planning for summer outings with your dog will hopefully keep him from ever experiencing any of the above symptoms.

Be sure to always have your cell phone with you so if something would happen and you're away from your home/car, you can call for help. (Would you be able to carry your dog in from the yard or home from a walk if he couldn't make it himself?)

Remember, dogs do not sweat like people do which means they can overheat quickly. (Dogs release heat mainly through the pads of their feet and by panting.) If there is any question about whether your dog should go on an outing with you, erring on the side of caution and leaving him at home may be the best idea – and may actually be the safest and most comfortable choice for your dog.

A little bit of caution and planning ahead means you and your dog can have a fun, safe and cool summer!

FIREWORKS / THUNDERPHOBIA

We all know dogs can become stressed during thunderstorms, but fireworks can be a whole new ball game. Even dogs who are unfazed by storms can become stressed, anxious, or even terrified with fireworks. The screeching, whirring, popping, and booming sounds and bright flashes can upset even the calmest, most laid-back of dogs. If they do get worked up, they can become incredible escape artists to try and "outrun" that horrible unknown. Much of the information which follows can apply to thunderstorms as well.

A panicked greyhound will be running on an adrenaline rush and will only have one thing on his mind - run as far and fast as his legs will take him to try and get away from the source of his fear. He won't be thinking about where he's running to, the roads he'll have to cross, traffic that will be out there, or that he is running away from the safest place he can be. It's up to us to do our best to keep him safe.

If your dog needs an over-the-counter or prescription aid to help stay calm during the fireworks, plan now. Check to see that you have adequate OTC supplies on hand. Or if it's prescription, make sure you have enough to last or call for a refill now – before you get into the weekend and can't reach your vet. When the 4th falls Monday – Friday, you can pretty much count on parties going on the weekends before and after!

Acepromazine (Ace) is never recommended for use in greyhounds. Some experts say it really shouldn't be used for any dogs since there are so many better products available. Many more suitable drugs are available that can help keep your dog relaxed. In some cases, OTC products like Melatonin and Benadryl may be sufficient to take the edge off. However, when stronger medications are needed, talk to your vet about Alprazolam and Trazodone. Both require a prescription to be filled at your veterinarian's office or called in to a local pharmacy. The goal is to help your dog relax – if he chooses to go off and nap in a dark corner, the bathtub, or floor of your closet, that's okay. Remember, we're not trying to "knock him out" with the medications so dosages may need to be adjusted accordingly.

This is not something you want to try for the first time as you leave for a party. You need to be home with your dog the first time or two you try this or any other sedative (including anything prescribed by your vet) to see how your dog will respond. Make sure your vet knows it's your **greyhound** he/she is prescribing for as some meds may be too strong if they simply prescribe by weight of the dog. Sometimes dosages need to be adjusted and you want to make sure all of that is worked out in advance so you don't come home to a sick dog or worse. Be very cautious and talk to your veterinarian if your dog is older or ill in any way or on any other type of medication already.

Other options to consider are herbal relaxers available at PetSmart, other pet supply stores, and online. These take time to work with so don't wait until the holiday or storm is upon you to investigate whether this will work for your dog. There are many kinds which contain ingredients used by people to help them relax, such as kava kava, valerian root, and chamomile. It is trial and error to find one which will help relax your dog as not all dogs respond to the same ingredients in the same way. Watch for no reaction or possibly even an opposite reaction - is your dog a lot more active than usual after receiving the dose?

As with any holiday but especially one like July 4th, please think about your plans in advance. Figure out how your greyhound and any other pets fit in with these plans so you don't have the added pressure on you and your family as you're trying to get ready the day of the celebration.

Tips:

Long before the celebrations begin, be sure you have ID tags on your dog and keep them on him at all times. Double and triple check fences, gates, etc. Don't forget the doors and storm/screen doors on your house. Make sure everything closes and latches securely. Be careful about leaving doors and windows open with just screens to block them. A greyhound can easily run right through them anytime but especially when scared.

Provide your hound with a blanket in a quiet place to wait out the celebration. If you're home with him and he becomes clingy and wanting attention, you don't have to ignore him but do try to remain confident and use your normal speaking voice when giving him attention. While sometimes soothing, you have to be careful with baby talk as it can sometimes lead to an even more clingy reaction. You want him to pick up on your calm, cool behavior and hopefully start understanding he is safe so he becomes less anxious or afraid and more self-confident.

Do not take your dog to fireworks displays. Most communities don't allow dogs in larger crowds anyway but even if yours does, it's not a good idea. Even a typical family gathering can be overwhelming with the addition of fireworks. Better to leave him safe and snug in his own home than risk having him get loose in a strange place with so much going on.

If the party is at your house, **make sure all guests know the rules** as far as not allowing the dog out of a fenced area off-leash and that they know to be especially careful when using gates or doors leading to areas that aren't fenced. You might want to baby-gate your dog so he can't get to the doors or have someone hold him on leash when folks are going in/out. He may whine thinking he wants outside because you're out there but when fireworks are going off, it's best to have him safely in the house and out of harm's way.

If you leave your dog at home, make sure windows, doors, and doggie doors are closed for that time period. You wouldn't want to come home to find your dog has panicked and broken a screen out or got out in the yard and dug out to get away from what's scaring him. Leave a white noise machine, radio, or TV on in the room with him to help cover up the outside noises. Just make sure it isn't a station that's going to play the fireworks! If you have a CD player that will hold several hours' worth of disks, use that because then you can choose some mellow, soothing music for him.

Close the curtains and leave some lights on to lessen the impact of bright flashes he might see from neighbors' fireworks. While the flashes themselves probably aren't what really bother the dog, if he is affected at all by storms, he will probably associate the noise and lights with thunder and lightning so not being able to see the flashes might help a little.

If you have been through fireworks/storms with your dog and his reaction is severe enough to require medication, make sure to call your vet well ahead of time so you have the meds on hand. Depending on what day the holiday falls on, you'll likely need to be prepared for several days' worth to adequately help your dog through several days of celebrating going on around you.

Stay safe!

Nails

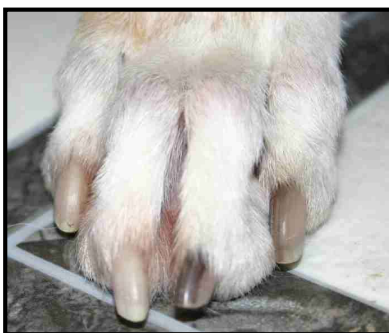
How long are your greys' nails? Do they click when your dog walks on a hard surface, such as your kitchen floor? Are they short enough that your dog can sneak up behind you and surprise you with a well-placed cold nose? Are they so long that when your hound stands up his or her toes twist and turn to the side? Ideally the nails should be so short that they don't touch the ground. It's rare for most people to keep their dogs' nails that short but that is the best length for proper alignment of the bones in the toes and feet.

If your dog's nails do touch the ground but just barely, they're probably okay. However, if your dog's toes bend or twist when your dog walks, it's time for a nail trim. If the nails have gotten this long it is probably not possible to trim as much as necessary all at one time. As nails get long, the blood supply in them - known as the "quick" - gets long at the same time. When very long nails are cut only a little bit can be taken off at one time. Wait a few days, then trim a little more. Eventually you can get the nails back to a good length without accidentally nicking the vein. There are many sizes and styles of nail trimmers. Be sure you have one that's equipped to deal with large nails.

Some dogs' nails get so long that the quickest solution is to have them all drastically cut back while the dog is under anesthesia. If your dog needs a dental or some other procedure which will require anesthesia and his nails are long, ask your vet about cutting them back while the dog is under. A major trim such as this involves cutting back beyond the vein on every nail, which would be very painful to do while the dog is awake. After this procedure is performed the dog may be a little sore for the first day or two, but they generally recover very quickly and are glad to be able to position their feet normally again.



This dog's nails were in such extremely poor condition they had to be trimmed back by the vet while the dog was sedated for a dental.

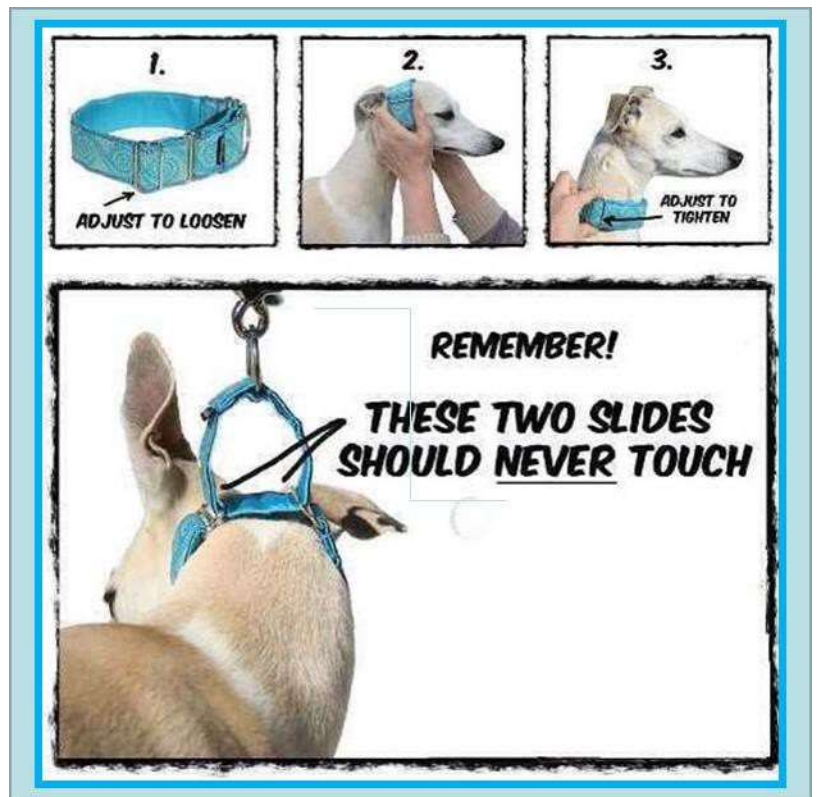


How nails can look when given a "pedicure" at home or by a professional every couple of weeks.

If you have access to a dremel tool and would like a step-by-step tutorial, visit www.doberdawn.com and follow the links to her page on dremeling. She gives excellent instructions on how to introduce your dog to a dremel and how to get the best results from the tool. Many dogs tolerate this quite well.

If your dog is squirmy or otherwise uncooperative, get some help from a family member or friend. Some dogs will be still while someone they know and trust rubs their head and neck while the trimmer does his work. Another way to calm some unruly dogs is to put a muzzle on them. Not only does that help them remember their manners, it may also increase the confidence level of the person doing the trimming. Other dogs respond better to frequent and very special treats, such as cheese or chicken or small bits of bread with peanut butter. If your dog is objecting strongly, don't try to do all

the nails at one time. Do a few while your dog is relatively calm, and end the session on a good, positive tone. The next day go for a few more nails. The point is to make nail-trimming less stressful from both sides of the clippers. If you just plain don't like to trim nails or your dog gets too stressed, make use of a professional and take your dog to a groomer or your vet's office. Often dogs who are uncooperative at home will be better behaved for someone else - just like kids!



Using the Turnout Muzzle

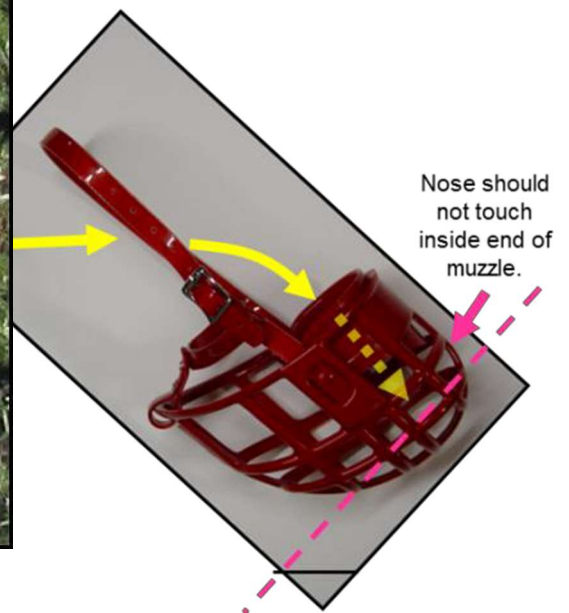
Once you get a new muzzle adjusted to fit your Greyhound's head, you should not ever need to unbuckle it to put it on or take it off.

The biggest issue I find when I hear the muzzle doesn't fit is that it's upside down so you might want to put a piece of tape with "top" or their name on the part that should end up on top of the nose.

Here's a picture of one on a dog and a diagram to help you if you need it.

Tip the muzzle so the nose goes through the loop the strap makes then as it goes on, you can use your fingers to help slip the strap behind the ears.

The nose should not be smushed up against the end of the muzzle inside – if so, that's too tight and will hurt and rub sores. Be careful to not make it too loose though as some will rub it and end up having it hanging under their neck.



Should your greyhound ever get out of your house/yard or become frightened and pull out of their collar, remember, your first calls should be to GPA Tri-State, animal control, veterinary offices, even the police can be notified so if anyone should find your dog and he/she somehow lost the identification tags, they will have a contact number to help get your dog back to you sooner. Make sure you have an up-to-date list handy with emergency numbers and your dog's current description/info so in a panic, you won't leave something out (it would also give you something to hand a friend or neighbor and ask them to start calling while you start looking for your dog). It's a good idea to keep copies near the phone and in your vehicles.

Be sure you have current ID tags on them **at all times**. Many groups are starting to recommend a second "tag collar" or embroidered ID collar (worn behind the slip-on martingale styles) that stays on the dog at all times except during baths. This can be a regular buckle-type collar with tags or the embroidered style as you would never use it to attach their leash to. The embroidered ID collars are great for those light sleepers who are easily awakened by jingling tags. They typically have the dog's name and a phone number embroidered on them - again - it's best to just cut the D-ring off if it comes with one as you NEVER want to lead the dog by this collar. This way, even if your dog should become frightened enough to struggle out of their martingale collar, their ID tags are still on them and not in your hand with the collar they slipped. Also, that ensures ID will be on a mischievous or frightened dog who bolts through an open door.

Keep up-to-date snapshots of your pets in a safe place where you'll know you have them in case you need to make "I'm Lost" posters to aid in the search. Predator calls or "squawkers" can come in handy as well as having extra leashes/collars in the car and maybe even a squeaky toy to help get your dogs attention and encourage them to come to you. Remember (and I know this is very, VERY hard to do) but, no matter how much you feel like scolding them for running off, you need to do your very best to praise them and be excited about them coming to you - yes, even go so far as to give them a yummy treat. Think of it this way... We teach our dogs not to repeat things they're scolded for so if they get into trouble when coming back to you, how likely will they be the next time to run right into your arms?

Remember, a panicked greyhound will be thinking of one thing - run as far and fast as their legs will take them to try and get away from the source of their fear. They won't be thinking about where they're running to, the roads they'll have to cross, traffic that will be out there, or that they are running away from the safest place they can be - it's up to us to keep them safe.