

MANAGING YOUR GREYHOUND'S CORNS

While your vet can offer a range of surgical treatments for corns, you may wish to explore non-surgical options you can use at home. This is called 'conservative management.' It is unlikely to make the corns go away, but you should be able to make your greyhound more comfortable.

Corns may develop for a variety of reasons, and the approaches to consider may vary as a result.

THE SHAPE OF YOUR DOG'S FEET

Most of your dog's weight should be through the central two toes of each paw. If they have a missing or damaged toe, the weight may be distributed differently and cause a corn to form. If their nails are too long, or they have flat feet, their weight may be shifted backwards; again, a corn may result.



THE WAY YOUR DOG WALKS

Particularly if your dog develops a corn in later life, consider how they walk. Favouring one side because of arthritic pain or muscle tension may cause them to develop a corn on the other side, as they shift weight away from the painful limb.

THE STATE OF YOUR DOG'S FEET

If your dog's pads are very soft, they are more likely to damage them and this can lead to a corn forming. Problems can also arise because there is not enough 'padding' to cushion to bones. Remember, if your dog has corns on both front feet or both back feet, they may not limp!

HOW CAN WE LOOK AFTER CORNS?

PROTECTION

The simplest method to help your dog is to walk them on soft surfaces, both inside and outside of the house. The more walking they do on hard surfaces the quicker the corns will build up. If walking on pavements or hard floors is essential, try buying them some boots. Therapaw boots and Hunny boots are popular brands to try. Both have padding inside to cushion the foot. Alternatively, buy a cheaper brand (or even use a baby sock) and put foam padding inside. For indoors you can get baby socks with grippy soles so they don't slip.

SOFTENING

Use a cream or emollient regularly to keep the pads in good condition. Coconut oil or a moisturising paw balm is ideal. Burt's Bees and Musher's paw was are often used. You can also use creams intended for hard skin, with 10% urea in. Avoid creams with toxic oils in such as tea tree, in case your dog licks the foot.

FILING

If the corn protrudes above the level of the pad, and/or is surrounded by hard skin ('hyperkeratosis') this can be filed back until it feels similar to the rest of the pad. You can use a pedicure file or even just an emery board to do this when your dog is resting.

HULLING



Removing the corn from the 'corn bed' is called hulling. This can be most safely done at home by soaking the affected foot in Epsom Salts (or just plain water) so the corn swells and can be scraped out with your fingernail. This will only work if you can see a clear 'edge' to the corn, as in the picture on the right. If it is still a pale circle within the pad it is not yet ready to come out, as shown on the left.



Not ready to come out

This one could be hulled

You will need Epsom salts, cotton wool or cotton wool pads, cling film, a baby sock, micropore tape and a boot or bandage. This is what to do;

- Dissolve 2 tablespoons of Epsom salts in 100ml of hot water and cool to hand-hot (about 30C). Soak a few cotton wool pads or a ball of cotton wool in the solution.
- Lay out a piece of cling-film and place your cotton wool in the centre. Stand your dog with the affected foot on the cotton wool and bunch up the cling film to hold the cotton wool against the pads.
- Slide a baby sock on over the cling film. You could use micropore tape to keep this in place.
- Cover the babysock with Vetwrap bandage or a boot to keep it in place and leave for several hours, or overnight. Additional padding can be used between the toes and round the paw.
- Change every few hours and repeat until the corn swells up and can be scraped out.
- Allow the foot to dry and moisturise thoroughly.

Hulling and filing the corn will need to be repeated every few weeks as the will corn regrow due to the pressure created when your dog walks. If Epsom salts are not successful, you could also try Animalintex poultice on the affected pad only, using the above technique.

PHYSICAL THERAPIES AND PAIN RELIEF

If your greyhound has arthritis or musculoskeletal issues, they may benefit from pain relief, physiotherapy, acupuncture, massage, chiropractic treatments etc. to help them carry their weight in a more balanced way. Dealing with the imbalance could reduce or eliminate the corn.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON CORNS AND THEIR MANAGEMENT

- To read more, or provide information and contacts for your vet, visit the website for the Greyhound Health Initiative at <https://www.greyhoundhealthinitiative.org/corns/>
- To learn more about conservative management of corns at home join the Facebook group Greyhounds with corns <https://www.facebook.com/groups/Greyhoundswithcorns>