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Broken Legs are Serious Risks for Italian Greyhounds

By Kerry Clabaugh

We have two Italian Greyhounds (affectionately referred to as IG's). Dixie was two when we brought Yankee home. I read that IG's are happier with another animal and thought that another IG would be half as much trouble and twice as much fun. After a few days of establishing a pack order the two became great friends.

For those not familiar with IG's, they are about ¼ scale of the famous racetrack breed. In their finest form they look half-starved, even though it may look cruel to most pet owners, that's when they are the most active and truly happiest. A pound or two slows them down tremendously and even becomes dangerous.

They are fearless leapers. No matter how many times I try to explain to them Newton's Laws of Gravity, it does no good. Heart-stopping stories abound over the internet chat rooms about their Superman like tendencies. The extra weight increases the risk of broken bones.

They are also tremendous jumpers. In her hey-day Dixie could jump straight up over 6 feet high to grab a snack. At will she could jump flat-footed on to the dining room table, landing as soft as a butterfly with sore feet.

But more than anything, those long thin legs were meant for speed. Unfortunately, they can run faster than they can think. IG's become single focused when running. Twice I have nearly had a heart attack as they ran full speed into each other from opposite directions, tumbling like out of control race cars. Chasing after one another, they'd scrape the trees so close that bark literally flew off and misjudging turns, wiping-out in to brick walls and other immovable objects was a common occurrence.

Well, one day the inevitable finally happened, Dixie went into a door facing and snapped her left leg. The break was clean through. Her little paw dangling 90 degrees from just below her knee told me everything I didn't want to know.

I did the best I could to immobilize it as my wife called the vet. As soon as we got there they took her back for x-rays. She was obviously in a lot of pain but had quit yelping after I first picked her up. In fact, she was the calmest of any of us.

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My wife was crying because of the dog. I was crying because of the bill. If I would've known how much it was going to cost in the lobby I would have cried a lot harder. This was going to be a big payday for the vet.

The choices were simple, they could try a cast, but it would probably not set right because of the very tiny, toothpick–thin fibula. The vet recommended a titanium plate and screws.

The surgery alone would run \$1,000. The total bill would actually end up over \$1,800. I could have bought 3 Dixies and a lifetime supply of dog food for that much. My wife got mad because she didn't like my sense of humor, but I wasn't joking. I know the power of the purse, and I have no intention of getting hit by hers again so I relented.

The next morning they put in the custom made plate and screws. It was really tricky because the screws had to be big enough to hold things together, but small enough not to interrupt blood flow.

More painful (if you can believe that) than the vet bill, was the care and attention Dixie would require for the next 3 to 4 months. For the next three months she would have to be kept in a crate at all times.

For the first three weeks when we took her out to go potty we would have to hold on to her. No walking was allowed. It is absolutely crucial for dogs to find the perfect spot to relieve themselves, not any spot will do. Humans cannot fully appreciate this until they miss an entire showing of Monday Night Football.

A few weeks after the surgery we got a bit of good news, the leg was healing fine. She would still have to be crated, but we could put her on a real tight lead and let her stand on her three good legs to go potty. In about two to three week intervals after that she was allowed a little more freedom.

Slowly things got back to normal. The first month after she got full clearance to run was rather tiring. Each jump, every full trot run brought held breaths in anticipation of another vet trip.

It has taken two full years to get to where she no longer yelps or pulls up after a full run or sharp turn. She has lost a noticeable amount of her initial burst. She can longer track down Yankee from behind, but they still love to chase each other in the backyard and that gives us great pleasure. If you've never seen these gracious runners play at full speed then you cannot fully appreciate why we went to all the trouble and expense.

My wife loves to show Dixie's scar to anyone who comes by. She talks about the whole adventure like it was The Good Old Days. Out of fear that my wife will read this article I will state that if I had to do it again I would. But I won't like it.

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education. Kerry is also interested in your experiences with robotic lawnmowers. He can be reached toll free (877) 383-6054

Greyhound: The Fastest Running Dog

By George Adams

The fastest running dog of all the canine species is the Greyhound. Because of their great speed, many Greyhound owners use these animals as racing dogs. In this case, the lifespan of a Greyhound depends on how long he can maintain his ability win. After too many losses, some owners will opt to euthanize their animals. For those Greyhounds lucky enough to be rescued, they can be rehabilitated for family pets.

If you decide you'd like to give a rehabilitated Greyhound a home, consider speaking with a trained rescuer about the issues these types of dogs may have. When training a Greyhound to race, they are taught to chase a mechanical rabbit. Many times Greyhounds will have difficulty discerning the mechanical rabbit from a small child or other pet, and will erroneously give chase. Rehabilitated Greyhounds make much better pets when they are not given the opportunity to interact with children and other pets. Being full grown at the time of their rehabilitation, unfortunately does not mean they are house broken and will likely need extra time and patience to learn what is expected of a pet.

The American Kennel Club classifies the Greyhounds as a member of the Hound Group, which first made their appearance in ancient Egypt. There they were taught to hunt down game. After making their way to England, they developed into favored animals with British noblemen who, realizing their speed and ability to turn coin, began racing them. This trend continued when Greyhounds crossed the seas to America.

Large, sleek and strong with narrow bodies, Greyhounds are muscular with long lithe tails and dark eyes. Where most dogs of a specific breed are categorized by their unique color, the Greyhound breed can be a variety of different colors.

Though not known for their energy, Greyhounds are popular for their impossible speed. When not racing, these dogs can be found lazing away in the shade, storing what energy they have for their next race. Greyhounds need plenty of room to run, in a well enclosed area. However, animals that live in more confined spaces like apartments will eventually acclimate themselves to walking on a leash.

Typically Greyhounds are amiable, companionable pets that enjoy time spent with their families playing. Greyhounds are affectionate dogs and love to be close to their owners. They love children and delight in playing with them, and are generally gentle and good natured enough to play with other animals as well. Because the Greyhound's instinct is to prey, it's advisable you watch them closely around other pets and children. Though they are loveable dogs, their natural instincts drive their

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actions.

Greyhounds require good quality food to sustain their bodies and provide energy. They are notorious for their tendency to bloat, so Greyhound owners must carefully monitor their food intake and make certain they are not eating too much. It's recommended, for the overall health of your pet that they be allowed to eat numerous smaller meals instead of a couple larger ones. It's always a good idea to speak with a veterinarian; they will be able to provide the best information about how to care for your Greyhound, along with recommending a vitamin supplement that will keep your pet in good health.

Luckily Greyhounds don't shed much at all. This is because they have a short coat, which makes

grooming for these animals relatively simple. Greyhounds shouldn't need to be brushed more than once a week, and a good rule of thumb is to have their nails clipped by a professional when they begin to sound like tap dancers.

Deciding to become the owner of a rehabilitated Greyhound may seem daunting at first, but with patience and devotion, these dogs can make an excellent addition to any family.

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