

# COOL TIPS FOR HOT WEATHER

As the “Dog days of summer” are upon we need to be careful training and trialing our dogs. It is important to make sure they do not overheat in this weather.

## **Trialing Outdoors:**

- Make sure you have adequate shade available for both human and dog. EZ- ups are available for a fairly reasonable price and they are usually on sale by August.
- Silver shade mesh tarps to help keep out the heat but they also allow for air flow to pass through. These are also great to use on vehicles to keep out the heat; spring loaded clamps or the bungee cords are an easy way to attach them
- Don't put your dog back into a crate immediately after running them; give them time to cool down and walk them out to avoid cramping. Ex-pens are a great idea as the dog can stretch out and move around much easier.
- Cool coats for dogs are a great idea- There are a couple of different kinds- the white mesh ones are used by getting them wet then putting them on the dog; it serves 2 purposes; 1- keeps the direct heat off of the dog (especially if you have a black dog) and 2-the mesh part allows for airflow and a cooling evaporation can occur.
- Hydration- make sure BOTH handler and dogs have adequate water available. Drink far more than you think is necessary- this is very important to avoid heat related injuries or illnesses. Powerade or Gatorade or Propel are good options for humans too. If you have a dog that is a reluctant drinker try a product called “K-9 GO DOG” it is liver flavored powder that is added to water. Many people have had good success with this. There are other products on the market but I don't have personal experience with them. AVOID using ICE water for dogs to drink after their runs; can cause cramping.
- Make use of the kid pools or hose if available. Help the dogs to cool off by putting them in the pool especially after their runs; it is helpful to get their underside cool and wet.
- Cooling dog beds; Water beds for dogs allow them to lay on the cooling surface to help cool down the underside of dog. They can be a bit bulky and heavy for larger dogs.

- Air flow: There are many battery operated fans available for summer. There are also a few that plug into your cigarette lighter of vehicles. These are a great idea. I have also seen some of the rechargeable battery type fans available from Sears “Craftsman” or the Ryobi products which have a rechargeable battery. They hold a charge all day and provide a good amount of airflow.

## **Training:**

- Avoid training in the hottest part of the day get up extra early or wait until late in the day
- Keep training sessions VERY short and try NOT to repeat things too many times
- Less is more!
- Keep water and shade available
- Keep a kid pool with water or hose available to cool dog down
- Try to train in a shady area
- Work on skill sets instead of sequences
- Listen to your dog! If they leave the training area to find shade or go to the pool they are telling you they are too hot- don’t force them to do more running! Give them a break!
- Watch for signs of fatigue; if dog seems unstable or wobbly legged (almost look like they are drunk) they need water and to cool down as well as providing them with some quick energy type treats
- Listen to your instincts- if it doesn’t feel right- don’t train!



Use indoor options to work on your crate games; hand targets; travel plank for contact work; practice lining your dog up at your side and proofing your release word

**Be safe and have fun!**