



Heavy duty
Australian-made dog
equipment for dogs of
all shapes and sizes

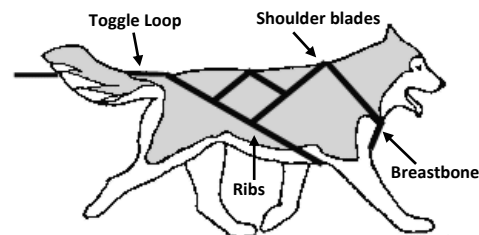
HARNESS FIT & CARE

Sledding harnesses are designed for dogs to pull at speed, such as in sled dog races or when exercising a dog attached to a pushbike, scooter, cart or sled.

Both sledding and weight-pulling harnesses are specifically designed to allow the dogs a combination of maximum pulling power and comfort. These harnesses are designed to transfer the stress of the pull to the neck and shoulder areas, where the harness is padded. The energy of the pull is focussed by the harness onto bony points of the dog's structure at the withers (shoulder blades), prosternum (breastbone) and ribs. This stops the harness from digging in to the softer fleshy parts of the dog's body which would cause discomfort.

It is important that the working harnesses are a good fit on the dog to maximise comfort and minimise rubbing and injury. Because every dog is built differently it is best to get sledding and weight-pull harnesses made to measure to fit your dog.

The sledding harness should always be attached to the bike or scooter with a bungee line. The bungee line incorporates an elastic section which takes up the shock and therefore prevents jarring injuries to your dog. This is a must for most types of harness work at speed - a static line (rope, lead or chain) should never be used.



Fitting the Harness

To put the harness on your dog, fold the breast plate section in half and with your hands around the neck section place the harness over your dog's head. Gently step your dog's front legs through the harness so that the top of the breastplate section sits on the breastbone and extends down between the front legs. Gently but firmly pull all excess skin and fur through the neck section so that the harness is sitting snugly against the dog. Pull directly backwards on the toggle loop at the rear of the harness to make sure the harness is sitting straight on your dog.

A correctly fitted harness may feel a little tight when pulling it over the dogs head, depending on the breed of dog and the size of the head relative to the neck. The harness must be seated firmly on your dog's neck by pulling all excess skin and fur through the neck section – this step in fitting the harness is essential.

Once on the dog, the neck section should be a snug fit without digging into your dog's windpipe. If too large the neck section will slip down towards the dog's upper arm and shoulder when pulling, which could cause discomfort or injury.

When backward pressure is applied, the toggle loop should sit next to or past the dog's tail. When the dog is not pulling the harness may sit further up your dog's back away from the base of the tail and to the untrained eye may appear too short. The X section across the dog's back should not be tight in order to allow the dog to arch its back while running.

Only when you are exerting significant pressure directly backwards on the toggle loop can you determine if the harness is fitting correctly – this is how the harness will be sitting at times of maximum stress on the dog such as during acceleration or pulling up an incline. It is at these times of high stress that an incorrectly fitted harness is most likely to cause injury or discomfort.

Note: THE HARNESS MUST BE PULLED TIGHT DIRECTLY BACKWARDS TO ASSESS FIT.

A harness that is a good fit will always look too short when it is sitting loose on a dog – it must be pulled tight as if the dog were pulling a heavy load.

If you have any questions about harness fit please contact us.

Caring for your Harness

- HAND WASH YOUR HARNESS with a mild soap, such as Wool Mix, in warm (not hot) water.
- Hang your harness up to dry away from direct heat and sunlight after every use. (Do not tumble dry).
- Dry completely before putting away, and do not store in plastic bags. Damp harnesses can become mouldy.
- Unwashed harnesses become stiff, increasing the rubbing action on the dog and reducing the life of the harness. Dirty harnesses become malodorous and more tasty for your dog to chew.
- Check your harness for wear and evidence of being chewed before each use.
- Do not leave the harness on your dog when he/she is not working - bored dogs chew harnesses and the polar fleece padding is often damp after a run.
- If the stitching shows signs of wear, send the harness back for repair.