

Get to Know Your Greyhound

First of all, congratulations on the adoption of your ex-racing greyhound! We are all so happy that you chose to help a greyhound in need and were willing to open your home and hearts to this special breed!

Your greyhound is a member of one of the most ancient and prestigious breeds. Known for over 4,000 years as extraordinary hunters and loyal pets, these canines were revered by royalty in Egypt, Persia, Europe and the Middle East, and are in fact the only breed of dog mentioned in the King James version of the Bible (Proverbs 30: 29-31).

Your greyhound, whether a racer for a month or for several years, is accustomed to a very regimented lifestyle. The schedule for feeding, turn-outs (bathroom breaks) and the rest is very strict in a racing kennel and consequently, the transition from professional racer to pet can be very confusing.

Even though your new family member has been in a foster home for a few weeks, he/she still has a lot to learn about retirement life. Patience and encouragement on your part will do wonders in easing your new greyhound into his new environment. He/she will learn quickly, but he/she needs your help.

The following items will be given to you at the pick-up:

Martingale collar and Leash

Muzzle

THE MUZZLE

For greyhounds, the muzzle is part of their gear. They wear them as easily as we wear eye glasses or hard hats. The open, plastic, basket muzzle is comfortable and safe for your dog even for fairly long periods of time. Its design allows the dog to breathe and to drink easily. A muzzle offers an amazing way to deal with a myriad of everyday problems that all greyhound owners endure - issues beyond the typical examples such as safe introductions, playgroup etiquette, and use in multi-hound households. In fact, almost every problem you have ever had with your greyhound that involves his mouth can be nearly "cured" by using his muzzle in creative and intelligent ways. Muzzles can also be used to restrict your dog from exhibiting other undesirable behaviors such as counter surfing, chewing, and general destructiveness when left unattended, and to control the licking and biting of sutures and stitches after surgery. Responsible use of a muzzle can be a very useful tool because it will help you to achieve positive results early on so that ultimately you won't have to use it in the future!

INTRODUCTION INTO YOUR HOME

When bringing a newly retired racer into your home, there are several guidelines to follow that will make this introduction a safe one for all concerned. It is important to remember that the majority of these hounds have chased a lure for a living and even though they are, for the most part, gentle creatures, some have a higher prey drive than others. If you have other pets in your household, special care should be given to ensure the safety of all concerned. Remember, this is all new to your greyhound and their adrenaline may be much higher initially so always proceed with caution.

INTRODUCTION TO OTHER DOGS IN YOUR HOME

If you have other dogs in your home, regardless of the breed, there are several ways in which you may choose to introduce them:

1. ON NEUTRAL GROUND

Try to introduce your dogs to your greyhound on "neutral ground", for example, the front yard. If you have more than one dog and you have help, bring them out one at a time and let them sniff each other. Remember that everyone should be on a short lead and your greyhound muzzled for the introduction. Never let your dogs rush your greyhound. Pay close attention to the reactions of each dog. If any signs of aggression (growling, snapping, biting, etc.) or dominance (head in an arch over the back of the other dog with tail up over their back and ridged stance) are observed correct immediately with a firm "No".

2. INSIDE YOUR HOME

Meeting each other on neutral ground is not always an option. If this is the case and you must bring your greyhound into the house, do so with as little commotion as possible. If you are introducing more than one dog to your greyhound, try introducing them one dog at a time. You might want to start with your dogs in another room. Before any introduction, muzzle your greyhound. This is your dog's home so it is not necessary that they be on a lead to meet the newcomer when introduced in your home. As each dog is introduced to your greyhound, watch his or her behavior. After you are sure they are ok, introduce the next one.

INTRODUCING YOUR GREYHOUND TO YOUR CAT

We try very hard to cat test all greyhounds leaving our program but we highly recommend you introduce your greyhound to the cat(s) in a safe manner. We do not encourage attempting to let your foster interact with small animals such as; guinea pigs, ferrets, rabbits etc... **Please keep your foster muzzled and supervised for at least the first week when the cat or any small animal is present.**

Introduce your greyhound to your cat indoors while on lead and muzzled.

1. Walk your greyhound around until they see the cat. Always remember to keep your greyhound on a short lead for more control, as you never know if your cat might take that moment to dart across the room in front of them.
2. Once the cat has been spotted, slowly walk towards the cat paying close attention to his/her actions. If your cat hisses and swats your greyhound and he/she turns away and shows signs of being afraid of the cat, that's GREYT. If he/she totally ignores your cat, that's even better. If he/she shows some interest, give a small tug on his/her lead while saying in a firm voice "NO KITTY". You may have to repeat this several times until they get the picture. Using a spray bottle is a wonderful tool for teaching your greyhound what NO means. If you see that they are interested in your cat(s), as you tell them NO KITTY, spray them with a stream of water. Although some greyhounds are not fazed by this method, most do not like it and will stop whatever behavior is related to the water.

If your greyhound exhibits any of the following signs after seeing your cat:

- Teeth clicking or snapping
- Fixed gaze or stare which cannot be broken by a verbal "NO" or water spraying
- Trembling or lurching
- Ears alert (which alone could simply mean curiosity)

SEPARATE them immediately by placing the greyhound in their crate or the cat in a different room with the door shut. Once you have secured the safety of all involved, notify us right away so that we can provide further guidance.

Always remember that your greyhound may be ok with your cat in the house, but while outside All BETS ARE OFF!

INTRODUCING YOUR GREYHOUND TO SMALL CHILDREN

When you introduce children to your greyhound do so with an abundance of caution:

1. First, keep your greyhound muzzled for at least the first week while children are playing nearby as this will help prevent accidents should a child step or fall on your dog. **Never leave your dog alone with small children.**
2. Hold your greyhound on a short lead and walk them towards the child, **NEVER LET YOUR CHILD RUN AT THE GREYHOUND.**
3. Teach your child the proper way to greet your greyhound by extending their hand for him/her to sniff. Teach your child to pet the dog gently and to begin under the neck

moving up to the head and NOT by reaching over his/her head to pat them. **NEVER** allow children to put their face directly in the face of your greyhound.

4. It is very important that your children or their friends respect your greyhounds' sleeping quarters. **DO NOT let your children play in or around your greyhounds' crate. Likewise, DO NOT allow children to lie on your dog's bed.** Greyhounds have never had to share their sleeping quarters before. Never let your child approach a greyhound that is lying down without calling the greyhound's name first. **GREYHOUNDS CAN SLEEP WITH THEIR EYES OPEN.**

SOCIALIZING YOUR GREYHOUND

Remember to proceed with caution while introducing your greyhound to new things, but always let them know you are there to lean on. Also remember, greyhounds are very smart. If they think you are apprehensive about something, they will be too. Always have treats on hand when they have conquered a new challenge and reward them if they respond in a positive manner.

ROUTINES AND POSSIBLE ISSUES TO AWARE OF GREYHOUNDS ARE STRICTLY INSIDE DOGS

Greyhounds are strictly indoor house dogs! They have very thin, short coats and little body fat to insulate them from heat or cold. Therefore greyhounds are ill-equipped for life out-of-doors. Inclement weather (hot or cold) cannot be tolerated for long periods of time. That doesn't mean that greyhounds don't enjoy being outside with their owners. In fact, most greyhounds love to jump around in fresh snow and will not complain about going out in most kinds of weather.

A good rule to stick to is, if it's cold enough that **you** have to put on a coat to go outside, then put one on your greyhound too. If it is hot enough that you have to use the air-conditioner or open the windows of your car, then it is too hot for your greyhound to be outside for a long time.

These dogs are kept in heated kennel buildings and wear coats at the track in the winter, and also require air-conditioned, cool kennels in the summer.

SLEEP AGGRESSION

While your greyhound is sleeping, pay close attention to him/her. Keep in mind, at the track they have not had to share their space with anyone, so at first they may have some space issues. It is important that they have a crate they can go to for comfort.

NEVER let a small child sit or lie on your dogs' bed. That is their safe place and should be respected at all times.

REMEMBER, GREYHOUNDS CAN SLEEP WITH THEIR EYES OPEN so call out their name when they are lying down so they know you are approaching. If a greyhound is surprised while sleeping and reacts negatively, (growling or biting) it does not necessarily mean they are aggressive or vicious. It generally means they have been startled. As a whole, greyhounds are gentle, sociable, affectionate dogs and are for the most part, well-adjusted around other animals and people.

POSSESSIVENESS

Possessiveness of beds, food, toys or even their crate in the beginning is not out of the ordinary. Most of these things are new to them and therefore, they may feel the need to protect them. Usually a stern “NO” or the handy spray bottle accompanied by a stern “NO” will do the trick.

PACK MENTALITY

It is very important to understand the “PACK” mentality and your role in the “PACK”. Greyhounds have been raised in a pack setting since birth. Unlike other breeds that are separated from their siblings at an early age, greyhounds are raised, schooled and raced with ONLY greyhounds. It is natural, then, for them to establish a “pecking order”. Because of this, a greyhound that has been “alpha” in his or her past group may well enter your home thinking they will be the alpha there also. Make sure you are in charge, not your greyhound, or your other dog(s) for that matter. It is important that you are aware of your role in promoting peaceful relations among the pack. Close supervision and recognizing subtle signs of aggression are paramount in providing safety for your family and your pets. Be observant of all behaviors that may signal the onset of a problem.

FEAR AND DOMINANCE

Recognizing subtle signs of dominance or aggression can stop a bad situation dead in its tracks. Signs to watch for are:

- Your greyhound positioning itself in a stiff stance, usually with tail erect over his/her back, above another pet that is lying down, playing with a toy or eating. This signifies their desire to establish their place as the boss and want the respect from the rest of the “pack”. Should this happen, gently pull them away from the situation accompanied with a firm “NO”.
- Your greyhound turning their head to the side when someone tries to pet them. This may indicate they are frightened and want to be left alone.

NEVER put your face directly in the face of your greyhound unless you know that this is a behavior they are comfortable with. You will know they feel threatened as they will become still and rigid and their tail will stop wagging. Some dogs will see this as a challenge or threat and do what is required to protect themselves.

RESIST the urge to hug or join your greyhound if they are lying down, especially if they are on their favorite bed. Remember, while at the track, these hounds have had very little personal items to call their own, so a crate and a bed are at the top of their list.

FEAR FIGHTING

Fear fighting among animals is usually the result of one of them being injured. This type of behavior is usually one of pain and the injured animal striking out at what or whoever may have caused the pain. If other animals are present during the injury, the injured animal may attack and a vicious fight may ensue, sometimes to the death. Very often the owner will not be present when the attack occurs and will assume the animal “just went berserk” and “tried to kill” the other animal. Very rarely will this be the

case, as generally an animal will not turn on one of its own unless in a great deal of pain. **NEVER TRY TO HANDLE AN INJURED ANIMAL UNLESS IT IS MUZZLED FIRST.**

SEPARATION ANXIETY

Some greyhounds exhibit unusual behavior when they are moved from the kennel environment to a home environment. This behavior is called Separation Anxiety or “SA.” Because they have spent their whole lives with many people and dogs around, a change in environment can be stressful to the hound. The characteristics of SA may include urinating in their crate, howling, and/or destructive behavior when the dog is left alone. Following are some ways you can comfort your greyhound through his transition. Throughout the first few days, allow the dog to see you walk out the door (numerous times) and return shortly after. Your greyhound will soon learn that when you leave, you will return. If you have other dogs in the house, have them sleep in the same room with the greyhound. If you don’t have that luxury, the dog should sleep in an area so that he/she can see you. This should help him/her feel secure during the night. Urinating in the crate can be corrected by frequent outings. They may wet their own crate as a reaction to SA, but eventually they will tire of wetting themselves and will become comfortable with their new routine.

REMEMBER, YOU ARE IN CHARGE

Animals will almost invariably revert back to instinctual behavior without a “Pack Leader” and greyhounds more so than most animals as they have been raised in the pack setting. It is important your greyhound knows you are the one in charge. You must set guidelines that they must follow. When setting these guidelines, remember the environment they have come from and what was expected of them there. In their past environment, they were required to do little more than run, rest, eat and potty and they were required to obey. They are now in a place where much is expected of them and more stimuli than they have ever faced before is coming at them from all sides. This new list of rules can cause a very challenging adaptation period for your greyhound. Your new family member is relying on you to keep things in order and to enforce rules that are meant to protect all those in your household.

SHY GREYHOUNDS

If you are trying to establish a trusting relationship with a shy greyhound, avoid eye contact until you are sure they do not perceive it as a threat. Stay on your feet or sit but do not crawl. When you are trying to form a bond with a shy dog do not rush the process. Act as if you are walking past them and gently touch them saying something kind and reassuring as you pass. Sit on a piece of furniture and let him/her approach you; it may take a while but as your greyhound becomes more relaxed it will happen. Have treats in your pocket and offer one each time he/she approaches you on their own, this will help them bond with you and will instill trust.

YOUR GREYHOUND AT PLAY

If you have observed aggressive behavior in your greyhound or other pets in your household while they are playing, especially outdoors, consider this a potential for disaster. As soon as you observe this behavior, stop it immediately! Racing greyhounds are especially prey driven and competitive by nature. Competing for a toy or jockeying for position for the lead in a game of chase are perfect examples of a setup for fighting. Even the most gentle of dogs can have a sudden urge to take a toy or be ahead in a race, which can produce devastating injuries in a pack response. Better safe than sorry so keep a muzzle on your greyhound while they are running outside.

GAMES OF FETCH

NEVER play fetch with a greyhound that has shown a competitive streak unless you are playing with just him/her.

PLAYING WITH TOYS INSIDE

If your greyhound growls at another dog or person while he/she is playing with a toy either inside or out, correct them right away with a stern “NO”. If it continues, take the toy away and put it up. Do not let small children play with your greyhounds’ toys and vice versa.

MEDICAL CARE

VACCINATIONS AND WORMING

All greyhounds receive routine vaccinations and an initial worming prior to placement in a home.

VETERINARIANS

Before allowing your greyhound to be anesthetized or tranquilized for any reason, please be sure your veterinarian is experienced or at least familiar with the safe procedures and dosages appropriate for a greyhound. If he/she is not or does not seem interested in the topic or your concern, then find a vet with experience with greyhounds and the Sight Hound group. It could make the difference between life and death for your greyhound! Your vet should also be knowledgeable of the differences in a greyhound's blood work test values.

Greyhounds are not “regular” dogs.		
Normal lab results in Greyhounds are not the same as other breeds.		
Normal	Greyhounds	Other Breeds
HCT/PCV	50% - 70%	42% - 62%
WBC	3.5-6.9	5.8-20.3
Platelets	110-205	173-497
Total Protein	4.8-6.3	5.1-7.1
Globulin	1.7-3.0	2.2-3.9
Creatinine	1.0-1.7	0.6-1.6
Total T4 (nMol/L)	8-20	20-33

A Greyhound with HCT/PCV <50% is anemic!

If you think your Greyhound is hypothyroid, please have your vet check the TSH!

www.greyhoundhealthinitiative.org

We have included the name and phone number of the veterinarian who spayed or neutered your greyhound in your dog's paper work. Please insist that your vet contact this vet if there are any questions.

GENERAL CARE AND UP KEEP OF YOUR GREYHOUND

CRATING YOUR GREYHOUND

Borrow or buy a crate and don't hesitate to use it. A crate is not cruel or a punishment. Your greyhound has spent the majority of his/her racing life in a crate and it is an important tool for training them. Your greyhound will need the security and routine of a crate at first and it will keep them out of trouble and your house intact. You set him/her up for success and not failure. Your dog should be out of the crate when you are home.

CRATING YOUR GREYHOUND IS NOT A CRUEL THING TO DO. Greyhounds are very smart and will pick up on your vibes. If they detect from you, even the slightest discomfort in crating them, they will run with

it. When it is time to crate your greyhound (at night initially and whenever you leave the house or they are eating) just do it! Do not act like it is a big deal, walk them to the crate with your hand on their collar and put them in using a phrase like “kennel up”, “get in your house”, etc. Use the same phrase each time. Once he/she sees it is not a big deal to you, it will not be a big deal to them.

NEVER use the crate for punishment. Put your greyhound in the crate at different times; not only when you leave the house. Don't let your greyhound associate anything negative to the crate.

Your greyhound has been used to being in a room full of other greyhounds and being separated from other dogs and humans may prove to be very stressful. The first couple of nights will probably be the hardest. You greyhound may decide he/she needs to cry to you the entire night. Leaving a radio or TV on while you are away will also help them as they have never been without some sort of noise at the track. In the case of a greyhound, SILENCE IS NOT GOLDEN.

It is possible to overuse a crate. Your greyhound will want to be with you and the rest of your family. Do not keep your greyhound in his crate when you are home. Never use the crate as a punishment. The crate is a training tool and not a storage area for your pet.

MUZZLING YOUR GREYHOUND

Your greyhound will come to you with a muzzle. **Please keep this muzzle on your greyhound at all times for at least the first week if small animals or children are present.** Always use the muzzle when your greyhound is running with other greyhounds/non-greys or when being transported in your vehicle. Do not let other animals or children play with their muzzle.

FEEDING

Feed your greyhound a high quality food. Acclimate him/her to your particular routine to make it easier for you. When feeding your greyhound, never do so close to your own pets. His/her crate may be a nice place for him/her to eat as it creates a good feeling about their crate and prevents competition over food. In most cases, your greyhound will be fed twice a day.

Never feed your greyhound:

- Raw meat
- Food that may be spoiled. Discard any uneaten food after your dogs' designated eating time. Leaving food out, especially moist food, can promote the growth of bacteria and lead to an upset stomach, vomiting and diarrhea.
- Chicken bones, pork bones, or fish bones – these can be swallowed and their sharp ends can pierce the stomach or intestinal walls.
- Chocolate

WALKING

ALWAYS KEEP THEM ON LEASH WHEN OUTSIDE!

Exercising your dog off leash in an area that is not entirely fenced in, could cost your greyhound his life. Your greyhound may be entirely devoted to you and never leave your side at home, but you must remember that this breed is the product of 4000 years of breeding to produce a 45 mph hunter with

exceptional eye sight. It may be something as simple as a leaf blowing by or a small animal or piece of trash rolling down the road, and your always loyal greyhound is off and running as fast as a horse at full gallop! They are not street wise and no car or bus could stop in time! Your greyhound's life is not a risk worth taking.

DOOR SAVVY GREYHOUNDS

Anytime you or anyone (adult or especially a child) enters or exits your home through the front, back or garage door, you must be very careful not to let your greyhound slip out the door to an unfenced area! Remember, these dogs have been trained to react to doors swinging open by running right through them! Never answer your door without either putting your greyhound in another room with the door closed, or have someone hold his collar firmly. Teach all family members and friends to open doors slowly and carefully or you will find your greyhound happily running outside, possibly into an unfenced area and then down the street. Greyhounds are notorious for ignoring your calls to come back, when they are excited and running, so please be very careful not to let your greyhound slip out the doors to your home to unfenced or dangerous areas.

QUESTIONS? WHO TO CALL

Jessica Rawlinson (409) 289-1742

Wendi Richard (409) 781-2356

Ashleigh Menard (337) 660-6157