

GREYHOUND GUIDE



Homeward Bound Greyhounds

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Greyhound Guide

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Welcome!

You are part of a growing number of people who consider themselves fortunate to have greyhounds in their lives. You will quickly discover how unique greyhounds are, and I hope this booklet helps in that understanding. Please do not hesitate to call us at 239-353-7335, or e-mail us at homewardbndgreys@aol.com with questions. No question is too trivial. You can also visit us at www.homewardboundgreyhounds.com or www.petfinder.com/.

What's Inside

Your Greyhound and

<i>I.</i>	<i>Adjustment Angst</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>II.</i>	<i>The House</i>	
	<i>Household Horrors</i>	<i>6</i>
	<i>Feeding Frenzy</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>III.</i>	<i>The Yard</i>	
	<i>Pee and Poop</i>	<i>8</i>
	<i>Running and Playing</i>	<i>9</i>
	<i>Bugs and Baths</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>IV.</i>	<i>Making Friends</i>	
	<i>Cats, Cockatiels, and Critters</i>	<i>12</i>
	<i>With Children</i>	<i>13</i>
	<i>With You</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>V.</i>	<i>A Dog with a Past</i>	
	<i>History of the Breed</i>	<i>15</i>
	<i>Racing History</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>VI.</i>	<i>Afterthoughts</i>	<i>17</i>

Note #1: The pronoun “he” is used throughout this guide to denote either sex of greyhound. I’m not being sexist, though I do have ‘a thing’ for the male greyhounds. It’s just more convenient to use “he” as a generic reference.

Note #2: All greyhounds adopted through Homeward Bound Greyhounds will have been in foster care prior to being adopted. This means they will have been introduced to homes, grass, cars, cats, etc. However, this manual is written as if you are getting a dog right off the track, because that is how most adoption groups work and it is better if you can understand your greyhound’s mindset from the beginning.



Your Greyhound and Adjustment Angst

Helping your dog get adjusted is a very important part of the greyhound adoption process. With patience, understanding and lots of laughter the first few weeks, you will find you have the most wonderful pet imaginable.

What you have to remember during the adjustment period is that your greyhound has lived his entire life in a kennel. This means upwards of 23 hours in a 2x4 wooden crate. He may never have been inside a home before, and he has no idea who you are or why you are taking him someplace.

Becoming a house pet involves a very dramatic change in routine for him, and he can be a little scared and baffled by all the new things around him. Usually, greyhounds adapt very quickly to the plush life as a household pet – wouldn't you?

Initial Nerves

You may feel a little nervous about getting your greyhound. Well, your greyhound is a lot more nervous than you are. And that nervousness manifests itself in a variety of ways. He may pant, whine, move around a lot, and have a drippy nose, sweaty paws, and start getting flaky skin and diarrhea. These are all common symptoms and will disappear once the dog feels more secure and calm. So you just need to be patient.

Car Ride Home

Remember, he has not spent much time in a car, and you are a stranger to him (but not for long!). So, on that car ride home, he has a reason to be nervous. Reassure him with your voice – calm and soothing. With your actions, go steady and slow. And be sure, right after the car ride home, before you go into the house, to walk with him around the yard and let him go to the bathroom.

Length of Adjustment

During the initial adjustment period he will be getting used to you, the house, the car, the kids, the pets, the stairs, and the beds – get the idea? Remember, be sympathetic with your greyhound's situation – he has had a traumatic upheaval in his routine track life, and it may take him some time to adjust. Usually, the initial adjustment period takes only a few days. He is an intelligent dog, and soon he will grasp what you expect of him. Your patience, love, and understanding will help your greyhound.

You will also find you have a shadow. Your greyhound will follow you everywhere you go: to the bathroom, to the kitchen, to the cellar, and to the door when you go out. This will continue until he realizes you are really his and you are not going to disappear.

As your greyhound becomes more secure with his surroundings and starts to trust you, you will see his personality emerging. He might steal your possessions and hide them, or smile at you when you come home, or start demanding to be let on all soft things. These signs mean that you have a bonafide member of your household, now.

Choosing A Vet

The choice of a veterinarian is another important decision. These dogs have difficulty with regular anesthesia, and a vet that does not follow the anesthesia guidelines for greyhounds will have a dead dog on his hands. So, choose a vet who has worked with greyhounds and is familiar with the sighthound group.

Do not be afraid to ask questions of your vet, or to find another vet if you have concerns! It is your greyhound's life at stake. I have a lot of experience that I am always willing to share, so do not hesitate to call me with concerns.

Exercise

Exercise and play is addressed in the “Running and Playing” chapter, however, during the adjustment period the more you walk, play, and run with your greyhound in the first few weeks of ownership, the easier the transition from racing greyhound to family friend.

Some greyhounds are accustomed to running up to three days a week at the racetrack. They are bred and trained to run, so up to this point it has been their greatest pleasure. The change from racetrack to house is exciting, but also confusing to your new greyhound. Think of how you would react to a similar situation.

Exercise can help you and him to keep everything in perspective. You will both feel better and less overwhelmed. Additionally, you will find your greyhound bonding to you more quickly. Who knows, maybe you will drop those pounds you have talked about shedding.

Bonding

Greyhounds seem to choose to have a relationship with you. They are very polite and friendly to everyone, but they learn to trust you. While other dogs seem to blindly trust, greyhounds are uniquely independent, almost cat – like in the way they choose to bestow affection. The more you do with your greyhound, the more solid your relationship becomes. The more you touch, play, and love these greyhounds, the more you get in return.

Once your dog feels comfortable with you, take him with you whenever you can. It helps in the bonding process. It also helps them to get the picture of their new world. Most love to travel, and being in the car with you is great for bonding. They are usually very sociable dogs and will be curious about everything.

Another thing that helps with the bonding process is the sleeping arrangements. Do not shut your greyhound in a separate room to sleep. From his track days, he is used to sleeping with lots of other greyhounds, so he will prefer to sleep in the same room with any member of the family (in the same bed, if you let him). He will feel more secure and is less likely to cry or cause damage during the first few weeks, if you allow him this pleasure.

Separation Anxiety

It is extremely important to remember that your greyhound has never been left alone before. He has either lived on a farm with lots of dog friends, or lived in a crate in a kennel with about 40 other dogs. So if you have to leave him at home – ALONE – he is going to be scared and confused. He is wondering, “Where did you go? Will you return? Where am I?” There are a few things you can do to ease this separation anxiety.

1. Practice leaving your greyhound for a few minutes at a time. Don’t make a big deal about leaving (if he thinks you’re going someplace and having more fun than he is, then he will definitely be upset!) and just leave for 15 minutes at first. Increase your leave to a few hours. He will get the idea that you’re coming back, and his anxiety about your leaving him forever will be eased.
2. Initially, dog-proof your home. Keep windows unobstructed from knickknacks and blinds. Your greyhound will go to the windows first to look for you, and if there are blinds or other objects in the way, they could get eaten when he gets anxious.
3. If anxiety is bad rent a crate from us, just for the first few weeks. Remember that your greyhound has always lived in one, so it’s very familiar. It can be used to make the transition from racer to pet more quickly. Here’s the routine. For the first two weeks, the greyhound is placed in his crate when left home alone. Then, when he knows the family routine, he is again placed in the crate, but the door is left open, giving him the choice. After a couple of weeks of this, the crate can be returned and a happy house pet exists.

Most greyhounds do not need crates, particularly when you have another dog in the household, or you are home most of the time. But once in a while there is an uncertain greyhound that needs the firm guidance of a crate until his new life becomes more understandable. I would wait to see your greyhound’s reaction to being left home alone, before borrowing, renting, or purchasing a crate.

Becoming A Statue

I am talking about a greyhound trait of stopping dead in their tracks and refusing to budge or look at you. This usually occurs when they are scared, nervous, and do not know exactly what is expected of them. The more insistent you get, the more insistent they get that they are not going anywhere. And they will win.

This most often happens when you are teaching them stairs, or trying to give them a bath in the tub. The best thing you can do is be very patient and wait them out, the whole time offering verbal encouragement and making it seem like what you are asking them to do is the most fun in the world. When you have tired of waiting and encouraging, as a last resort, just pick up the greyhound and move him to where you want him to be. (Do not lose your patience and yell, because you will ruin whatever good you have accomplished.)

Smiling

Some greyhounds smile, and this causes people who do not expect it to jump a mile back. They have a lot of long white teeth showing when they smile. If you have a smiler, it is really quite amusing and very harmless.

Ears Back

Most greyhounds keep their ears pinned back to their heads unless they hear a noise that causes their ears to straighten up. This is not a sign of aggression. I believe they think it makes them more streamlined and cool looking.

Eating Grass

When your greyhound is meandering around the yard, you will see him eat grass. Let him. The grass provides a nutrient he feels he needs, and does not do him any harm. A few greyhounds will then vomit up the grass and whatever was in their stomach that was making them feel out of sorts. The majority of greyhounds do not vomit after eating grass.

Leash

Every greyhound will come to you leash trained. They know to walk quietly and easily next to you. However, please keep your greyhound on a leash when he is not in a completely fenced area. Centuries of breeding will cause them to chase anything that moves. They will take off, they will not listen, and chances are that a car will hit them before you catch up to them. The best way to hold a leash is to place your hand through the loop and then grab the leash. This way the lease cannot slide out of your hand.

Retractable leashes are not recommended as they can get tangled easily, especially with a big dog. And they don't provide the stability of the nylon leash. Four or six – foot nylon leashes work well.

Flatulence

You must be warned. A greyhound with gas will wake you up in the middle of the night, and can clear a room. During this adjustment time, he will be expressing himself this way. The stress, the newness, the food, the treats – it all affects his gastric system. Some people say that giving a greyhound one to two dollops of low fat, plain yogurt will cause the flatulence to cease. Keeping windows open also helps.

Again, the more time you spend initially getting to know your greyhound, the quicker his adjustment period will be. If you can take days off when your greyhound comes into your home, it can really help his adjustment. You will be surprised at how quickly your greyhound becomes attached to you and your family and what a difference your presence makes to him....and his presence makes to you.



Your Greyhound and The House: Household Horrors

Everything in your house is familiar to you, but not at all familiar to your greyhound. Try to think how you would feel if aliens abducted you and took you to their strange planet. You will have a lot of fun watching your greyhound explore his new home. But he is going to need your help too.

Stairs

Your greyhound has probably never seen nor had to deal with stairs. You have to teach him to climb them. The best way is to get down on all fours and show him. If that does not work, stand behind him and move one paw at a time – step by step, showing him what he is supposed to do. Make sure you give lots of verbal, positive reinforcement. Gradually increase the number of steps he climbs. When going down the stairs, hold his collar securely, and go down the steps slowly, right next to him. They are quick to learn and soon become old pros at it.

He may initially resist (that statue routine we spoke of in the Adjustment chapter), but just keep gently and positively asking him to climb the stairs. No matter what method you choose to teach your greyhound stairs, NEVER FORCE your greyhound up or down stairs by dragging him by the collar. If pushed into climbing the stairs, he will become frightened, and may try to jump them all, possibly breaking a leg – or worse.

Mirrors, Doors, and Floors – Oh My!

Everything in the house is new and can be confusing. Full – length mirrors may cause your pet to stare at the mysterious dog on the other side of the mirror. Sliding glass doors can cause a sore nose when your greyhound tries to walk through it. Please put masking tape at eye level for a day or two. Hardwood, tile, and linoleum floors are also tricky for greyhounds to negotiate. Flushing toilets, TV's, refrigerators, and more will provide you with lots of laughs at your greyhound's expense.

Garbage

One man's trash is another man's treasure – this applies to your new greyhound as well. He does not know he is not supposed to root around in the garbage, and he finds those smells simply delightful and well worth investigating. Protect your greyhound from getting into trouble or possible harm by keeping the garbage out of his way, or by using a tight fitting lid on the can. A sharp, verbal reprimand if he should try to nose around the garbage will soon teach him not to disturb it.

Counters and Tables

Kitchen counters happen to be nose level with most greyhounds. Remember that they have been raised in a kennel, where every time they smelled food, it was THEIR food. Your new greyhound has not been taught proper manners yet, when it comes to food on the counter. A sharp NO, when he shows interest is enough to deter him, at least when you are around. However, a temptation such as a steak defrosting within his reach, might be too much to ask.

Sofas and Beds

If it is soft, your greyhound will like it. Shag carpeting is bliss for your retired racer. But a comfy sofa is even better! A good rule to enforce right from the start: if you don't want your dog on the couch, don't ever let him on it. He will quickly learn to love the luxury of the sofa cushions, and you will never get him to stay off. If your greyhound figures out the couch all by himself, and lounges on it while you are not home, then take an old blanket and cover the spot he has chosen prior to leaving the house. It is a lot simpler than fighting it.

Patience, positive reinforcement, and verbal reprimands are the main ingredients you need to help your greyhound adjust to a home environment.



Your Greyhound and The House: Feeding Frenzy

As you introduce your greyhound to your home, you will also have to teach him a new concept. The idea that not all food he sees is for him. He will need to learn the difference between dog food and people food. A greyhound's diet at the track consisted of 6 – 8 cups of quality dry meal/kibble, with 1 – 2 pounds of meat (sometimes 4 – D diseased, deadly, dying, etc.) added, and cooked vegetables. In retirement, as a house pet, your new greyhound will not need that volume of food, or the added meat.

Initial Eating Adjustment

Some greyhounds may seem nervous when eating, they are just worried that someone else is going to come and take their food. My first greyhound would load his mouth up with kibble, go into another room, drop it and then eat it in privacy. He eventually realized the food was his, and he could eat it in peace. Also, they may be very sloppy initially. You'll find more kibble on the floor than in the bowl. Again, they are chowing down because they are afraid someone else is going to take their food. Eventually, better manners will prevail.

What To Feed

Everyone has his or her own favorite kibble. We recommend a high quality kibble (Nature's Recipe, Nutro-Max, Pro Plan, Sensible Choice, etc.) from a pet food store, as what goes in shows up in the shine and condition of their coats. Grocery stores carry lower grade foods that use corn as filler. The first few ingredients on the bag should not contain by – products or corn. An additional supplement, (Nupro, Missing Link, etc.) whether powder or oil, helps greyhounds' coats become sleeker. Greyhounds generally have excellent appetites and will eat everything. Unfortunately, everything does not quite agree with them. Like most sighthounds, greyhounds have sensitive digestive systems that respond to changes in their diet with diarrhea. Too many table scraps may not necessarily be a good idea.

How to Feed

We recommend feeding your greyhound twice a day totaling about 4 – 6 cups of kibble. You may need to modify that amount after the first few weeks according to your greyhound's level of activity, age, and size. You should be able to feel ribs, not see them. Greyhounds need their food elevated. You can buy the feeding platforms, or buy two plant stands and put your greyhound's bowls on them.

Treats

Your greyhound may have eaten bananas, apricots, pumpkin, applesauce, spinach, and even vanilla ice cream as a racer. Oftentimes marshmallows were given after a race. When selecting snacks for your greyhound, choose good quality basics such as Milkbones, and natural biscuits. Avoid treats that contain lots of dye and sugar. Compressed rawhide bones, Nylabones, other toys, and stuffed animals are all the treats your greyhound should have. Treats are an excellent positive reinforcement. You should be warned about one thing – CHOCOLATE CAN BE DANGEROUS. Reactions vary from dog to dog, but none are good. Chocolate contains ingredients that can speed your greyhound's heart rate and cause allergic reactions.

Don't Say You Weren't Warned

And you must be warned again. A greyhound passing gas will wake you up in the middle of the night, and can clear a room. This flatulence usually occurs because you have given him something he is not used to in his diet. Like a new treat or some of your food (!). Or he could have gotten into something in the yard or garbage that did not quite agree with him. It could also be a sign the he needs to go out, so let him out! Some people say that giving a greyhound one to two dollops of low fat, plain yogurt will cause the flatulence to cease.

Your Greyhound and The Yard: Pee and Poop

Most greyhounds are very easy to train. They have been crate-trained, so they do not go in the area they consider their kennel. However, they have never been inside a house. They are used to being let out up to six times a day to relieve themselves in a fenced – in pen. For the first few days when you get your greyhound home, make sure you take him out often, stay with him, and praise him effusively when he goes. He will catch on very quickly that outside is where he does his thing. Try to establish not only a fairly set routine that your new greyhound can learn, but a word or phrase that your new greyhound can identify and respond to, such as “Do you want to go out?” You will notice if you watch carefully, that within a few days your greyhound will adapt to his new routine, and also start giving you “signals” when he needs to be taken outside.

Having an Accident

If your dog has an accident in the house, and you are right there when it happens, give him a sharp, verbal reprimand, then take him outside, wait with him until he goes, and then praise the dickens out of him when he goes in the right place. Do not hit your dog or try to put his nose in the accident, as your dog will respond more quickly and more positively to kindness. If your greyhound is a male, he may attempt to lift his leg in a few places around the house to “mark his territory”, especially if you already have a dog. He is making the house HIS house, so he feels more at home. Watch him carefully as he walks or sniffs around the house the first few hours and days and try to catch him before he does it, so you can reprimand him verbally and strongly. If this should happen, it does not go on for long, so try to be patient.

Greyhounds are very clean dogs by nature. If your greyhound has any type of accident, rather than blame the dog, look for the reasons why it happened. He either was not taken out early or often enough, or not allowed enough time to fully relieve himself. Remember that a dog that has fully relieved himself has nothing left in his bladder to make an accident on your rug. Also remember that your new greyhound does not have any way to tell you he needs to go out. He is used to a set routine, where someone came and got him and put him outside in a turnout pen.

Some greyhounds from Homeward Bound Greyhounds are housebroken (at a foster home) when they arrive at yours. If you can put a doggie door in your home, do it! They are invaluable, and give the dog the ability to go in and out at will. This means you don’t have to worry about accidents in the house when you have been gone an extra amount of time.

Cleaning an Accident

Pet stores have lots of solutions to help make cleaning up after your dog easier. One of the best stain removers is Oxi Clean, which you can purchase at Wal-Mart, Walgreens, Sam’s Club, Cosco, or most Super Markets.

Prevention

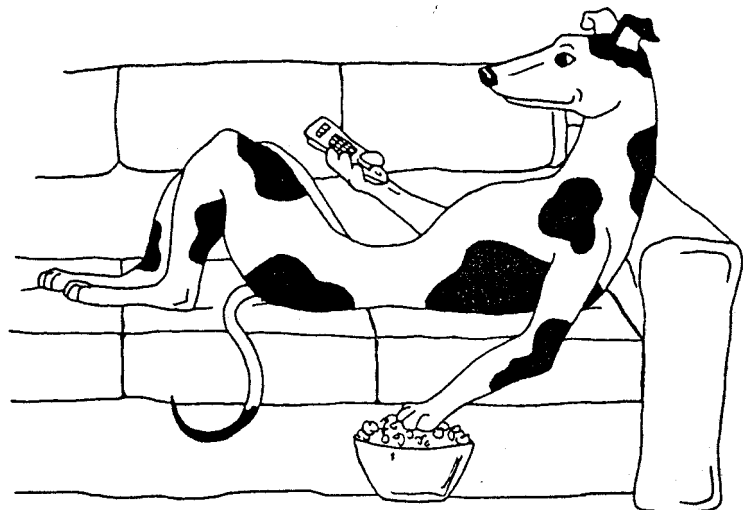
Prevention is the best solution to any housebreaking problem. For the first few days, it is a good idea to walk or let your greyhound outside in a fenced yard more frequently than you ordinarily would – as often as every couple of hours. This teaches your greyhound where his new home is and where he is supposed to “go,” and helps relieve the tension of a strange place, thus preventing accidents.

It is very common in their first few days for greyhounds to drink a lot more water than they would normally. They do this because they are nervous about being in an unfamiliar place. But all this drinking plus being nervous means they will need to go outside more.

Also, quite often the change from kennel dog to house pet can give a greyhound diarrhea, caused by nerves, change of water, and change of diet. If your greyhound should have loose stools the first few days, mix cooked rice and/or chicken with his kibble. Also be sure you allow your greyhound the ability to relieve himself quite often if he has diarrhea, as he cannot “hold” it for long. This type of diarrhea doesn’t last more than a few days. If it does, take your dog to the vet, as there may be some other problem, such as worms, food allergies, nerves, etc. which could be causing it, and it needs to be treated by your vet.

Your Greyhound and The Yard: Running and Playing

One of the questions you will be asked most often is, "Don't greyhounds need a lot of exercise?" Once you live with a greyhound, you will know the truth – this is a very lazy dog. Lazy or not, your pet will need physical activity – just like you do! The most obvious and easiest answer is in your own backyard. However, most greyhounds will not play by themselves. They will want you to play with them and walk them around the block, on a leash.



On – Leash

Your greyhound is leash trained. You will need to keep him on a leash unless he is in a totally fenced area.

Most greyhounds walk very well on a leash. The youngsters might pull when on a leash, and I recommend a greyhound harness. Regular harnesses, bought in a pet store, do not fit a greyhound.

If you plan to use your greyhound as a partner in a walking or jogging fitness program, you should have an enthusiastic partner as long as you start slowly and use a little common sense. Greyhounds exercise primarily on sand in their kennel situation, which means the pads on their feet are smooth and soft. A little time must be taken to build up the calluses needed to exercise on cement or blacktop. Start your dog's regime the same way you did yours – slowly. Walk or jog 2 or 3 blocks at first, and then gradually increase.

Off – Leash

Care should be taken to introduce your new greyhound pet to your yard or any new fenced area before turning him loose in it. This means that you need to check the entire fence for potential openings. Because if there is one, he will find it and he will be gone quicker than you have ever thought possible. While you are walking the fence with the dog on a leash, it also enables him to familiarize himself with the boundary. You should also let the dog investigate hazards in your yard such as a barbecue or planter. The first time your dog exercises in your yard off the leash it should be daylight and you need to be in the yard watching him.

Surprisingly, you may need to restrict your dog's activity in a new area. For example, when you take your dog to a fenced football field, you will want to monitor the running your dog does. Greyhounds have been conditioned for sprinting and may be so excited and interested by a new exercise area that they overtax themselves. If this happens, they will react just like any athlete who has over-extended himself – heaving sides, heavy panting, vomiting, wooziness while standing. You will need to walk them very slowly to cool them down, and douse their feet in water. Do not let them drink a lot of water fast, as they will choke and vomit it back up.

Weather

Care should be taken during extreme temperatures. Your dog is susceptible to heat stroke, just as you are. During hot weather it is wise to exercise early and easier. Make sure your dog is completely cooled down before feeding.

Cold weather presents other hazards for this desert breed. A warm-up blanket (coat) made for greyhounds are an excellent idea for walking or jogging in winter.

Each dog is an individual with different activity levels. Generally younger dogs enjoy higher activity levels.

Warning

It cannot be stressed enough that exercising your dog off leash in an area that is not entirely enclosed is asking for a disaster to happen.

Your pet may be entirely devoted to you and never leave your side at home, but you must remember that this pet is the product of centuries of specialized breeding to produce a lightning fast hunter. The greyhound has been bred to scan the horizon and run after anything that moves. A paper cup blowing across the street from the park could mean your dog's death. This is not about disobedience. The explosive hunting run is instinct. Once your pet is focused in on a moving object, he is running on pure instinct and he will no longer hear you. The car driving down the street does not expect to see a 45 mph blur of a dog bounding after the paper cup crossing in front of it. **DO NOT TAKE THE CHANCE.**

Playing

Your greyhound may not know how to play because no one has ever taught him or showed him how. He was bred as a business, not as a pet, so it is your job to teach him to play. And it is the 'funniest' job you will ever have!

I recommend a box or basket of toys that are just his. He will get the idea quickly and pick and choose his playthings when he is in the mood.

You may not get to see the silly side of your greyhound for a while. He will probably not feel like letting his puppy personality out until he feels quite secure. When you see the classic bottom up, front end down pose bouncing in front of you, you will know it is time to play.

Toys

One of the most popular toys is a cotton rope toss about a foot long. Not only is it safe, durable, and fun for your pet, it also flosses his teeth.

Greyhounds love to adopt stuffed animals, pillows, etc. Tag sales are great places to pick up an inexpensive toy for your greyhound. Just remember to remove the eyes or any other part that could cause damage to your hound.

Additionally, little squeaky toys will get any greyhound's attention. When they were trained to chase a lure, squeaky noises were part of that training, so you will see them become very intent on the squeaky toy.

Bones

Pick and chose your rawhide purchases carefully. American – made rawhide is the best type to buy. Inexpensive rawhide is cured overseas, often with dangerous chemicals like arsenic. Also, the compressed rawhide is safer than the ones with the knots on either end.

Nylabone may seem expensive, but will last forever and provide good cleaning action for your dog's teeth. A shank or marrowbone at least 5" will provide hours of enjoyment for your dog and can be a great doggie pacifier. Try putting some peanut butter in it and you greyhound will be in ecstasy.

Balls

Some greyhounds like to play with a tennis ball. Remember that your pet was bred to chase critters on the ground. So roll or bowl the ball, don't throw it. Once the ball is punctured, it should be discarded.

Running and playing are keys to your greyhound's well being. Discover the joy he feels by joining in with him!

Your Greyhound and The Yard: Bugs and Baths

One of the nicest features of your greyhound is that he does not have a lot of hair and this makes him easy to care for. A quick brushing with a grooming mitt (nubbed rubber glove), and lots of petting keeps him looking great.



Baths

Your greyhound needs to be bathed when soiled, like if he decides to doze on poop. Otherwise, he is fine with his routine petting and brushing. Greyhounds have very little oil in their skin and so have little “doggy odor.” If you do need to shampoo, select an all-natural, mild, conditioning shampoo. Their shower should take no longer than five minutes, and they do survive. If their back collapses in the shower, do not worry, it just means they are totally relaxed.

Ears

Once a week you should inspect your pet’s ears and clean gently with a cotton ball and baby oil if needed. Do not use peroxide, as it can cause damage to your dog’s eardrums.

Skin

A greyhound’s previous living conditions (fleas, ticks, poor food, etc.) were not conducive to good skin. Some greyhounds we get from the track have some kind of skin condition. You will need to provide a good supplement to their food (Nupro, Missing Link, etc.) and give their hair and skin time to grow in nicely.

Teeth

Greyhounds have notoriously bad teeth when they come off the track as they have been fed a lot of soft food. They have been cleaned before you adopt your greyhound, but those teeth get plaque build – up just like yours. Brushing them regularly helps them to stay clean and healthy. Another way to keep teeth clean is to buy knuckle/soup marrowbones at your supermarket. The gnawing greyhounds do on these big bones helps to keep off any plaque. Bad breath can be a sign of mouth problems. So please check with your vet when your dog breathes on you and you want to gag.

Nails

Greyhounds are used to having their nails trimmed while they stand. Just lean over and bend each foot backwards, so that you can see the underside of the nail. If you trim them a little bit regularly, then you do not have to worry about causing the dog to bleed. If you are nervous about trimming the nails, ask your vet or local groomer to show you how much to trim. A greyhound’s toes and nails are longer than the average dog, but will still need to be clipped. Make sure you have styptic powder on hand when you do this to stop the bleeding.

Fleas

NEVER PUT A REGULAR FLEA COLLAR ON A GREYHOUND! Flea collars work by releasing their flea – killing chemicals onto the skin of the dog, which is then absorbed into the dog’s blood stream. Most breeds can have their livers/kidneys filter these toxins out. But a greyhound’s liver/kidney do not work that fast, so the toxins continue to build up until it eventually kills the greyhound. For this same reason, never use any internal flea preventative pills.

One exception – there are a few “totally natural” flea collars out on the market. These collars are treated with pennyroyal, mint, and eucalyptus oils. They are perfectly safe for greyhounds. The best way to handle fleas safely is to use natural flea shampoos and flea sprays – do not use products containing pyrethrins as they also contain phosphates. Take time to read the label. Many flea products cannot be used on a dog who is taking heartworm preventative medication. When in doubt, check with your vet. Also, many flea sprays that advertise long duration protection are far too strong to be used on greyhounds.



Your Greyhound and Making Friends: Cats, Cockatiels, and Critters

Let your greyhound get used to the house, “his new kennel”, before you introduce him to other pets in the household. It is a rare greyhound that does not get along with other pets, ***but be careful at first!*** The introduction and the first few days of habitation are critical-not only for your new greyhound’s well being, but also for all your other pets.

Other Dogs

Your greyhound should get along well with other dogs as he has had lots of “socialization” experience in the kennel. Watch all the introductions carefully. As the “old dog” may be jealous of the newcomer. They will need to establish who is the top dog. This will take some time, but with caution and patience, it will work.

Cats

All of nature is telling your greyhound that the cat would be fun to chase and catch. All you have to do is tell him that both of these ideas are bad. Show your greyhound that the cat is a loved member of the family, a pretty good character, and ***off limits!*** They will be quick to respond to all kinds of encouragement.

A final note about cats and greyhounds. Most greyhounds, once they have accepted the cat, get along quite well in time. A greyhound that accepts a cat indoors may not apply the same rules of behavior outdoors. Do not allow the cat and greyhound outside at the same time. Greyhounds are sighthounds. Outside, that may take over, and they will give chase to the cat. Most cats can outrun dogs, but greyhounds being the fastest dogs, are fast enough to catch them. The cat may not know the dog is after it until it is too late. And always keep in mind that though your greyhound may totally accept your cat, acceptance may not apply to your neighbor’s cats.

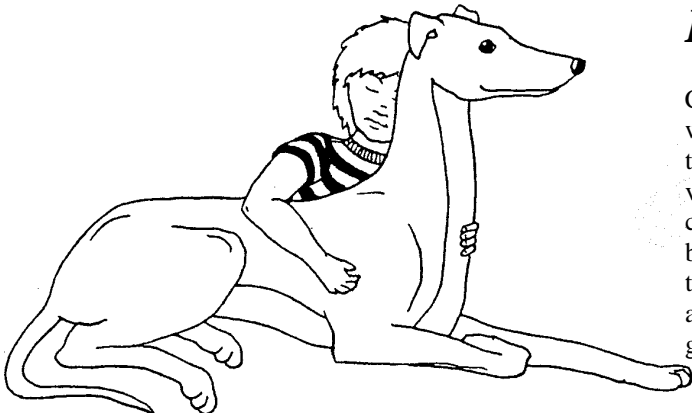
Birds

Introduction of a greyhound to a caged bird follows the basic procedures detailed above. A severe jerk on the collar accompanied by a low bellowed “NO!” will do wonders. A flying bird will be a big temptation though. Have your greyhound muzzled and next to you if your bird is flying around

Horses

If you own horses, remember that greyhounds have absolutely no sense when it comes to behavior around horses. They may not understand how a horse moves. Around horses, the greyhound could be seriously injured by a kick.

Your Greyhound and Making Friends With Children



Children and dogs are a natural combination. And they will become the best of buddies when they both learn how to play and interact with each other. Greyhounds are a very tolerant, non-aggressive breed and will allow children to handle them extensively. However, just because they are one of the most easy – going dog breeds, they are also vital, adult animals with all the accompanying instincts and needs. So please follow these guidelines.

Let Sleeping Dogs Lie

No dog should be disturbed when sleeping. If you are going to interrupt his sleep, call his name before startling him. A greyhound needs a place of his own to rest undisturbed.

Teach Children How to Act

Small children often want to express their affection for the pet greyhound by hugging or clinging to the dog. Though greyhounds will endure all sorts of treatment initially, in silence, their limits will be reached and they may growl, bark, or even snap. Greyhounds never intend to do harm, but if the child's body is in the path of their snap, harm could unintentionally occur. They will also start avoiding your children and will cringe when they approach. You do not want this to happen. So teach your children the correct way to handle a dog by gently stroking the neck and shoulders or brushing, instead. Also, enforce that tails are private things, not play things.

Teach Your Dog How To Act

It is important to reinforce the idea with your dog that children are not littermates to the dog. Even though a child may be eye level, your dog must understand that it is still a person and must respond appropriately, not as if the child was another dog.

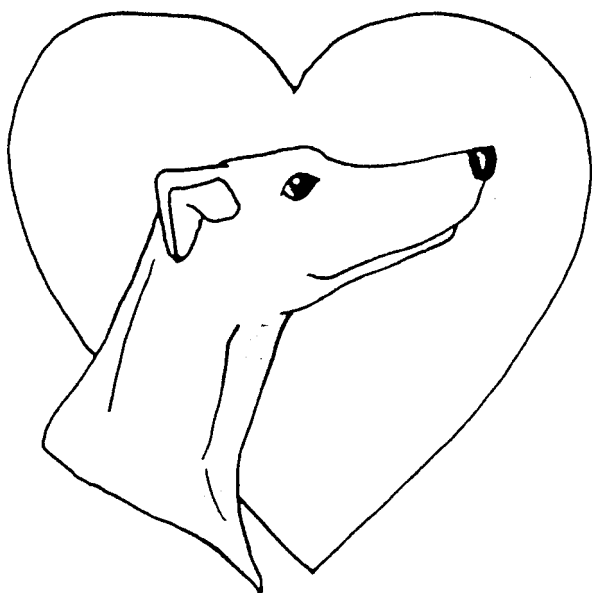
If you let the greyhound share your child's bed it encourages the dog to think of the child as a brother or sister and respond accordingly. If one dog rolls on or kicks another as they sleep, the dog naturally responds with a growl or a disciplinary nip. The greyhound will do this to the child; not inflicting or intending harm, but it could scare the child.

Playing Outdoors

Outdoor games with your greyhound should be closely supervised, especially initially and until both child and dog are fully introduced. No dog, and especially no greyhound, can be expected not to chase after an excited, squealing child. And sometimes the greyhound's idea of fun is to play "imaginary hunter" using the child as a lure. Most kids would hardly classify being run down by a large dog as fun. Instead, encourage your child to join you as you stand in place and happily encourage your dog to come to you, with each person taking a turn. This provides exercise for the dog and reminds him that all people are in control – large or small.

The main rule to keep in mind concerning children and dogs is easy – safety first. This applies to both the dog and the kids. Never leave young children and dogs alone together. Although protection of the children is your first concern, you must also protect your dog. Your greyhound could be seriously injured as a youngster decides to "play horsy" on his back or tries painting his nose.

There is a book, 'Childproofing Your Dog' that I recommend all adopters with children to purchase and read prior to adopting a greyhound. It is the definitive book on children and dog interactions.



Your Greyhound and Making Friends With You

Setting Limits

You'll probably go out of your way to make your new pet comfortable in his new home. Of course you want him to like his new environment and love you in return. Spoiling is OK, up to a certain point. Have you ever met a spoiled child? Bratty, bossy and totally unpleasant to be around. You do not want your greyhounds to turn out like that.

Animals, just like children, need limits set for them. Consistency and clarity about what is acceptable behavior and what is not acceptable, and knowing that you are in charge, are key to a good transition for greyhound.

Throughout the dog's life, he has relied on someone to set boundaries for him. First his mother laid down the law, and the puppy quickly learned that as long as he followed the rules, life was great.

The leadership role was transferred to humans as your greyhound left his litter and began his training. Although he was exposed to lots of new experiences and places, there was one constant factor he could rely on – there was always a human to tell him what was good and what was not. Every dog needs this reassurance.

Be the Leader

A dog without a strong leader (alpha dog) quickly becomes a bratty, overbearing animal that no one wants to live with, and therefore the dog suffers without the one thing he needs most, acceptance and a place in the pack. You are that leader, so act like one. Be firm and fair, and you'll have a dog you can take anywhere and be proud of.

Discipline

Greyhounds are very smart and react well with positive reinforcement. This means praise and hugs when they do what is expected of them. They will know you are happy, and they will continue to try to make you happy.

When you need to discipline, and it must be done while the 'bad' incident is occurring (like peeing in the house, chewing on something they shouldn't, barking, etc.), use your voice, not your hand. Lower your voice to a growl, get his attention (I grab his muzzle and make him look me in the eye) and tell him "**No**" or "**Bad**", and then leave him alone for a bit. He will be so chastised; he may never do it again. If he does, you escalate the level of your voice, and even more forceful that you mean it. It really is like dealing with kids, some of them will ignore you until they really think you mean it.

Occasionally new greyhound pet owners fear reprimanding their pet because they think the dog will not like them. Unfortunately, these are the adoptions that have problems several months later. After 2 to 4 weeks of no reprimands, he might not react well to you suddenly trying to get him to pay attention to what you want.

Plan to keep a balance from the beginning, being fair and consistent. These dogs do not want to be bad; they really want to please you. So get into their heads, understand why they are doing what they are doing, and do not cater to every whim, every time. In the long run, it is better for you and your pet. Remember that you have a new family member, not a houseguest!



A Dog With A Past: History of the Breed

Greyhounds have had a special place in history for a long time. They were treasured by their owners, usually royalty or noblemen, and treated as one of the family.

Ancient Times

The greyhound, as we know it today, was worshipped in ancient Egypt. The death of a favorite greyhound was treated the same as the death of a human. Families shaved heads, stopped eating, wailed, mummified, and buried their pets with their owners. Greyhounds traveled from ancient Egypt to ancient Greece and were treated with the same reverence. The same is true for ancient Rome. Gods in all three cultures were portrayed with greyhounds – Anubis in Egypt is sometimes interpreted as part man, part hound. The Greek Gods Hecate, Pollux, and Artemis all had greyhounds as companions. In Rome, Diana was just one of the many gods who was portrayed with greyhounds. It was in ancient Rome that it appears that greyhound racing after hares started as a sport.

Medieval Times

Greyhounds almost became extinct during the Middle Ages as famine and pestilence spread across the land. Men of the cloth saved them, and the nobility claimed them as an exclusive right of theirs. It is during the Renaissance that greyhounds were painted and immortalized. Both Chaucer and Shakespeare mentioned greyhounds in their literature.

In the 1700's, greyhound coursing became popular and spread across Britain and Europe. During the same time, bulldogs were bred with greyhounds by an English nobleman named Lord Orford and these cross – breeds continued for 7 generations, and were very popular.

Getting To America

As the Britons immigrated to America, they brought their greyhounds with them. They found them ideally suited to chase down rabbits that were interfering with their crops. This led to bets and wagers among the farmers as to whom had the faster dog. And in the 1900's, an artificial lute and an oval track led to the first formal greyhound wagering, the forerunner of our greyhound racetracks.

A great book all about your greyhound's past is *The Reign of the Greyhound – A Popular History of the Oldest Family of Dogs*, by Cynthia Branigan. All book stores carry it and it is highly recommended and fun reading!

Additionally, there are a lot of web sites devoted to greyhound adoption. *The Greyhound Project* and *A Breed Apart* are two of the best! They have tons of information on history and adoption of these wonderful dogs.

A Dog With A Past - - Racing History



Ear Tattoos

The breeder applies tattoos at 3 months of age to puppies to ensure a permanent and positive ID of each potential racer.

Birth Date

The right ear tells the month and year the puppy was born. Example 1: 88A means the puppy was born in the eighth (8) month of 1988 (8), and is the first (A) dog in the litter. Example 2: 121E means the puppy was born in the twelfth month (12) of 2001 (2) and is the fifth (E) dog in the litter to be tattooed.

Registration ID

The left ear has 4 – 5 digits and is the litter registration number with the National Greyhound Association. This number is checked every time the dog is raced to ensure it is the correct dog racing. You can use the numbers to help locate your pet if lost.

You can also contact The National Greyhound Association at Box 543, Abilene, KS, 67410, 785-263-4660. This is where they maintain their computer registry. They will give you your greyhound's racing name, his birth date, his birthplace, his mom's name, his dad's name, and the current owner of record. You can write to that owner and send papers to get your greyhound's ownership transferred over to you. If you have your greyhound's racing name you can go to www.greyhound-data.com and you can find out your greyhound's entire racing history and bloodlines, there are fun things to do at this web site.

Their Former Life

Greyhound litters usually produce 4 – 10 puppies. Once weaned, puppies are placed in a fenced area to play and grow. Usually when they are around one-year-old, they are kenneled and their track training begins. They are taught to chase a lure and race counter clockwise. It is usually at this time that it is determined whether they will become racers or not.

When greyhounds are kenneled, they are kept crated for the majority of their time. Crates are placed one on top of another, side by side. Crates are usually 3 feet by 2 feet.

Trainers usually care for 20 – 60 dogs within a kennel. Greyhounds are let out, muzzled, with a pack of other same – sex greyhounds up to 5 times a day, depending on the kennel, to relieve themselves. A racing or training greyhound is also let out of the kennel to go to the track and run 5/16th of a mile up to twice a week.

They are fed once a day with a variety of food - - usually soft, high-protein, and inexpensive. They are not neutered or spayed in case they will be used for breeding purposes.

This is all that a greyhound knows until you bring him home!

After Thoughts

Quick Facts

- Retired racers are usually between two and five years old. And will live to 12 – 14 years of age.
- Males are usually 26 to 30 inches high. Females are usually 23 to 26 inches high.
- Males are usually between 65 and 85 pounds. Females are usually between 50 and 65 pounds.
- Greyhounds come in many colors – brindle, black, white, fawn, or a combination of these colors.

Swimming and Pools

Greyhounds have a very small percentage of body fat, so when you ask them to swim, they sink. I have seen a few greyhounds learn to like swimming, and most will valiantly dog paddle when you have taken them over their heads, and then slowly sink or turn over on their sides in the water.

Be very careful with your greyhound and pools. They have never seen one, and will not understand instinctively that the blue stuff is water. They will be dashing around your yard, and suddenly plop right into the water. They will sink, and you will have to jump in to save them. So introduce them to the pool and watch them carefully the first few times you are in the yard playing near it.

Names

Greyhounds have track names, but are not usually called by those names. Trainers do not want them responding to someone yelling their name as they are racing around the track. They usually have a kennel name. When you get your greyhound, if he comes with a name you do not like, you can usually give him another name without a problem. You just have to use it continually until he gets the idea.

Wounds

Greyhounds have no protection of fur or fat for injuries. So they tend to seem more accident – prone. But they are not babies. They will still run and play even with an injury. So just keep an eye on them when they are running and playing hard.

Also, buy betadine and use it instead of peroxide to clean a small wound. Be sure to dilute it until it looks like weak tea. A triple antibiotic ointment is also used once you have cleaned out the wound with betadine. You should, of course, take your greyhound to the vet for big or serious wounds.

Guard Dogs

Greyhounds are not guard dogs. Once in a while they will bark when someone approaches the door. But more likely they are fast asleep on something soft. They are not an aggressive breed and will not attack any person. However, most people will think twice about entering a home that has a dog the size of a greyhound, with that long nose and those long teeth. And if you get one that smiles at strangers, well, you have yourself a guard dog!

Pack Rats

Some greyhounds like to collect your items and take them outside or put them in their beds. They seldom damage the items, they just collect them. So if you are missing something, check with your greyhound!

Sweating

Greyhounds sweat through their paws and nose. If your greyhound has overexerted himself while running, hosing down their feet only will help them get cool quicker.

Petting Your Greyhound

Greyhounds love to be massaged everywhere, but particularly on their necks and butts. Additionally, they like their noses rubbed – top and bottom. After they have eaten they will often try to clean off their noses by rubbing them on your furniture, blankets, or you. The more you pet them, the quicker they will bond to you.

Barking and Whining

Greyhounds are not barkers. If you have a barker, then you probably have a more insecure dog and he is barking because something has frightened him. Now, whining is another story. Greyhounds communicate with you by whining. Whining to be let in, to eat, to play, to get up on the bed – you name it and they will talk (whine) to you about it.

Where They Put Their Noses

Besides counter tops, other dog's behinds and anything else that smells good, when greyhounds approach people their noses are right about crotch level. So they have been known to stick their noses in people's crotches. They are not being bad, just friendly.

Products

The Internet has so many greyhound sites, and they all have products and information. We buy our doggy products through a variety of catalogs. If you have a PetsMart in your area they are an excellent place for one stop shopping for your greyhound.

Items You Need Before You Get Your Greyhound Home

1. Something very soft and nestable for them to sleep on – dog bed, big blankets, sleeping bag
2. Food – Kibble of high quality, no preservatives, no corn, no by – products
3. Elevated dog bowls – you can buy them or put the bowls on a box or buckets
4. Vitamin supplement to add to their food for their coat
5. Bones for them to chew on
6. Toys for them to play with
7. Lots of love

Congratulations on being a smart and savvy person and adopting the best pet!