



Greyhound Guide

Welcome!

You're part of a growing number of people who consider themselves fortunate to have greyhounds in their lives. You'll quickly discover how unique greyhounds are, and I hope this information helps in that understanding!

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

Note #2: Almost all greyhounds adopted through the Greyhound Gang, 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 guide 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.

Note #3: Thank you to the Phoenix adoption group for allowing me to use some of their information in my guide.

Your Greyhound and....Adjustment Angst

Helping your dog get adjusted is a very important part of the greyhound adoption process. And with patience, understanding and lots of laughter the first few weeks, you'll 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. But most of these dogs 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 lots more nervous than you are. And that nervousness manifests itself in a variety of ways. He might pant, whine, move around a lot, 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

Also, remember, he hasn't spent much time in a car, and you're 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, and with your actions -- steady and slow. And make sure, right after the car ride home, before you go into the house, to walk him around the yard first and let him go to the bathroom.

Length of Adjustment

During the initial adjustment period he'll be getting used to you, the house, the car, the kids, the pets, the stairs, 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

only takes a few days, though. He's an intelligent dog, and soon he will grasp what you expect of him. Your patience, love and understanding will help your greyhound.

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

As your greyhound becomes more secure with his surroundings and starts to trust you, you'll 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 you now have a bonafide member of your household.

Choosing A Vet

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 I gave to you in your adoption packet 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's your greyhound's life at stake.

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 pet in the first few weeks of ownership, the easier the transition from racing greyhound to family friend.

Some dogs are accustomed to running up to three days at the race track. They are bred and trained to run, so up to this point it's been their greatest pleasure. The change from race track 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 keep everything in perspective. You'll both feel better and less overwhelmed. Additionally, you'll find your greyhound bonding to you more quickly. And who knows, maybe you'll drop those pounds you've been talking about shedding.

Bonding

These dogs 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 dog, the more solid your relationship becomes. The more you touch, play with and love these dogs, 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. They have never seen cars, grocery stores, etc. They are 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 dogs, so he will much 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's either lived on a farm with lots of dog friends, or lived in a crate in a kennel with about 40 dogs. So if you have to leave him at home -- ALONE -- he's going to be scared and confused. He's 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'll definitely be upset!) and just leave for 15 minutes at first. Increase your leave to a few hours. He'll get the idea that you're coming back, and his anxiety about you leaving him forever will be eased.
2. Initially, dog proof your home. Keep windows unobstructed from knick-knacks 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, borrow a crate, just for the first few weeks. Remember 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 weeks of this, the crate can be returned and a happy house pet exists.

Crates are not needed by most greyhounds, particularly when you have another dog in the household, or you are home most of the time. But once in a while there's an uncertain hound 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 or purchasing a crate.

Becoming A Statue

I'm 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 don't know exactly what is wanted of them. The more insistent you get, the more insistent they get that they are not going anywhere. And they'll 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've tired of waiting and encouraging, then as a last resort just pick up the greyhound and move him to where you want him to be. (Don't lose your patience and yell, because you'll ruin whatever good you had accomplished.)

Smiling

Some greyhounds smile, and this causes people who don't know them to jump a mile back. They have a lot of long white teeth showing when they smile. My theory is they smile to ingratiate themselves to those around them. If you've got 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, my guess is they think it makes them more streamlined and cool-looking.

Eating Grass

When your greyhound is meandering around the yard, you'll see him eat grass. Let him. The grass provides a nutrient he feels he needs, and doesn't do him any harm. A few dogs 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 leashed 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 they will get hit by a car 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 leash 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

And you must be warned. A greyhound fart 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. Some people say that giving a greyhound one to two dollops of lowfat, plain yogurt will cause the flatulence to cease.

Again, the more time you spend initially getting to know our 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 this adjustment period. 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.

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Your Greyhound and...The House -- Household Horrors

Everything in your house is familiar to you, but not at all familiar to your greyhound. You'll have a lot of fun watching your greyhound explore his new home. But he's going to need your help too.

Stairs

Your greyhound has probably never seen nor had to deal with stairs. So you have to teach him to climb them. The best way is to get down on all fours and show him. (joke) If that doesn't work, stand behind him and move one paw at a time -- step by step, showing him what he is supposed to do. And make sure you give lots of verbal positive reinforcement. Gradually increase the number of steps he climbs. When going down stairs, hold his collar securely and go down the stairs 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, **DO NOT EVER FORCE** your greyhound up or down stairs by dragging him by the collar. If pushed into doing the stairs, he will become frightened and may try to jump them all, and possibly break 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 for hours 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 and linoleum floors are also tricky for greyhounds to negotiate. Flushing toilets, TVs, 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 doesn't know he's 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, Tables

Kitchen counters happen to be nose level with most greyhounds. Remember, 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're around. However, a temptation such as a steak defrosting within his reach might be too much to ask.

Sofas, 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. He'll quickly learn to love the luxury of the sofa cushions, and you'll never get him to stay off. If your greyhound figures out the couch all by himself, and lounges on it while you aren't home, then take an old blanket and cover the spot he's chosen prior to leaving the house. It's a lot simpler than fighting it.

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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 -- that not all food he sees is for him. He'll 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 lb. of meat (sometimes 4-D -- diseased, deadly, dying, etc.) added, and cooked vegetables. In retirement, as a house pet, your new greyhound won't need that volume of food nor 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 what's 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 their own favorite kibble. I recommend a high-quality kibble (Nature's Recipe, Nutro-Max, Sensible Choice, etc.) from a pet food store. Grocery stores carry lower grade foods that use corn as a filler. The first few ingredients on the bag should not contain by-products or corn. An additional supplement (Vital Nutrition, Derm-Caps, Missing Link, etc.), whether powder or oil, helps greyhounds coats become sleeker.

Greyhounds generally have excellent appetites and will eat everything. Unfortunately, everything doesn't quite

agree with them. Like most sighthounds, greyhounds have sensitive digestive systems that respond to changes in their diet with diarrhea. So too many table scraps is not necessarily a good idea.

How to Feed

I've successfully free fed all of my greyhounds. This means I leave dry food out in their dish 24 hours a day, and they eat when they are hungry. My dogs do not ever get fat, and are not that food oriented because they know they can get food whenever they want. Other greyhound owners feed their greys twice a day, totaling about 4-6 cups of kibble. You may need to modify the amount after the first few weeks according to your dog's activity level, 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 just invert buckets or a box and put your dog'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 pet, choose good quality basics such as Milkbones and natural biscuits. Avoid treats that contain lots of dye and sugar. Rawhide bones (American only), Nylabones, other toys, and stuffed animals are all treats your greyhound should have. Treats are an excellent positive reinforcement.

You should be perfect about one thing though -- CHOCOLATE CAN BE DANGEROUS. Reactions vary from dog to dog, but none are good. Chocolate contains ingredients that can speed your dog's heart rate and can cause allergic reactions.

Don't Say You Weren't Warned

And you must be warned. A greyhound fart will wake you up in the middle of the night, and can clear a room. This flatulence usually occurs because you've given him something he's 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 didn't quite agree with him. It could also be a sign that he needs to go out, so let him out! Some people say that giving a greyhound one to two dollops of lowfat, plain yogurt will cause the flatulence to cease.

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Your Greyhound and...The Yard -- Pee and Poop

Most greyhounds are very easy to train. They have been crate trained and so they don't go in the area they consider their kennel. However, they have never been inside a house. And they are used to being let out up to six times a day to relieve themselves in a fenced-in pen.

So 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'll 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 wasn't taken out early or often enough, or not allowed enough time to fully relieve himself. Remember, a dog which 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 turn-out pen.

Greyhounds from the Greyhound Gang are housebroken (at my home) when they arrive at yours. They are also used to a doggie door. If you can put one 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 there being any accidents in the house when you've 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. I would definitely purchase one, like Nature's Miracle, before bringing your greyhound home.

Prevention

However, prevention is the best solution to any house-breaking problem. For the first few days, it's 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, change of diet. If your greyhound should have loose stools the first few days, mix cooked rice and/or hamburger with his kibble. You can also try solid-packed pumpkin. 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.

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Your Greyhound and...The Yard -- Running and Playing

One of the questions you'll be asked most often is -- Don't greyhounds need a lot of exercise? Once you live with a greyhound, you'll 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 with themselves. They will want you to play with them and walk them around the block, on leash.

On-Leash

Your greyhound is leashed trained. You need to keep him on leash unless he is in a totally fenced area. And he needs to stay on leash until he's obedience trained, and even then, you need to be extremely cautious.

Most greyhounds walk very well on a leash. If your pet starts to pull or freezes as he sees something on the horizon, "pop" or "snap" the leash to quickly jerk the collar and give the command, "heel," "let's go," etc.

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'll find it and he'll be gone quicker than you ever thought possible). While you're walking the fence with the dog on 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 there and watch 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'll 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'll react just like any athlete who's over-extended himself -- heaving sides, heavy panting, vomiting, wooziness while standing. You'll need to walk them very slowly to cool them down, and douse their feet in water. Don't 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 is an excellent idea for walking or jogging in winter. Check you dog's feet for snow packing, which can split webs, or

ice cuts. It's also a good idea to swish the dog's feet in lukewarm water to rinse off salt and other ice melters after your walk.

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'll 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. Don't 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's your job to teach him to play. And it's the 'funnest' job you'll ever have!

I recommend a box or basket of toys that are just his. He'll get the idea quickly and pick and choose his playthings when he's 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'll know it's time to play. One of my favorite pictures from an adopter is when the human is on the floor with elbows down and butt up in the air facing off with their greyhound who's in his play posture.

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'll see them become very intent on the squeaky toy.

Bones

Pick and choose 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.

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

Balls

Some greyhounds like to play with a tennis ball. Remember, 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 key to your greyhound's well-being. Discover the joy he feels by joining in with him!

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Your Greyhound and...The Yard -- Bugs and Baths

One of the nicest features of your greyhound is that he doesn't 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 only needs to be bathed when soiled, like if he decides to doze on poop. Otherwise, he's 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.

My greyhounds were not into baths, even though they got them very seldom. I'd have to pick them up to put them in the tub, and as I bathed them their legs would turn to rubber and they'd sink to the tub floor looking very helpless and put out. Just keep bracing them up on their feet. Their shower should take no longer than five minutes and they do survive.

Ears

Once a week you should inspect your pet's ears and clean gently with a cotton ball and baby oil if needed. Don't use peroxide, as it can cause damage to your dog's ear drums.

Skin

Their past living conditions (fleas, ticks, poor food, etc.) were not conducive to good skin. Most greys I get from the track have some kind of skin condition. You'll need to provide a good supplement to their food (Omega 3 fatty acid, Vitamin E, Vital Nutrition, Vitamin C, etc.) and give their hair and skin time to grow in nicely. Trust me, it will!

Teeth

Greyhounds have notoriously bad teeth when they come off the track as they've been fed a lot of soft food. They've been cleaned before you adopted 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 marrow bones at your supermarket. The gnawing greyhounds do on these big bones help to keep off any plaque. Bad breath is a sign of mouth problems, so please check with your vet when your dog breaths on you and you 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 do a little bit regularly, then you don't have to worry about causing the dog to bleed. If you're nervous about trimming the nails, ask your vet or local groomer to show you how much to trim. Greyhound 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

DO NOT EVER put a regular flea collar on a greyhound!!

Regular flea collars work by releasing their flea-killing chemicals onto the skin of the dog, which is then absorbed into the dog's bloodstream. Most breeds can have their livers/kidneys filter these toxins out. But a greyhound's liver/kidneys do not work that fast, so the toxins continue to build up until it eventually kills the greyhound. For this very same reason, do not ever use any of those internal flea preventative pills.

One caveat -- 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 that use natural-based pyrethrins and do not contain organic 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.

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Your Greyhound and...Making Friends -- Cats, Cockatiels & Critters

Let your greyhound get used to the house, "his new kennel," before you introduce him to other pets in the household. It's a rare greyhound that does not get along with any type of pet, **BUT BE CAREFUL AT FIRST!** The introduction and the first few days of co-habitation are critical -- not only for your new greyhounds well-being, but for that of all your other pets. Every group should screen every greyhound they place. The Greyhound Gang introduces all greyhounds to cats, little dogs, etc. I know each dog's predisposition before we place him.

To ensure there are no problems with introductions, I've given you a muzzle. Please use it for the first introductions to small animals. Muzzling the greyhound is not cruel. They have been wearing a muzzle for as long as they have been wearing a collar. It is more cruel to the dog to give him the opportunity to make a dreadful mistake such as grabbing or hurting your small animal, and then being angry with the dog. The greyhound simply does not know better, and until you teach him to behave properly around small animals, use the muzzle!

Other Dogs

Your greyhound should get along well with other dogs as he has had lots of "socialization" experience in the racing kennel. Watch all the introductions carefully, however, as the "old dog" may be jealous of the newcomer. And the dogs will need to establish who's the top dog. This will take some time, but with caution and patience, it will work out fine.

Again, I suggest using a muzzle for introductions to small dogs. Greyhounds who have never seen a small dog may initially think the little dog is something that should be chased and caught. With strong verbal reprimands from you (and a few from the little guy, as well) the greyhound will quickly learn who's the boss.

Cats

All of nature is telling the greyhound that the cat would be fun to chase and catch. All you have to do is tell the greyhound that both of these are bad ideas. Show your greyhound that the cat is a loved member of the family, a pretty tough character, and OFF LIMITS!!! They will be quick to respond to all kinds of encouragement. If you are lucky, your cat will help out by being pretty bold, and will make clear to the greyhound that he's the boss.

Remember, while making the introductions between cat and greyhound, keep the muzzle on the greyhound. No matter how the first meeting goes, the greyhound cannot hurt the cat while muzzled.

A final note about cats and greyhounds. Most greyhounds, once they have accepted the cat, get along quite well all the time. But occasionally a greyhound who accepts a cat indoors may not apply the same rules of behavior outdoors. Be very careful if you allow cat and greyhound outside at the same time. Greyhounds are sighthounds, and outside their instincts may take over, and they will give chase to the cat. Most cats can outrun dogs, but greyhounds, being the fastest breed of dog, are fast enough to catch them. The cat may not know the dog is after it until it is too late, as greyhounds do not bark even while chasing something. And always keep in mind that though your greyhound may totally accept your cat, his 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 lead and/or collar accompanied by a low bellowed "NO!" will do wonders. A flying bird though will be a big temptation, so keep 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. Like in everything else, these dogs are highly intelligent, and it won't take them long to understand about horses, but until they do, don't let them get hurt.

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Your Greyhound and...Making Friends -- With Children

Children and dogs are a natural combination. And they'll 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 a live, adult animal 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're 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 on 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'll also start avoiding your children and will cringe when they approach. You don't 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 litter mates 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 were 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. Being run down by a large dog would hardly be classified as fun by most kids!

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. Do not ever 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 horsey" on his back or tries painting his nose.

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

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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 don't really want your greyhound to turn out like that.

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

Throughout the dog's life, he's 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 wasn't. 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 so smart, and react so well with positive reinforcement. This means praise and hugs when they do what you want. They'll know you're happy, and they'll 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 be 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 won't 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 don't want to be bad, they really really want to please you. So get into their heads, understand why they are doing what they are doing, and don't cater to every whim every time. In the long run, it's better for your pet and you. Remember you have a new family member, not a house guest!

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A Dog With A Past -- History of the Breed

Greyhounds have had a special place in history for a long time. And until modern times, 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, and 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 were 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 crosses continued for 7 generations, and were very popular.

Getting To America

As the Britons emigrated to America, they brought their greyhounds with them. And 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 who had the faster dog. And in the 1900's, an artificial lure and an oval track led to the first formal greyhound wagering, the forerunner of our greyhound racetracks.

A greyt 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](#) (and, of course, the Greyhound Gang) are two of the best! They have tons of information on history and adoption of these wonderful dogs.

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A Dog with A Past -- Racing History

Ear Tattoos

Tattoos are applied by the breeder 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: 122E means the puppy was born in the twelfth month (12) of 1992 (2) and is the fifth (E) dog in the litter.

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, 913-263-4660. This is where they maintain their computer registry. They'll give you your greyhound's racing name, his birth date, his birth place, 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. This information is also available on [The Greyhound Project's 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 what a greyhound knows until you bring him home.

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Afterthoughts

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 23 to 26 inches high.

- Males are usually between 65 and 85 pounds. Females are 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've taken them over their head, 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 won't understand instinctively that the blue stuff is water. They'll be dashing around your yard, and suddenly -- plop -- right into the water. And 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're in the yard playing near it.

Names

Greyhounds have track names, but are not usually called by those names. Trainers don't want them responding to someone yelling their name as they're racing around the track. They usually have a kennel name. When you get your greyhound, if he comes with a name you don't 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 bentadyne 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've cleaned out the wound with bentadyne. You should, of course, take your greyhound to the vet for big wounds.

Here's my goriest wound story. My greyhound saw a cat under a bush and decided to try and pounce on it. Instead he pounced right into a stick that stuck about an inch straight into his eye. It was nighttime, and we lived an hour and a half from the vet. So I pulled out the three-inch stick (I was sure it had punctured his brain, if not the eye itself), kept my hand over his eye (thinking the eye ball would fall out if I didn't) and started driving the hour and half to the vet. I was speeding and got pulled over by a cop. He thought my dog looked fine, as he was standing in the front seat with one eye closed. Then I showed him the bloody stick I'd pulled from my dog's eye. Happy ending to story -- eye membrane had parted to allow stick to enter with minor damage, so dog is 100% OK.

Guard Dogs

They 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 of a nose and those long teeth. And if you get one that smiles at strangers, well, you've got your 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're 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 loved to be massaged everywhere, but particularly on their necks and butts. Additionally, they like their noses rubbed -- top and bottom. After they've 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 & 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'll talk (whine) to you about it.

Where They Put Their Noses

Beside 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're not being bad, just friendly.

Products

The Internet has so many greyhound sites, and they all have products and information. I buy my doggy products through a variety of catalogs. King Wholesale, 800-825-4647. NE Serum Company, 800-637-3786. Foster Smith, 800-826-7206. RC Steele, 800-872-3773.

For items made especially for greyhounds check the Internet or call Nat'l Greyhound Adoption Program, 215-331-7918. The Voyagers, 1-800-352-3762.

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. Leash -- 4 or 6 feet, nylon
3. Food -- Kibble of high quality, no preservatives, no corn, no by-products -- I use a lamb and rice
4. Elevated dog bowls -- can buy them or put the bowls on a box or buckets
5. Supplement to add to their food for their coat
6. Bones for them to chew on
7. Toys for them to play with
8. Lots of love

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

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