

# The GAP Guide to Adopting an ex-racing Greyhound



# Welcome

*It has been over 10 years since the Greyhound Adoption Programme Trust started work and since the adoption of Rosie, the first GAP Greyhound, pictured on the inside of the front cover. Since then we've helped 2000 greyhounds hang up their racing vests and settle into life as a family pet. Not surprisingly over this period we've learnt a lot about greyhounds and their owner's experiences.*

*In this booklet we share the knowledge we've collected along the way. We believe nearly all of the questions you may have as a new greyhound owner are covered in this booklet. We recommend it be your constant guide during the settling in and training period as your greyhound adapts to life as a family pet.*

People adopt an ex-racing greyhound for different reasons. Many people are attracted to the idea of adopting a greyhound because of the striking beauty and character of this ancient breed. Others are looking for an adult dog as they don't want to go through the puppy stage, others just want an easy to care for, affectionate companion. For most people the choice of an ex-racing greyhound is combination of these. However, most new owners have one thing in common and that is the expectation that their new pet will settle in with ease and be a fully formed member of the family within a few weeks.

To their credit many greyhounds make the transition from track to couch potato with startling adaptability, however for some it does take longer.

An ex-racing greyhound is not a puppy but neither is it a 'ready-to-go' adult pet; instead each dog is more like a blank canvas ready to explore the delights of being a pet with its new owner. It will take time to create this beautiful relationship. The dog must learn about the home environment, about living with other animals and about his owner's and society's expectations of him. The new owner will need to understand how their dog is thinking and learn how to convey expectations in a clear and positive manner. Often both will need to learn to relax and have fun to truly make the most of this connection.

Whatever your reason for adopting an ex-racer and whatever your experience with dogs, you can be assured that with your new greyhound you are starting the most remarkable exploration into a very special human-canine bond.

*The GAP Team*

# Contents

Introduction	4
About greyhounds	5
History	5
Description	5
Temperament	6
Racing Life	8
A greyhound in your family	9
Greyhounds and small children	9
Greyhounds and other dogs	10
Greyhounds, cats and other small animals	10
The adoption process	12
Application form	12
Home check	12
Finding your ideal companion	13
Administration	14
Transport	14
Before you get your dog home	15
Things to consider:	15
Things you will need	17
Setting boundaries and routines	17
Settling in your Greyhound	18
Day 1	18
When you get home	18
Your first night	19
Feeding your greyhound	24
The perfect weight	24
Settling in	24
Feeding problems	26
The Oderous Hound	26
Water	26
Complete foods	26
Fresh meat	26
Bones and Supplements	26
Food Warnings	27
General care	30
Grooming	30
Nails	31
Muzzles	32
Coats	32

Exercise!	33
Prey Drive	34
Hazards	34
Nipping	35
Lost greyhounds	35
Training	36
Teaching your Greyhound what is expected	36
Socialisation	37
Sit/Down	38
Recall	39
Cars	41
Obedience Classes	41
Play	41
Further Training	41
Health	42
Pet Insurance	42
Anaesthetics	43
Coat and skin	43
Fleas & Worms	43
Stitches	44
Tail infections	44
Teeth	44
Vaccinations	45
Weight	45
Common problems	46
Problems in behaviour	46
Teach Manners	47
Separation Anxiety	48
What is separation anxiety	49
My dog has separation anxiety	51
Tips for easing anxiety	51
A Note on Social Media	51
When your greyhound leaves	52
What next?	53
Become part of the GAP community	53
Become a volunteer	53
Donate	54
Steadfast Friends	54
Make a Bequest	54
Recommended resources	55
Contacts	56



## Introduction

### *Congratulations on choosing a retired greyhound!*

This booklet is designed to lead you through the adoption process and the first few months of living with your new pet.

The Guide covers basic care and training as well as advice specific to greyhound behaviour. Don't feel the need to do everything straight away – take it slowly. While your greyhound may appear settled within the first few weeks you will find that your dog's personality is continually developing and even a year later you may both discover something new in your relationship.

Keep this booklet as a handy reference guide.

Relax and enjoy the company of your new friend!

# About Greyhounds

*The greyhound is truly a fast friend! Thousands of years of breeding have resulted in today's greyhound – a gentle, affectionate hound capable of running at breathtaking speed!*

## History

The greyhound has a long and illustrious history being the favoured pet of the nobility in several cultures. In Egypt the greyhound was valued highly by the pharaohs for its speed, grace and agility and is featured on engravings inside the pyramids. The breed is also the only dog to be mentioned in the Bible. In England in the tenth century, the greyhound was so highly prized that King Howel of Wales made the killing of a greyhound punishable by death, and shortly after King Canute forbade the ownership of greyhounds by peasants and freemen.

These days a good racing greyhound may command a high price but unfortunately most of these dogs have little commercial value as soon as their racing days are over. Their value then is purely in their affectionate companionship.

## Description

Greyhounds usually range in weight between 25-38 kg and between 61 to 75 cm high at the shoulder. They have a slender body with a deep chest and narrow waist. The head is narrow



*Diana, Goddess of the Hunt. School of Fontainebleau, sixteenth century. Louvre, Paris, France. Erich Lessing/Art Resource, NY.*

and the muzzle pointed giving the classic greyhound shape. Bitches are generally smaller than dogs.

The greyhound coat is short and surprisingly soft. One advantage of owning a greyhound is the lack of smell due to the absence of oil in the coat. The greyhound is also one of few breeds that come in an array of colours. The greyhound coat may be black, white, fawn, red, blue, brindle and white with patches of these colours.



## Temperament

The greyhound is one of the world's oldest dog breeds. Thousands of years of breeding has made the greyhound what it is today:

- Affectionate and willing to please
- Intelligent and trainable
- Quiet, gentle and enjoys sleeping
- Fast!

The greyhound would traditionally have been a constant companion to its master therefore these characteristics would have been valued and bred for, while unwanted traits such as aggression have now been bred out almost completely.

Many greyhound owners are surprised at the immense love and affection they receive from their hound. Every re-homed greyhound enjoys being a member of the family and will happily snuggle up to anyone who will make a fuss of them. Most adore cuddles and being so gentle can easily be walked by all members of the family.

The gentle and calm nature of the greyhound is notable. Scientific studies have validated what any greyhound owner will tell you – this breed is one of the least aggressive dog breeds you can choose as a pet. The greyhound's placid nature has recommended it for 'pet therapy' and it will happily rest its head on your lap and be stroked all day – therapy indeed! Neither do they bark greatly, as one visitor commented when visiting the GAP kennels, "I couldn't believe how quiet it was!" Greyhounds prefer to use their eyes when speaking to

you – one look from those big pleading eyes will invariably get them the best spot on the sofa!

The greyhound is also intelligent; indeed some may even be called 'sneaky'! Many an owner has wondered what happened to their sandwich when they left the room to answer the phone, only to come back two minutes later to find an empty plate and their greyhound supposedly still fast asleep. Greyhounds are easy to train as long as you remember the WIFM or 'what's in it for me?' principle. Your dog will move heaven and earth for love and affection and sometimes food, but will get easily bored if the effort seems pointless.

Many recently retired greyhounds are confused by the game of 'fetch' – you can see them thinking "why should I go and get the ball if you're just going to throw it away again?" Add another dog to give it a racing element, and you're onto a winner!



A beautifully stacked greyhound.



**Greyhounds are born to run!**

**“Scientific studies have validated this breed is one of the least aggressive dog breeds you can choose as a pet”**

As a member of the sight hound family the greyhound was valued for its excellent long distance vision and great speed, and was traditionally used to chase small game such as hare. The instinct to chase is still strong in many greyhounds, however their adaptability and willingness to please means that when re-homed as pets most can be taught not to bother small animals. In fact, as the greyhound is a sprint animal, its other great love is sleeping – so most well fed pets will be too busy snoozing to notice the neighbour’s cat entering the garden.

Of course every greyhound is different and they’ll often break one of the rules, for example, younger dogs usually need more exercise, some dogs do bark and some even fetch. If one character trait is particularly important to you then please let us know and we will endeavour to find your ideal companion.



## Racing Life

Just about every greyhound loves to race so while you may be saving a life please don't think you're rescuing a dog from a terrible life on the track. The majority of racing kennels are well kept and the dogs well cared for. You can certainly be sure that if the racing owner put their dog into GAP, then the dog has been well thought of.

While a few greyhounds may have reached their owners' couch most will have only known a racing and kennels life. The change in what their new post retirement owner will expect from them is huge. Some of their experiences as a racer are highly beneficial to their new life as a pet and some are not. Most greyhounds adjust with surprising ease, however here are some things from their previous life to bear in mind:

Days have a set routine; feeding and training occur at set times each day.

- They have their own kennel space so sleep is undisturbed.
- They have never been without the company of another dog nearby.
- They will have been used to living in a group of dogs so have a strong sense of pack order.
- They are handled regularly for nail clipping, examined for injuries and even massaged.
- They travel long distances by car and are used to being crated.
- They are taught to walk beautifully on a lead.
- They are taught to chase a small white fluffy lure – usually made of sheepskin.
- And they are never taught to sit or lay down as that could result in a very slow start!

# A Greyhound in your Family

## Greyhounds and small children

Children and dogs can have great fun together. It is often a child who has more time to play with a dog, and owning a dog is a great way to learn about responsibility – but when is the right time to welcome a dog to the family?

The difficult ages are when your child has mobility and curiosity but little empathy, usually between the ages of one and four. As with any breed of dog, it is essential that young children are never left unsupervised with your greyhound, particularly during the early stages when your dog is settling in. Children should be taught to be calm and gentle with the dog and to have respect for its needs and its bed. A “time-out” place is a good idea so that when the dog has had enough he can retreat to his own space for a rest.

Crates are a very valuable accessory for your home and hound. The physical barrier works better with inquisitive children that may struggle to keep their hands to themselves. If trained correctly, Greyhounds very quickly learn that their crate is their safe place.

Greyhounds are generally very tolerant of inappropriate handling but if you feel you will be unable to prevent



a young child from jumping on your dog or poking him in the eye with a toy, then please wait until your child is older for both your child's and your dog's safety. By the age of five most children can enjoy their greyhound's companionship and even take them for a walk.

It is not a good idea to allow your new hound on the human furniture. Your greyhound will not be used to being disturbed when they are asleep. If you do accidentally disturb your greyhound they may wake with a start and could bark, growl or snap because they got a fright. This can be very frightening for you and your family. Also greyhounds (like children) thrive on boundaries and consistency. Without boundaries there is chaos and whilst your greyhound is learning about pet life it is important to have these in place.

## Greyhounds and other dogs

Greyhounds generally love the company of other dogs and learn quickly about pet life from their new companion. Most greyhounds have never played doggy games other than chase, and watching them learn how to fetch the ball and even swim can be very entertaining.

Coming from an environment where they have led quite a singular life means your new greyhound needs time to master his doggy social skills. With quiet, sensible introductions to other dogs most greyhounds learn these skills quickly. Do not rush this process and make sure to introduce your new pet slowly to the joys of doggy friends. Be aware too that while greyhounds and smaller dogs can play very well together, a significant difference in size can make doggy communication more difficult and it is probably best not to let a large bouncy greyhound play with a toy breed of dog in case of accidental injury.



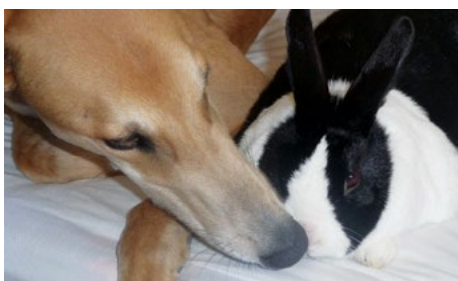
**'Tug-of-war' is always a great game.**

## Greyhounds, cats and other small animals

Considering greyhounds have been bred and trained for hundreds of years to chase small animals it never ceases to amaze us how many of our greyhounds learn to live contentedly with cats. Indeed many owners tell us that their cat is very definitely the boss.

Many greyhounds can and do live with other animals too. There are GAP greyhounds living on lifestyle farms with horses, cattle, sheep, pigs, ducks and chooks. There are also greyhounds that have learnt to live with other indoor pets such as parrots and even house-trained rabbits.

However it should never be forgotten that like other dog breeds, a greyhound's natural instinct is to chase small animals, but unlike other breeds greyhounds are much better at catching their dinner, therefore caution is always wise.



**It's surprising who your friends are!**

The success of training your greyhound to live with other animals will depend on two things – firstly the temperament of the greyhound, and secondly the time and commitment you can give to teaching your greyhound what is acceptable behaviour.

GAP puts a considerable amount

of time and effort into ensuring that our new owners are matched with a suitable greyhound for their family and environment after which it is up to you as the new owner to invest some time in teaching your new family member about his role in life.

“Many greyhounds can and do live with other animals...”



Vadar and Spar.



## The Adoption Process

*Congratulations! You've decided to adopt a greyhound, now how do you go about getting one?*

### **Application form**

The first step to finding your ideal companion is to complete an application form, which can be found online at [www.greyhoundsaspets.org.nz](http://www.greyhoundsaspets.org.nz), under Adoptions.

We hope you had time to read through the Guide, found online at [www.greyhoundsaspets.org.nz](http://www.greyhoundsaspets.org.nz) under Adoption Process, before your home check. It will have answered many of your questions about adopting a greyhound, and it may have raised

more questions that you could ask your Home Checker. Please don't expect your Home Checker to know everything about greyhounds though, as their experience will likely be limited to the hound that they adopted. They should refer you to our kennel managers if they were unable to answer your question.

### **Home check**

It is GAP policy to complete a home check on all prospective homes.

We will arrange for a volunteer who is experienced in greyhound ownership to come and visit you in your home. During their visit they will



complete GAP's standard Home Check Questionnaire and check your fencing. Many of our volunteers will also bring their own greyhound with them for you to meet.

The purpose of the home check is to ensure all our greyhounds have a safe, warm and comfortable home to go to, and an owner who will love them regardless of any mistakes they may make, and provide appropriate food and exercise for them.

We want you and your greyhound to be happy together! So if you have any concerns this is the best time to let us know.

## Finding your ideal companion

All our greyhounds go through temperament testing to check their sociability around other dog breeds, cats and in some cases, livestock. What we can learn about the greyhound in a kennel environment is limited as there is only a certain amount of time available for each dog, but we get a pretty good idea of their individual needs, and matching to a home is usually very accurate. If they need a longer period of assessment or further training around cats or other animals, they are placed in an appropriate foster home.


With the information from your Application Form and Home Check Questionnaire, and the information we have on each greyhound, our Kennel Managers then set about finding your ideal companion.


Depending on your situation we


may have a selection of greyhounds available and ready to adopt. If you have a cat, or have particular preferences, a short wait is likely while we find your ideal hound.

As the majority of our owners live some distance from the kennels, and our Kennel Managers have a good understanding of each dog's temperament, they will usually recommend a particular greyhound to you. However if you are interested in a dog you have seen on the website, then do contact the kennels to see if this dog might be suitable for you.


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**Babe** Age: 2 Sex: Female  
Racing Name: *Safari Party* - [Search Racing History](#)  
I'm such a honey; so cute, kind and cuddly.  





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**King** Age: 3 Sex: Male  
Racing Name: *Triple Tee* - [Search Racing History](#)  
Apparently I'm a 'bit of a lad' - whatever that means! I'm perfectly well behaved on lead and LOVE cuddles and attention but I do need to learn basic manners before I'm a perfect gentleman.  




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**Chris** Age: 10 Sex: Male  
Racing Name: *Homebush Chris* - [Search Racing History](#)  
My foster carer describes me as 'a perfect gentleman and a really sweet dog'; I can be a tiny bit shy of strangers but this just makes me even more endearing. Really I'm just a gentle soul.  
[See more pictures of Chris on Greyhounds Blog!](#) ([click here to open in new window](#))  




The 'We Need Homes' tab at [www.greyhoundsaspets.org.nz](http://www.greyhoundsaspets.org.nz) is a great place to start looking for your new hound.



Also, if you have another dog, then we ask you to bring them to the kennels to meet their prospective playmate. If you have children we request you bring them with you to meet a hound too.

Finding your ideal companion is very much a two-way process and you are welcome to come and visit your recommended hound before adoption.

Also, if you have another dog, then we ask you to bring them to the kennels to meet their prospective playmate. If you have children we request you bring them with you to meet a hound too.

## **Administration**

On adoption, you are required to sign our Adoption Agreement and pay an adoption fee.

Payment can be made by cheque or through internet banking. Please note this fee only partly defrays the costs of preparing a greyhound for pet life. The following package costs on average over \$500 for each greyhound, so additional donations are always very welcome!

The adoption fee helps cover:

- GAP temperament assessment, matching and ongoing advice
- Desexing
- Vaccination
- Microchipping
- General health check
- Dental scale and polish (applies to the majority of greyhounds)
- GAP Handbook
- Council Registration Fee

Each greyhound will come with their vaccination certificate and a training muzzle which we recommend you use in any new situation where you are unsure how your greyhound may react.

Your greyhound has been microchipped and registered with GAP's local council. You will need to transfer his registration to your council. There should be no charge for this but they may want to see his microchip and neutering certificates.

Last – but not least – when your greyhound has settled in, please send us a photograph of them with their new family! It is very rewarding for everyone involved, including their previous owner, to see that your greyhound has happily settled into its forever home.

We also love to put your updates on the 'We Found Homes' webpage. Most prospective adopters look at the website for information and the best recommendation the dogs have is you!

## **Transport**

When the kennel managers have identified the best matches and you have chosen your companion, you will be invited to your local GAP Kennels to meet and hopefully take your new family member home.

# Before You Get Your Dog Home

*As soon as your application has been approved you need to start preparing for your new addition in much the same way as you would prepare for a new baby! We've likened the arrival of an ex-racing greyhound to the arrival of a toddler. Naturally some dogs settle far quicker into home life than others which is entirely dependent on the sort of upbringing they've had or how much time, if any, they have spent in foster care.*

## Things to consider:

- Where will you put your greyhound's bed or crate? A warm spot indoors is essential. Have you got a soft bed ready for the crate?
- Does he have a 'safe place' away from noisy or boisterous children?
- Do you need to keep your greyhound separate from your cats when you are out?
- Have you considered toilet training?
- We recommend the use of crate training for all of the above – talk to your kennel manager for advice and guidance
- If you do not have a crate do they have a 'safe place' away from noisy or boisterous children with a soft warm bed?
- Are there any holes in your fencing or gate latches that need securing?
- If you are out for long periods of time, does he have access to outdoors such as via a dog door?
- Do you need to install 'baby gates' if you want to teach him to stay out of certain areas of your house? Toddler-proof your home!
- Check for hazards around your home and garden: remove spikes or broken branches, wire or glass that may be lying around.
- Put precious things away! Greyhounds love to 'collect' things such as sheepskin slippers, spectacles, remotes and computer cables.



- Have you explained to your children where your greyhound has come from? The story book, Bo, is great for explaining your greyhound's past to younger members of the family.
- Set your new routine BEFORE your dog arrives. This could include making sure you have time to walk him before you go to work.
- Some people choose to crate train their greyhound. Crates can provide a safe haven from boisterous children, can help with toilet training, and can be useful for travelling. Crates need to be at least 120 x 75 x 75cm (Never let a child on a greyhound's bed. It should be his safe space)
- Ask your kennel manager about the option of renting/purchasing a crate for the settling in period or occasionally other owners will have second hand ones for sale.
- Set boundaries and make sure the whole family understands them. If you don't want your greyhound on your couch or in your bedroom, make sure everyone knows. Remember – mixed messages lead to confusion and stress.



**A warm coat in winter is essential for greyhounds with their short hair and lean bodies.**

## Things you will need

Many of the following items can be purchased through our online shop:

- **Food and water bowls.**
- **Crate** – these are very helpful for training your greyhound
- **Dog bed** – soft and squishy is best. Folded duvets, bean bags or a sofa!
- **Collar** – greyhounds have long slim necks similar in size to their heads, therefore collars at least 30mm wide with martingale attachments are the most secure. We do not support the use of choke collars.
- **Harness and lead** – a harness is the most secure attachment for your greyhound when out walking and is particularly recommended for timid hounds and keen chasers.
- **Coat** – a polar fleece for cold nights inside. Consider a waterproof coat if your hound is outside often during the day and for walks etc.
- **Plastic muzzle** – these are essential for training your greyhound around cats or other animals.
- **Food** – take advantage of our Petware ‘Welcome Pack’ and help other hounds find a home at the same time! We recommend Nutrience Grain Free food.
- **Poo Bags** – don’t forget these when out and about!

- **A few soft toys** – most greyhounds love playing with soft and squeaky toys

## Setting boundaries and routines

Greyhounds are very easy going in many ways but their sensitive and intelligent nature can make them stress-prone if their environment isn’t properly managed.

Establishing routines and clear boundaries about what he can and can’t do are vital to settling your greyhound into pet life. Without them he may become confused, leading to stress and possibly problem behaviours. This can happen anytime in your dog’s life but is most common within the first few months of taking your greyhound home.

Bear in mind that while racing, greyhounds are used to a strict and very limited routine, as well as an assertive owner who has told them what to do and when to do it. Trainers with large numbers of dogs have limited time so quality one-on-one attention is often minimal. For your greyhound, adapting to the freedoms of pet life can be overwhelming to say the least. Remember to keep your greyhound’s world very small to begin with. As confidence grows, so can your greyhound’s world.

Being consistent about what is acceptable behaviour is crucial and the whole family must know the rules and be prepared to stick to them. In time, as your dog adjusts to his new found freedom, you can relax these rules.

# Settling in your Greyhound

“Keep it simple – your greyhound has a lot to learn about life outside racing.”

Taking your greyhound into its new home can be a stressful time for them (heavy panting, listlessness and a lack of interest in food are all signs of anxiety). It is very important to remember that greyhounds do not always show obvious signs of anxiety. They will generally internalise anxiety which can be displayed in a number of ways such as freezing, not willing to engage with you and withdrawing. They may also show avoidance behaviours such as looking away, yawning, lip licking, hiding, trying to get away (on or off lead) and they may even start whining. These are normal doggy behaviours but the context and frequency of them will give you an indication of your greyhound's emotional state. Please contact your Kennel Manager if you have any concerns.

## **Day One:**

Your dog has had a very big day. Life as they know it has been turned upside down. To help your greyhound navigate his new life please follow these guidelines. They have been designed to ensure the transition from kennel life to home life is as smooth as possible- for both you and your new dog.

## **When you get home:**

Put your greyhound's plastic muzzle on while it is still in the car and clip on your lead. Your greyhound may need some encouragement (verbal or a tasty treat) to get out of the car as they are usually lifted in and out of vehicles by their trainers.

Check your garden is free of small animals (neighbours cats) and walk



**Greyhounds are not egalitarian in nature and may take the best bed.**

your dog around the perimeter of your garden. Let your greyhound sniff and explore their new surroundings and ensure your dog goes to the toilet. Praise gently (verbally, with treats and gentle stroking) when your greyhound does go to the toilet.

Once your greyhound has toileted and had a wander around then take them inside and put them in their crate or a confined area with their bed.

Your crate should already be set up in your main living area. This is where your dog will live while it is settling into its new life.

If you are not using a crate your greyhound should be restricted to one room in the house to start with. Make sure their bed is set up in a place out of the way but where they can see what's going on around them. Baby gates can be very useful for restricting access without shutting doors.

Go about the rest of your day like normal. Your dog will need to be toileted around every 2 -3 hours. Do not wake your dog to go to the toilet but do toilet your dog once they have woken up from a nap. After naps and meals is normal toileting time for your greyhound.

Signs your greyhound needs to go to the toilet are a possible rumbling tummy, restlessness, circling and staring at the door.

Ensure your greyhound's plastic muzzle and lead is on each time you take them outside. Always praise your greyhound for toileting outside. Once they are done, return them to their crate or room.

We suggest you do not walk your dog on their first day, or if you do so make it a very short walk. There is a lot for them to learn and you don't want to overwhelm them.

It is important that at some stage you leave the house for a short period of time so the dog gets used to the idea that you come and go. A coffee run or a chat to the neighbours is ideal.

### **Your first night:**

Just before bedtime you must take your dog out to toilet. It is very important that the dog goes to the toilet at this time, otherwise they may have no choice but to toilet on the floor/ in their crate overnight. Using an umbrella may be helpful if it is wet outside and they are reluctant to go.

Put your dog back in the crate/on their bed for bedtime. Please be aware that





**A comfy bed makes a happy hound.**

whinging/barking and restlessness may occur. It is very important that you do not unintentionally encourage this behaviour by going to comfort the dog. Leaving a light/TV/ radio on may help. You can also try leaving the bedroom door open so your greyhound can still hear you.

Please do not sleep with your dog overnight. It will make it harder for him to settle in and adjust to his new life in the long run.

### **Day Two:**

Today is the time to start getting your dog used to his new routine.

The very first thing you need to do when you wake up is toilet your greyhound! Then carry on as close to your normal routine as possible. Keep walks short (10minutes) and in and around a quiet area. There is

a lot for your dog to take in and you don't walk to overwhelm them. Your greyhound has a lot of new things to adjust to. Walking on hard pavements, meeting other breeds of dogs whilst out and about, not to mention new smells and a new environment. Keep your initial walks brisk, do not stop and talk to every dog you meet, allow your greyhound some space to take everything in. Remember you do not want to overwhelm them. The rest of your day will look similar to day one. Don't forget to spend some time away from the house so your dog gets used to being home alone.

### **The Working Week:**

Before leaving for work make sure your dog is walked, fed and toileted. Your greyhound may be happy in his crate/ inside for up to 6 hours but no longer please. If your work hours exceed this you will need to arrange for somebody to visit your greyhound during the day or come home in your lunch break so your greyhound can have a leg stretch and a toilet break. Make sure the first thing you do when you get home is toilet your greyhound.

In the early stages it is best to crate train your dog or restrict access to one toddler proofed room rather than turn them loose in the house or garden while you're not home. Keep walks to the same routes so your greyhound can get used to the environment. As their confidence increases so can the areas you walk.

Your kennel manager can offer further advice if needed.

*Keep It Small* – your greyhound has a lot to learn about life outside racing kennels. Let him explore his new world gradually. Keep walks to the same routes so your greyhound can get used to the environment. As their confidence increases so can the areas you walk. Do not throw a ‘Welcome Home Party’ and invite all your neighbours and relatives to come and give him a hug.

If your dog does have an “accident” indoors, bear in mind that punishment does not work and can actually make matters worse. Anticipate when your dog needs to go and take him outside and praise him when he does what is expected of him. Any accidents inside the home should be washed thoroughly in a solution of biological washing liquid or other cleaning agent designed to take the smell away.



## **Introducing your greyhound to an existing dog**

If you already have a dog, it is recommended that you arrange the initial meeting between the two in a neutral area, preferably when you first visit the kennels to meet your prospective pet or a local park or on the street. Go for a walk with the dogs until they are relaxed together and then allow them to smell each other on loose, relaxed leads. Once they appear comfortable in each other's company, take them back to the house and into the garden. Separate the dogs if either of the dogs exhibit anti-social behaviour such as snarling. Go back a step, increasing distance between them.

Dogs are not egalitarian in nature and you will find that dogs will have things they favour above others, be it the best bed, the tastiest treat or being the first out the door. Dogs, like people, have things they really want and then things they think 'meh' and are happy to forfeit. This is perfectly normal behaviour and it is essential that the owner does not interfere by trying to change the order to favour an existing pet. This may upset what the dogs have already figured out for themselves and cause trouble amongst them.

## **Introducing your greyhound to an existing cat**

Greyhounds which are assessed as being trainable with cats will need some training, even if they have spent time in foster care. Usually our owners find it quite easy, but follow these tips to ensure success! We recommend letting your greyhound have at least a day in its new environment before introducing him to the cat if that is possible.

It's a good idea for your cat and your greyhound to have separate routines, for example, it makes life easier for all concerned if they're not both dashing out of the door together to go outside. Think ahead and if necessary change your cat's routine before your greyhound arrives to ensure clashes are avoided.

Ensure that initial introductions are undertaken inside the house, with the greyhound muzzled and on a lead and the cat on the floor. Do not hold your cat in your arms as this makes it far more interesting to your hound.

Before you begin, arm yourself with a spray bottle set onto a strong squirt setting. At first, practise distracting your greyhound from the cat. When he looks at the cat, call him to you in an excited voice, and give him a treat. When he can easily be distracted allow him to approach the cat and gently sniff it. Again, distract him from the cat and reward him for his lack of interest. If the greyhound lunges for the cat, or attempts to snap at it, reprimand the

dog with a squirt in the face with your spray bottle. When the dog behaves correctly and shows no interest in the cat, profusely praise the dog. Gradually allow them to spend more time together until your greyhound regards your cat as another family member.

If your cat is especially flighty, keeping it at home so that training can take place is essential, and keeping your greyhound well fed and exercised will also help the process. Please note that even if the greyhound completely ignores the cat inside, outside is often another matter and even the most cat-safe dog (of any breed!) may chase cats in the backyard.

Take care to closely monitor the greyhound when it is around the cat during the first few weeks and use a muzzle until you are confident in your dog's behaviour towards your cat.

## **Sleeping arrangements**

The ideal spot for your greyhound's night time bed will vary between homes. However, bear the following points in mind:

- Your greyhound is likely to feel lonely if he can't see anyone and may bark or whine at night. Use a baby gate so he can see his new family around him while staying in his area. Alternatively put the gate across your door so he can see you at night without coming into your room.
- It is a good idea to get him used to sleeping on his own as in the long term as he needs to learn

independence. Gradually move his bed further away from yours until he is in a more suitable spot.

- A radio playing quietly at night can help your greyhound through this period of adjustment.
- Crate training is a great way of house breaking and giving your hound a safe sleeping area. Most greyhounds are used to a crate and settle well – your kennel manager can give you more information on crate training your greyhound.
- Letting your greyhound sleep on the bed is not advisable as he has not learnt yet that it is a privilege and must be earned. Allowing sleeping on the bed may cause problem behaviours as your dog thinks it is his right and may not be too happy when you object.
- If you are not sure about your greyhound's toileting prowess then an uncarpeted floor will be preferable. Letting him out last thing at night and first thing in the morning will reduce the likelihood of night time accidents.



# Feeding Your Greyhound

*Listed below are a number of guidelines which should keep your dog fit and healthy.*

## **The perfect weight**

A greyhound's condition can be quickly assessed by counting how many ribs are visible when he is standing. As a rough guide, he is at his ideal weight when the vague outline of the last three ribs can be seen. His food should be increased if more than three ribs are visible and reduced if the outline of the last rib cannot be seen.

Unlike most dog breeds, greyhounds are more likely to have trouble keeping weight on than losing it. Therefore they are always fed twice a day and it is fine to give them some

fatty foods. Please contact GAP if you are concerned about your dog's weight.

## **Settling in**

Your greyhound may go off his food for a few days after the adoption. This is usually as a result of stress and should pass fairly quickly as the dog settles into your home. Your dog also may have slight diarrhoea if he is stressed. If the diarrhoea persists do not feed him for 24 hours then introduce a small amount of food, gradually building up to the desired amount. If you are at



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GRAIN-FREE, MEAT RICH

**No bad  
anything**

No corn, wheat, soy No artificial flavours  
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all worried contact your local Kennel Manager or a vet.

## **Feeding problems**

### **The finicky hound**

While racing, greyhounds are likely to have been given fresh meat to build muscle and improve performance, it is therefore not uncommon for greyhounds to be finicky in their pet home. If you find your new friend is turning his nose up at his biscuits then try mixing a couple of tablespoons of pet mince and warm water through his food. Canned tuna or even just the oil can make his dinner more appetising as can left over gravy. Also bear in mind that many greyhounds will leave their food if they're not hungry so if he is a good weight then save his food for another meal.

### **The odorous hound!**

If your hound suffers from wind which makes everyone run for cover, then do realise that this is not his natural state. Try changing his food to something that agrees with him better. Alternatively, a more meat-based diet should improve this condition.

Changes should be gradual, giving his digestive system a chance to adjust to the new diet.

### **Water**

Clean, fresh water should be available at all times. **NEVER** leave your dog without water.

### **Complete Foods**

Complete foods are often the most effective, economical and efficient way of feeding your dog and ensuring

he gets all the vitamins and minerals he needs. While in the programme, your greyhound has been fed *Nutrience® Grain Free* which is a premium food made from top quality ingredients. Unlike many brands of dog food which are cereal-based, *Nutrience® Grain Free* is meat-based. So while the protein content may be similar to other brands the quality of the protein in *Nutrience® Grain Free* is superior, meaning easier digestibility and less doggy doos to clean up! Your greyhound's coat and skin will also benefit from the ingredients in this food.

Greyhounds vary considerably in size and energy level therefore their food requirements also vary.

Your kennel managers will provide you with specific advice concerning your dog's eating requirements at the time of adoption.

## **Fresh meat & bones**

Most dogs love fresh meat. This can be fed either raw or cooked.

Mutton flaps with thick layers of meat, fat and bone are ideal for putting weight on your greyhound while keeping his teeth clean at the same time. So are raw veal & brisket bones.

**Never feed cooked bones** as these are likely to splinter and can seriously injure your dog's gut and intestines.

## **Supplements**

Speak to your kennel manager about suitable supplements for your greyhound.

## Food Warnings

Table scraps are a great way to add interest to your dog's diet but do take care around the following food items –

<b>Chocolate</b>	Chocolate contains theobromine which is a cardiac stimulant and a diuretic (increased urine production). Vomiting and diarrhoea are also common. Theobromine will either increase the dog's heart rate or may cause it to beat irregularly. Death is quite possible, especially with exercise. Cocoa powder, Dark and Cooking chocolate are the most toxic forms. A 10kg dog can be seriously affected if it eats a 1/4 of a 250g block of Cooking or Dark chocolate. A dog needs to eat more than a 250g block of Milk chocolate to be affected. Obviously the smaller the dog the less it needs to eat to create these adverse effects.
<b>Coffee, coffee beans, tea bags</b>	Drinks/foods containing caffeine cause many of the same symptoms chocolate causes.
<b>Macadamia nuts</b>	Dogs develop muscle tremors, weakness and paralysis. Luckily the muscle weakness, while painful, seems to be of a short duration. Most dogs recover from the toxicity.
<b>Onions</b>	Whether fresh, cooked or powdered, onion (and garlic to a lesser degree) can destroy red blood cells and cause anaemia. This is due to the sulfoxides and disulphides found in the onion.
<b>Tomatoes</b>	Can cause tremors and heart arrhythmias (irregular heart beat). Tomato plants are the most toxic but tomatoes themselves are also unsafe.
<b>Potatoes</b>	Avoid raw potatoes especially green looking ones and also potato peelings. Cooked potatoes are fine.
<b>Avocado</b>	The fruit, stone and plant are all toxic. They can cause difficulty breathing and fluid accumulation in the chest, abdomen and heart.

<b>Fruit</b>	Fruits are acidic and sugary but in moderation can be beneficial to your dog. Although, pear pips, plum, peach and apricot kernels, and apple core pips contain cyanide which is – as we all know is poisonous.
<b>Salt</b>	Excessive salt intake can cause kidney problems.
<b>Mushrooms</b>	Various species of mushroom are toxic to dogs so it is safer to avoid all varieties. Eating mushrooms can cause the dog to go into shock.
<b>Grapes &amp; Raisins</b>	These are toxic causing sickness and diarrhoea in small amounts, and renal failure in larger quantities.
<b>Xylitol</b>	A commonly used sweetener used in “sugar free” products. Can cause liver failure. Xylitol is found in many sugarless chewing gums.
<b>Dairy Products</b>	Use caution with dairy products as they are high in fat and could cause pancreatitis, gas and diarrhoea. Usually non-fat plain yoghurt is safe in small amounts.
<b>Grains</b>	Should not be given in large amounts or make up a large part of a dog’s diet, but rice in small quantities is acceptable.
<b>Mouldy food</b>	Don’t allow your dog to rummage through the rubbish as mouldy food contains toxins that may cause serious illness.

Since many of the signs of toxicity are similar, call your veterinarian immediately if your dog becomes distressed, lethargic or in pain. Vomiting or bloody stools are also possible signs of poisoning.

The good news is that in most cases, treatment can be successful if administered in time.

**NEVER give your dog Paracetamol or Nurofen for pain relief. It is harmful to the liver and can cause death.**





## General Care

### Grooming

Generally greyhounds need very little grooming however most dogs will change their coat on adoption. This is due to a number of factors. Stress brought about by a change in their routine often results in hair loss and dandruff, but once settled into their new home, a greyhound may then grow a new coat as a result of living indoors, improved diet and reduced stress levels.

This often leads new owners to wonder about the easy care nature of the greyhound coat and ask why their greyhound looks nothing like the gleaming hounds belonging to other owners – the secret is merely time,

however aiding your greyhound's transition through dietary treats and a good rub over with a soft rubber brush is fantastic for bonding.

Some greyhounds do have fine fluffy fur and these can moult copiously at the changes of the season. GAP recommends using a soft rubber brush ('zoom groom') or rubber gloves to pull the dead hair from the coat.

Greyhounds can also suffer from dandruff which can be very noticeable on black dogs. This can be brought about by stress – many black greyhounds make a fine show of snow when taken to GAP promotional events, but it may also be caused by a lack of good quality oils in the diet.



You will find you rarely need to bath your greyhound but when they have been playing in the mud then use a gentle dog shampoo. If it is cold outside, put an old towel in the bottom of the bath to stop them slipping and wash them down with warm water.

## **Nails**

All GAP greyhounds have their nails trimmed before being adopted. Nails should not be allowed to grow too long. If the tip of your dog's nails are touching the floor, often characterised

by a tip-tapping sound when walking, then they should be trimmed. Long nails can cause great discomfort as well as nail bed infections, ripped nails and possibly corns (which greyhounds can be susceptible to).

GAP recommends the use of a Dremel grinder, or similar, to grind your dog's nails to a suitable length. Ideally grinders should be around 15-20,000 RPM. Alternatively visit your vet or pet store and ask about their nail trimming service.



**Greyhounds can be amazingly tolerant!**





**Nails that need clipping.**



**Short nails are much more comfortable.**

## **Muzzles**

If you have small animals, we strongly recommend that you use a plastic muzzle on your greyhound to help in the initial introduction and training period.

Plastic muzzles should also be used when your greyhound is likely to come into contact with other animals unless you know him to be entirely trustworthy.

See also Hazards on page 34.



**Use a muzzle for training with small animals and group runs.**

## **Coats**

Greyhounds have a very thin skin and fine coat with very little fat underneath, therefore a coat is essential in cold weather. Polar fleece coats are available from the GAP shop. These are suitable for wearing indoors – if you're wearing a thick jumper then your greyhound will probably need his coat too. For outdoors, a weatherproof coat will be required especially if your greyhound has access to outdoors while you are out.



**Weatherproof coats are fleece-lined with a high collar to keep long necks dry.**



## Exercise

*Although greyhounds are the fastest breed of dog, they achieve their incredible speed in one all-out sprint and do not have a lot of endurance. This means they are content to spend a lot of the day sleeping and have a reputation as ‘couch potatoes’. However, many do enjoy playing, and a 30 minute daily walk is essential to maintain the fitness of these canine athletes. Longer walks and runs can also be enjoyed but your greyhound may need to increase his stamina gradually. Also remember their paws are not used to asphalt or other hard surfaces and will need time to toughen up while out for walks.*

Most greyhounds enjoy a walk around town and as the majority walk so beautifully on a lead it's a great way to show them off. Our owners are regularly stopped by people curious about the breed so be prepared for a short walk turning into a long one. If you'd like to help promote GAP then please request a promotional vest

which will help your dog's buddies find a home too.

One of the joys of owning a greyhound is watching them run at full speed. It is often said that the greyhound takes flight and this is because when running they are in contact with the ground for only a short amount of time. A good run is

also good for your dog's mental and physical health and dogs that are able to enjoy sprinting regularly tend to be better behaved. However, a note of caution, GAP recommends that you do not let your greyhound run off leash in a public place and then please use discretion in choosing where you exercise your greyhound.

### **When in a public area please be aware of the following:**

#### **Prey drive**

All greyhounds have been bred and trained to chase small, fluffy, fast-moving objects. While all GAP greyhounds have passed their sociability with our small dog's assessment, this has taken place in a controlled environment.

Do not consider letting your greyhound off-leash unmuzzled in a public place unless you are totally confident in your greyhound's attitude to any small animals they may encounter. Even then the friendliest greyhound may be unwelcome in the dog park as small dogs can find a greyhound playing chase intimidating.

In town be aware that – to a dog – a walk is not 'exercise' but an adventure and therefore in town, even when on lead, keep an eye out for cats lurking under bushes by the footpath. If your

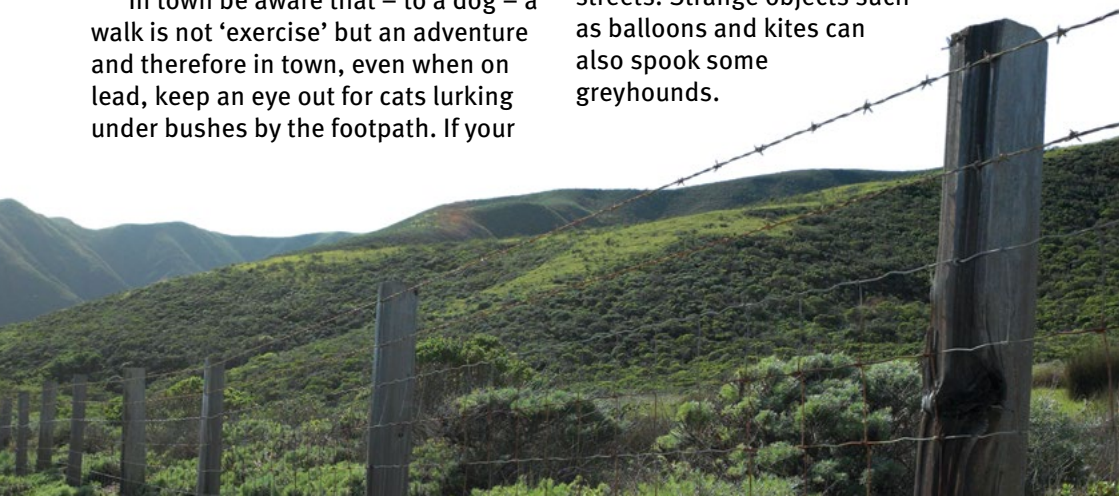
dog is a keen chaser please use a harness and even a muzzle if he is likely to come across cats on his walks.

Where more than two greyhounds are run off leash we require you to use their muzzles, regardless of their temperament, due to the heightened excitement of greyhounds running as a pack.

#### **Hazards**

Despite their excellent eyesight greyhounds often do not see small objects at speed. Wire fences, particularly the 3-strand un-battened type common in rural areas, and forward facing sticks or posts, can result in some very nasty injuries. You will also find your greyhound has absolutely no road sense whatsoever and may even try racing and cutting in front of cars – your hound will be much faster in town. Please keep your dog on a lead near roads or where there are unfamiliar hazards.

Our more sensitive greyhounds can be scared by loud and unfamiliar noises, particularly fireworks and gunshots, but also trucks and busy streets. Strange objects such as balloons and kites can also spook some greyhounds.



When frightened, greyhounds can be surprisingly adept at reversing out of their collars, and disappearing into the distance. If your dog is sensitive please use a walking harness and introduce them to noisy and busy places gradually.

### **Nipping**

Running greyhounds together on a deserted beach is a joy to behold, however please be aware that some greyhounds resort to unfair practices to get their nose in front! A quick nip on their mate's shoulder will give them an open wound and you a vet's bill. Please note this is not aggression and only occurs with the excitement of racing. We recommend you use their muzzle if this is a problem.

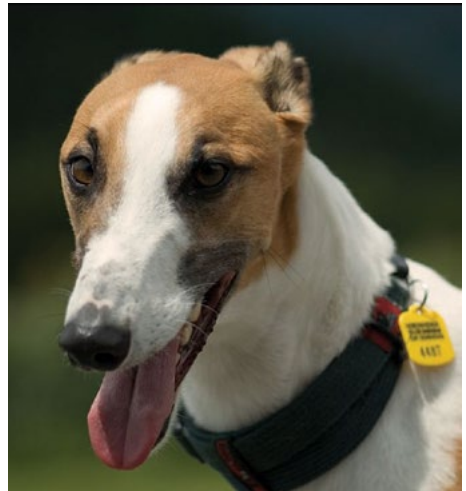
### **Lost Greyhounds**

Ensure you have a collar with identification tags on your greyhound at all times. If your greyhound gets lost, first advise GAP as most animal shelters will call us if a greyhound is handed in to them. Also call animal control, all local veterinary surgeries, the police, neighbours, schools and shopping centres.

We recommend registering your dog's microchip number with the Companion Animals Register.

[www.animalregister.co.nz](http://www.animalregister.co.nz)

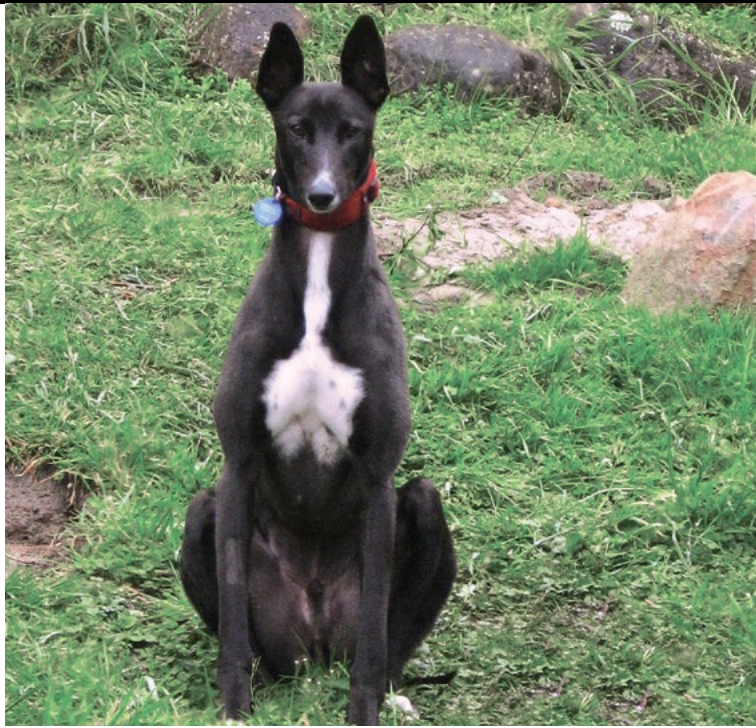
Only council pounds can access the dog registration records. If your hound gets lost, SPCA, Vets and many other organisations can locate an owner quickly via the Companion Animal Register.



**Clear identification on your dog is vital.**



# Training



*Greyhounds are intelligent dogs and may learn all sorts of tricks in time, but in the first few weeks do take it slowly and let him enjoy discovering his new environment.*

## **Teaching your greyhound what is expected**

Your greyhound has a lot to learn in their new environment. The best thing you can do to set your greyhound up for success is to only allow them to practice behaviours that you want them to. If you are not there to supervise then ensure your greyhound does not have any access to anything that could get them into trouble. Crate training is by far the best and easiest way to do this but restricting access to only one room in the house is also an option. Most behaviours that we consider to be

‘bad’ are learned - the same way that good behaviours are.

Some examples of learning bad or undesirable behaviours are counter surfing, raiding rubbish bins, getting on furniture you don’t want them on, pulling on the lead or chasing a cat. If your hound has stolen the dinner defrosting on the bench or raided the rubbish bin they have learnt that it a rewarding thing to do as they have probably had something really tasty. If they have got onto the furniture for a nap, they have learned that it is a soft and comfortable place to sleep. If they



have been able to pull on the lead they have learnt that that is how they get to what they want to get to. If they have chased the cat, they have learnt that it is a fun thing to do. These become self-rewarding behaviours and are much easier to manage by not allowing them to happen in the first place rather than trying to stop them happening once they have started.

Instead focus on how you DO want your greyhound to behave and reward these behaviours. If they are laying quietly in their crate a quiet 'good dog' as you go by. If they are waiting patiently to go out the door, again a quiet 'good dog'. If your greyhound gets excited when you pick up the leash, instead of reprimanding the bouncing and spinning, ignore it and stay quiet and disengaged until they are still with all four feet on the floor. They will learn very quickly what you do want if you are consistent with your interactions and expectations.

## Socialisation

Socialisation is a very important part in teaching your greyhound about life outside the kennels. Greyhounds know all about other greyhounds, but very little about other dog breeds, other animals, and the many experiences that exist outside kennel life. Teaching your greyhound how to behave is essential if he is to enjoy the pleasures of socialising.

Let him adjust slowly to his new environment. Make sure you are feeling relaxed and at ease and introduce him to new experiences slowly, and one at a time. Greyhounds are intelligent and sensitive and your dog will be very aware of your feelings. Hence, if you are stressed, they will also become stressed, resulting in a vicious circle of escalating tension.

For example, when you are out walking, if you feel anxious when an unfamiliar dog approaches and tighten



Introductions are taken slowly.



Each gets a chance to say "hello".

the lead, chances are that your dog will sense your anxiety and see the other dog as something to worry about. This increases the likelihood of them growling at the dog thus confirming your anxiety. The result is that the owner's behaviour rather than that of the dog can easily create a problem with socialisation. It doesn't take long to train your dog to respond in a stressful or fearful manner to anything new, but likewise when approached correctly he can soon learn that new encounters can be fun!

The easiest solution to this problem is to take things slowly and avoid it happening in the first place. For example if you see a strange dog approaching and you are unsure about it, remove yourself and your greyhound by crossing the street and carrying on your merry way. By

exposing your greyhound to new dogs slowly you are on the way to building a trusting relationship. Your greyhound will start to trust that you will not put them in a position that may be scary for them. Walking with friends can be a confidence booster for new greyhounds. There are lots of people in the GAP community who would be happy to go for a walk with you and your new greyhound.

Please do use your dog's muzzle when first out and about. That way you can ensure you remain relaxed and confident and he will learn to see unfamiliar dogs and surroundings as just another thing to look at as you go by.

### **Sit/Down**

Many greyhounds find the sit position uncomfortable, so teach them the down position unless your greyhound



**The ability to recall your dog gives you confidence and builds trust between you and your hound.**

sits naturally. Whichever method you use, once your greyhound understands the object of the exercise, he will usually willingly oblige, especially if a treat may be involved!

If your greyhound does sit naturally then sitting on command is relatively easy to teach. From a standing position draw a tasty treat backwards over his nose, so that in order to follow it with his nose his bottom must go down. If he wriggles his whole body back then position him against something he cannot go back against like a wall or piece of furniture until he gives way to the sit position.

To teach the down position from sitting, hold a tasty treat on the floor in front of them and as they lean down, draw it towards you until they stretch down into position.

If your greyhound does not sit naturally then you need to teach the down position from standing. This can take more time for your greyhound to understand what it is you are asking him to do.

The easiest method is to stand beside your greyhound's bed and call your hound. Wait silently till your greyhound goes to lie on their bed, as they go 'down' give your hound a treat. They will quickly cotton on to laying down beside you on their bed brings treats.

Once you have this behaviour quite consistently you can add the 'down' request. To start say 'down' as your hound is laying down and build up to saying it just before they lay down and

follow with a treat.

Once you have this mastered, move your dogs bed to a different place and start over. Dogs don't learn the same way people do. If you want a consistent behaviour in different environments then you need to train in different environments.

This does require some patience in the initial stages and a tip for training is that dogs learn to read our body language much more quickly than they learn spoken English. So when you are training this perhaps pair 'down' with a signal e.g. pointing at the bed.

## **Recall**

The ability to call your greyhound's name in a wide open space and have him speed instantly to your side gives every owner a special thrill and sense of pride. Whereas, calling your greyhound's name in a wide open space to have him continue trotting into the distance is highly embarrassing to say the least. So why do dogs behave differently and what can owners do to improve their chances of recalling their hound?

*There are many reasons why your dog might not come sprinting back to you:*

**Firstly**, have you trained your dog to understand the "Come" command?

**Secondly**, is coming back a good experience or does he get told off and kept securely on his lead when he does return? He's going to be pretty reluctant if 'bad' things happen when he does come back.

**Lastly**, remember he is a sight hound and if he focuses in on something interesting on the horizon, then you have minimal time to attract his attention before he's at full speed and disappearing rapidly into the distance.

**So, to make your recall work reliably you need to:**

- Train your dog to understand the "Come" command
- Make coming back fun
- Be aware of things that might attract your dog's attention.

Start your recall training at home with minimal distractions and build on this training by adding distractions as your hound learns what is expected in his new life.

"For most greyhounds,  
treats have to be tempting to  
inspire them ...."

If you've just adopted your hound or have changed his name then do make sure he knows his name first. You can usually test this by standing in the kitchen or by his food bowl and calling him.

When calling him do make your command clear. Dogs are quite capable of understanding sentences, but keep it simple to begin with and use his name followed by the command, eg. "Lucky" – "Come." When he reaches you then give him a treat and lots of praise.

For most greyhounds treats do have to be tempting to inspire them, so try cubes of cheese or slivers of steak.

You need to find something that does motivate your greyhound; most will respond to simply being made a fuss of, alternatively try some playtime with their favourite squeaky toy.

Once he is used to coming to you at home and in the garden then practise somewhere less familiar, for example a friend's garden, until you feel confident enough to let him off-lead in a larger area. Dog training clubs have suitable areas for practise so join a class and see if you can practise at other times too.

At some point you will want to let him off-lead for a run. Watching your greyhound racing his buddies at full speed is an amazing sight and even more enjoyable if you know he will come back when called. When running him off-lead do make sure it is in a safe area where there are no cars, cats or other small fluffies, or hazards such as wire fences.



**A soft mat, a good mate, and a comfy car.**

It does take time for your greyhound to learn all that's expected of him and he does need to be taught, so take it slowly and don't expect him to know things automatically. Bear in mind that – like people – you only get back what you put in. The more time you spend together the more fun that time will be.

## Cars

Nearly all greyhounds love travelling, which is not surprising as they have done a fair bit going to race meetings. However during the racing careers dogs have usually been taught not to jump into vehicles. This is because of the possibility of them injuring themselves before the big race.

Therefore you may find your greyhound happily puts his front feet in the boot of your car and then waits for you to lift the rest of him in. If you are not happy doing this then you will need to train him to jump up. This can usually be done using treats and teaching him the command “up” in an excited voice.

## Obedience Classes

Obedience classes can be good for teaching both **you** and **your dog** about basic commands. They are also an excellent opportunity to socialise your greyhound with other dog breeds.

Ask your local coordinator for a recommendation and if possible try and find an instructor who is used to working with greyhounds. Not all dog trainers are created equal, it is important that you use someone who uses positive training techniques.

## Play

A greyhound's favourite game will always be chase, but in the company of other breeds many can learn to play other games such as fetch, doggy wrestling and swimming. Once your dog has grasped the concept of a game he will usually prove to be quite adept at it, however most hounds will only play for short periods of time before retiring for a snooze.

Most greyhounds love toys, especially the fluffy squeaky kind which they enjoy throwing into the air and generally being quite silly with.

## Further training

The sky is the limit when it comes to training your greyhound to do new things. There are a number of training blogs on our website under *Info & Resources > Behavioural Advice*. Please do read these, especially # 7 *Introductions* before your new greyhound arrives.



Some dogs like a collection of soft toys.





## Health

*Establishing a good relationship with a vet is a must for any pet owner so take some time finding the right vet for you. A good vet will be happy to spend some time with you discussing treatment options and won't charge a fortune for unnecessary work. Ask GAP owners in your area for recommendations or inquire at your local vet clinic to establish their knowledge of treating and dealing with greyhounds.*

It is a good idea to register your greyhound with your chosen vet and ensure they have your dog's information and weight recorded. We recommend you take your greyhound for a general health check six months after adoption.

### **Pet Insurance**

Veterinary costs can be an expensive part of pet ownership so consider taking out pet insurance. Insurance policies can differ considerably

though so do check the exclusions and limitations carefully.

### **Anaesthetics**

Greyhounds react differently to anaesthetics than other dog breeds because of their higher muscle-to-body weight ratio, and it is very important to make sure your vet is aware of this.

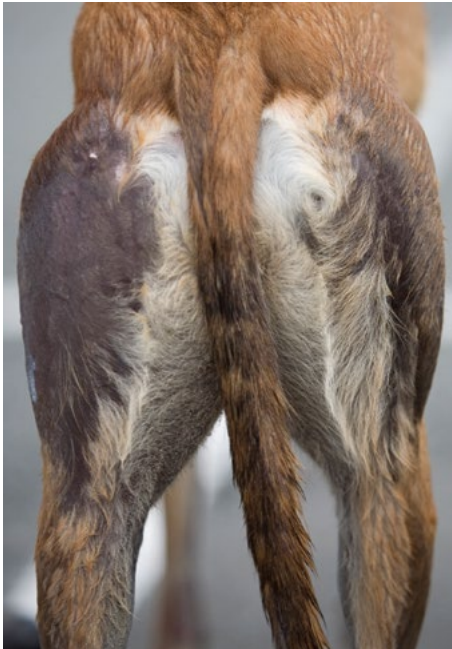
Older types of anaesthetic have killed greyhounds, however more modern anaesthetics are fine. If in doubt, ask your vet for a more sensitive

anaesthetic but be prepared to pay a little extra.

### **Coat and skin**

Bald thigh syndrome is a relatively common greyhound problem causing far more concern to owners than their dogs. The exact cause of this lack of bottom fluff has not been established. For some greyhounds it may be stress related and the fur will often grow back in time.

Occasionally it may be related to thyroid function.



**Bald thighs are a common syndrome.**

Greyhounds do have a low thyroxine count though so do not treat with medication unless your greyhound is being overly lethargic and showing less interest in life than normal.

A poor coat and skin, brittle nails and cracked paws can be the result of zinc deficiency. If you have had your greyhound for longer than six months and he's shown no improvement, then ask your vet about zinc supplements.

### **Fleas and worms**

Check your dog regularly for fleas, especially where cats share the same household. Frequent scratching, raised red patches and small dark particles of flea dander in the coat are all signs of an infestation. To check whether the black particles are actually from fleas, dampen them with water and if it is, it will turn dark red from the blood.

All GAP dogs are treated with a vet recommended spot on product. GAP recommends only using vet recommend products for the treatment and prevention of fleas, lice and mites. These can multiply quickly especially in warm weather so using a suitable product is essential.

## Stitches

At some point in his life your greyhound may need surgery, following which you may find he is adept at removing stitches. Most vets will supply Elizabethan collars to prevent a dog reaching its stitches however, because of the greyhound's long neck, these are often ineffective. A plastic muzzle could be an option instead. Your greyhound may be very offended at having to wear his muzzle but please do persist as another trip to the vet may result from being too soft-hearted.

## Tail infections

Some of our dogs are so happy that they literally wag their tails to pieces. Greyhounds have very little covering on their tails and seem to have very little sensitivity too. Many will wag their tails against hard objects with such enthusiasm as to cause bleeding. While the skin will heal, further wagging usually breaks it open again and if left unattended the wound may become infected. The end of the tail is hard to bandage, however we

have had some success with taping a plastic hair curler around the affected part to protect it. Or, alternatively, try strapping the tail to one of the back legs. In severe cases it may be necessary for the vet to remove the end of the tail. Vaseline can be useful in helping to seal minor tail wounds.

## Teeth

Dental problems are common among greyhounds, therefore give your dog plenty of treats designed to keep his teeth clean (see page 24).

Appropriate bones (veal, chicken frames, brisket) dry food help to maintain good dental hygiene. Bad dental health is indicated by bad breath, inflamed gums, and rotting and tartar covered teeth.

While all GAP greyhounds have their teeth checked and any necessary dental work completed before adoption, tartar can build up quickly if dental hygiene is not maintained. A considerable build-up of tartar should be removed by your veterinarian. If your dog needs a general anaesthetic



Good, clean and healthy teeth.



Signs of tartar build up and decay.

for any other reason, it is a good idea to ask your vet to clean your dog's teeth at the same time.

### **Vaccinations**

Your new greyhound will have been vaccinated and may require booster shots. Your Kennel Manager will explain all vaccinations at time of adoption and it is important to talk to your vet about these.

### **Weight**

Keeping your greyhound at his ideal weight is important for his health. Being such a slim sleek breed it is easy to see whether their feed should be adjusted.

Just count how many ribs you can see. Your greyhound is at his ideal weight if you can see the vague outline of the last three ribs. Any more then increase his food, if you can't see the outline of the last rib then cut back a little.





## Common Problems

*Most behavioural problems with greyhounds are caused by insecurity (stress and fear) and not understanding what is expected of them.*

### Problems in behaviour

Dogs are social animals and respond to clear, consistent expectations. They also operate in a “what's in it for me” mind set. Clear rules that the whole family follows are very important especially at the start of a greyhound's new life. It gets very confusing for a hound if some family members let him jump all over them and even on the couch and the next family member gets angry at this behaviour. Consistency is key!

If you have more than one dog you can avoid issues at feed time by feeding your new greyhound separately from the rest of the pets. We usually encourage feeding outside to help with toileting issues as most greyhounds will eat then immediately wee. Integrate him with the rest by bringing his bowl closer to the others a little bit each day.

Sleeping spots are very important to a greyhound as he likes sleeping a lot! So a comfortable resting place is imperative. A dog's bed should be



his sanctuary, a place to relax and rest and not be disturbed. But not completely out of the action either - a corner in the living room is usually a good place. Greyhounds are not used to being disturbed at all in their sleep and as they adjust to their new pet life it is very important that they are not disturbed when they are asleep on their bed. It is for this reason that crate training is so valuable with your new pet. Obviously your couch and bed are very comfortable so you may find your new hound makes a beeline for these in the early days. The key is to watch him and as soon as you see him starting to climb on or even looking like climbing on the furniture, distract him with an 'uu-uh' and re-direct him to his bed or crate. Then praise and even treat him for lying on his bed. It is very important that you don't let your new hound on the furniture (if you want to at all) until you have some basic control and can get them off easily.

Dogs come in all sorts of personalities and some are more adaptive than others. Our problem cases are often those who are confused from receiving mixed messages from different family members and are consequently under a great deal of stress. These are often dogs where one minute they are encouraged to beg or be at the table as they are given tit-bits from their owners' plates. The next minute (usually when friends come for dinner) they are growled at for this behaviour.

Fortunately the answer to these

problems is usually very simple and quick to implement. With a little bit of thought and some understanding of the dog's way of looking at things, it is easy to correct and prevent problem behaviours.

## Teach Manners

Actively teach your dog to understand and obey commands such as 'come', 'get down', 'out', and wait' and always give praise when he gets it right.

Make him wait a moment before tucking in to his dinner.

Make sure he stands nicely before putting his lead on for a walk.

The more time you put into positively training your greyhound the more he will want to learn. As your relationship grows with your hound the more he will want to please you. As



The command "wait" before eating.

your pet begin to understand what is expected of him and what you want the better behaved he will come from you.

Make training fun, if you are not having fun, neither is your dog.

### **Separation Anxiety**

Dogs are chosen as a pet because they make great companions. Up until very recently, a dog and his adopted family could be found enjoying each other's companionship throughout the day.

In the last decade or two though, family life changed as everyone started going out during the day. Not surprisingly a dog may now feel lonely by himself during the day.

Fortunately for the greyhound their predilection for sleeping long hours has made the breed an ideal pet for today's society. However they are a sensitive and affectionate breed and do need to feel secure and loved before they will contentedly snooze through



It is perfectly acceptable to have him on the sofa or even share your bed, as long as he respects your decision when it's time to get down.

the day on their own.

Even then they have their limitations, and six hours on their own five days a week is probably enough for most dogs. After that a second greyhound to play with is a good idea or a visit from a dog walker.

Alternatively, opt for a modern solution to this modern problem and send your hound to doggy day care once or twice a week. If you're away from home ten hours or more five days a week then another type of pet altogether is probably a better option.

### **What is separation anxiety?**

Separation Anxiety occurs when a dog becomes so distressed at being separated from his family that he exhibits problem behaviours such as barking, destructiveness and inappropriate toileting when left on his own. The behaviour normally starts shortly after being left and may continue for some time. It is not done on purpose to annoy the owner

– rather, the dog obtains some relief from his actions – for example chewing is known to release calming chemicals in the brain.

Separation anxiety can also be seen while the owner is still home with less confident dogs following their owners around the house in the first few days/ weeks after adoption. The new owner often exacerbates the problem by seeing it as cute and rewarding the dog for his behaviour with lots of cuddles and affection. On the positive side these dogs are usually very responsive and easy to train.

### **My dog has separation anxiety**

If you think your greyhound has separation anxiety then please contact the GAP kennels for specific advice.

Dogs which suffer from separation anxiety usually show it in the first few days, however dogs which have been part of the family for some time can become anxious when there is a



Separation anxiety exhibits itself in many ways, even a favourite toy isn't safe!

change in routine. Returning to work after a period of unemployment is a classic example.

Unfortunately there is no magic cure and the owner of a dog which is chewing the door, toileting in the bedroom or barking incessantly will have to go through the process of getting their dog used to being on his own. Starting with very short periods of time and gradually extending it until the dog is confident being left.

First check that nothing else is upsetting your hound; for example a urinary infection can cause toileting accidents, unusual loud noises such as bird scarers or large trucks going past can cause stress, and flea allergies can make your hound nibble at his skin.

Diffuse the emotion of your leaving with a good walk. Then, after feeding him, scale back your attention to the point of ignoring him during the last 15 minutes before you leave. Turn on the television or radio and, with no more than a whispered "Be Good,"

leave the house.

Some dogs will read the signs of imminent departure and become agitated. If packing a lunch or shuffling papers in your briefcase distresses the dog, desensitize him to these or other actions by doing them frequently and at other times so they lose their direct connection to the dreaded departure. Presenting a toy stuffed with goodies can draw the focus of less seriously afflicted canines toward cleaning out the item and away from your leaving. Kong toys work well as canine diversions. The seriously afflicted dog, however, will not give the treat a second look until his family is together again.

If your dog's separation anxiety is severe you may need to seek professional help from your veterinarian. While drugs are never an answer in themselves they can help calm your dog so that effective training can take place.



There's nothing better than a good romp with your mates.

### Tips for easing anxiety

- Make sure all the family give him walks, treats and affection so he is less likely to see your departure as the end of his world.
- Give him access to a window so he can see what's going on outside.
- Leave the radio/TV on so he can hear people talking.
- Keep him occupied with a Kong stuffed with peanut butter or scatter treats around the house/garden/yard for him to find.
- Tire him out by taking him for a long walk/run before you leave.
- Use baby gates which allow him to see you but not be with you when you're at home to get him used to being on his own.



Being tired out after a long walk can help with separation anxiety.

### A note on social media

The pet greyhound community has grown in leaps and bounds and there are now several websites and pages dedicated to these wonderful dogs. These pages can be a fun way to interact with other owners and share anecdotes and pictures of your greyhounds. They can also be an easy place to ask for advice. However, you will get lots of answers from well-meaning people and separating the good advice from the bad may not always be possible.

- If you have any questions or concerns with your greyhound, please do contact us rather than looking for help online. Our Kennel Managers and Regional Co-ordinators are here to help you and your greyhound succeed and have a wealth of experience with greyhounds and their journey into pet life.
- Our contact details are on the website under *Contact > Meet the Team*.
- Please do contact us if you have a question or need any help!





## When your greyhound leaves

*Many people ask us what is the expected life span of a greyhound but this can be a difficult question to answer.*

A greyhound that has had a relatively comfortable and stress free life with good diet and exercise is likely to live longer than one that hasn't. Good genes will also help. We do know of greyhounds that have made it to the ripe old age of 17, while others have departed at a relatively young age. Illness and injury can also take our pets away from us long before their time is due.

Older greyhounds bring their own special joys, and constant devoted companionship is yours in return for a comfortable bed, a regular meal and very little exercise. However at some point you will need to make the decision on euthanasia. This can be a very difficult time and fraught with emotion, but your vet will guide you through the process and advise you when your greyhound is suffering and should be put down. To make it easier

for both you and your hound, ask your vet if they will come to your home, or alternatively ask them to put your greyhound down while he is still in your car. You may choose to take his ashes home to keep or perhaps bury under a favourite plant; you could also consider a pet cemetery.

The loss of your greyhound will leave a hole in your life which people cope with in different ways. Some may choose to adopt a second dog straight away, while others may need a period of mourning. While your pet can never be replaced, another greyhound will give you a focus and will also honour his memory as well as give a second chance to another hound.

Our best advice for humans and greyhounds alike is to make sure you enjoy the time you have so that those who are left behind have good memories to cherish.



## What Next?

*So you've fallen in love with this endearing breed and want to meet up with other hounds and owners as well as help more greyhounds find loving homes?*

### **Become part of the GAP community**

GAP is more than an adoption centre - it's a community of greyhound lovers too. Our supporters enjoy walks and social occasions together. They read GAP's regular email newsletter, Hounding Around, and they share photos and stories on Facebook. Subscribe to Hounding Around on [www.greyhoundsaspets.org.nz](http://www.greyhoundsaspets.org.nz) and our local Regional Co-ordinator can let you know of the local Facebook groups.

### **Become a volunteer**

There are many ways you can help GAP find more homes for these wonderful dogs:

- **Become a foster carer**  
Help the dogs adjust to pet life before going to their permanent home.
- **Help at events**  
GAP attends events throughout New Zealand to introduce the public to the ex-racing greyhound and explain why they need homes. Volunteers

bring their dogs along and enjoy talking to the public about Greyhounds as Pets.

- **Help with fundraising**

If you can organise a sponsored event or help collect donations then please contact us. We're always interested to hear about new and exciting fundraising ideas as well as tried and tested ones!

- **You tell us!**

GAP supporters have volunteered to help with everything from sewing to marketing campaigns. You tell us what your skills are and we'll tell you how you can help!

## **Donate**

GAP is a registered charity and whilst we are fortunate to receive funding from the racing industry, we still need

donations to help us cover the costs of re-homing. Even though we charge an adoption fee this doesn't cover the actual cost to the programme of re-homing a greyhound, so the more dogs we rehome, the more donations we need.

***As well as a one-off donation, please consider:***

## **Steadfast Friends**

Join *Steadfast Friends*, and make a regular donation to help with our kennelling costs and veterinary expenses.

## **Make a Bequest**

Lump sums such as bequests can allow us to expand our kennel base and house more hounds or adoptions and undertake more events to attract more adopters.

Volunteering at events can be very rewarding, such as the Christchurch Christmas Parade.





## Recommended Resources

### Websites

[www.greyhoundsaspets.org.nz](http://www.greyhoundsaspets.org.nz) - official GAP website

[www.greyhound-data.com](http://www.greyhound-data.com) - For your greyhound's family tree.

[www.thedogs.co.nz](http://www.thedogs.co.nz) - To find out about your hound's past life and check out their racing career.

### Facebook

Join us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/GAPNZ](http://www.facebook.com/GAPNZ)

# Contacts

Please see the Meet The Team page on the GAP website for contact details.

[www.greyhoundsaspets.org.nz](http://www.greyhoundsaspets.org.nz)



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