



— NORTHUMBERLAND —
GREYHOUND RESCUE

Looking After Your Greyhound

A guide to the adoption process and advice
on looking after your new greyhound

Mobile : 07538935608

Website : www.northumberlandgreyhoundrescue.co.uk

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Instagram : @greyhoundnorthumberland

Getting started

Thank you for choosing to rehome a greyhound. This booklet aims to guide you and help you settle them into their new home.



We annually home around 80-100 greyhounds into loving homes, we are an entirely volunteer run charity relying solely on donations.

The first part of the process is to visit kennels and find your new greyhound, once you've chosen your new friend we'll arrange a home check with one of our volunteers. It's important to tell us about your lifestyle/other pets and family members when you visit so we can make sure you're right for each other.

The home check is to make sure your home and garden are safe for a greyhound and for you to ask any questions about adoption and greyhounds.

Once the home check is completed and everything is ok, we'll arrange a time for you to come and collect your new greyhound.

All of our greyhounds come with a muzzle, catch collar, walking out collar and lead. They are fully vaccinated, wormed, neutered and microchipped - we will swap the microchip over to you after the adoption fee has been paid (this can take a couple of weeks to process).

After your greyhound has gone home with you we'll arrange a follow up home check at around 6-8 weeks just to check you're all doing well!



Things to prepare

Here is a suggested list of things you'll need to gather and to prepare before you take your new greyhound home

- Water and food bowls, these can be raised or on the floor
- Comfortable bedding - this can be as simple as a folded up duvet or a dog bed, you may want to place this in a quiet corner of a room
- Depending on the time of year you may want to purchase a coat - especially if it's cold or wet
- Dog food, we'll give you a couple of days worth of food from kennels but you'll need to decide what you'd like to feed once home, you can transition over to your food over a couple of days
- Find a local vet and register with them
- Decide if you want to insure your greyhound and gather quotes
- Get a small first aid kit together (just in case)
- ID tag(s) for your greyhound
- Doggy poo bags (would recommend the thicker ones from experience)
- A grooming brush
- Doggy toothbrush and toothpaste

It's also a good idea to decide on routine and house rules before they arrive, along with what words you'll use for key things like 'going out to the loo'.



Collars, muzzles & leads

It is really important that your greyhounds new collars and muzzle are correctly fitted and we'll show you how to do this before you leave kennels.

A catch or house collar is very useful as a 'grab handle' especially if they are excitable and can be a good place to put an ID tag - they should always have an ID tag on at all times when out in public.

A 'fishtail' collar and lead will be provided for walking out, they are leather and specially shaped for greyhounds. It should go behind the ears at the thinnest part of the neck and should be tight enough to get 2 fingers between the collar and the neck. If it is any looser your greyhound may slip out of the collar.

NEVER use an extendable lead, these are very dangerous as a greyhound can go from 0-40mph in a few seconds.



Muzzles - you will take a muzzle home with your greyhound too, we strongly recommend that all greyhounds are muzzled at times when in public until well socialised with other breeds of dogs.

Please remember you should always be in control of your greyhound at all times and don't forget to clean up after them.

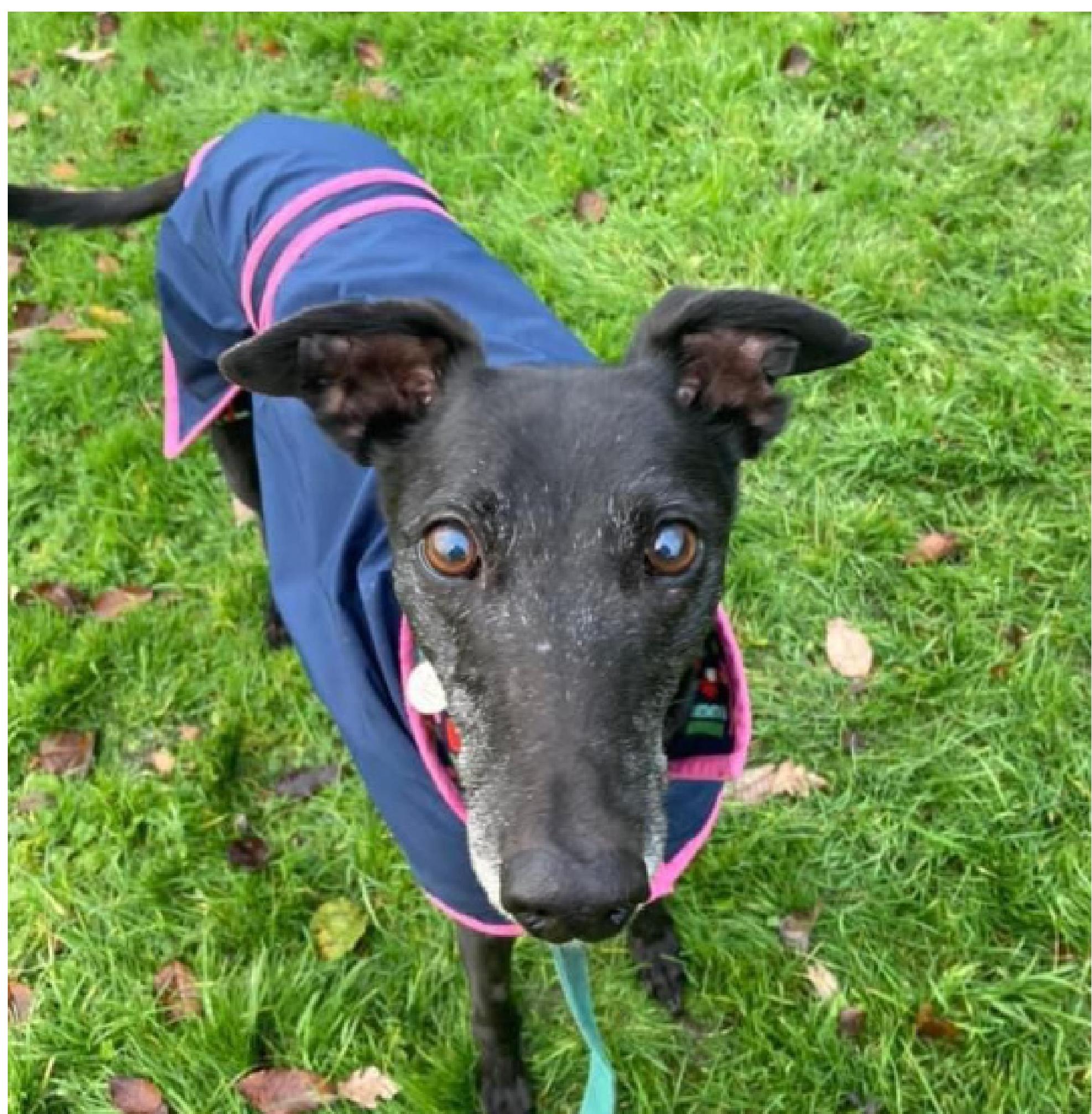


Bringing your greyhound home

When picking up your new greyhound, bear in mind that your greyhound may not have been in a house before.

Your new greyhound will settle at its own pace, so please don't rush it. Common household items such as vacuum cleaners, washing machines and TV's will be new and might initially confuse them.

Upon arriving home, take your greyhound straight into the garden or designated toilet spot. Wait until they relieve themselves and then praise them. Use their name and say 'good boy/girl' and reward them with a small piece of cheese or dog treat. Repeat this every hour or so for the first day and then get into a routine of letting them out before and straight after meals.



Take your greyhound around the house on the lead first so they can calmly see everything. After 10 mins take the lead off and sit down, letting them roam around on their own. By now the initial excitement should have worn off and they can explore calmly. The first few days can be daunting for them and they may become anxious. Signs of anxiety are panting, pacing, diarrhea, not eating or drinking and being destructive. Please be patient while they adjust. Night lights and low volume radio can be left on if needed and may help them not feel alone in the dark.



House training your greyhound

Most greyhounds are clean in their kennel and are happy to stick with a toilet routine at home once they know it.



House training should begin as soon as your greyhound arrives home; take them straight to the garden and wait until they relieve themselves and then reward with a small piece of cheese or dog treat.

Repeat this step and take your pet out at regular periods throughout the day. During this time its unlikely that they will have had a chance to have an accident and they will be familiar that 'toilets' are to be done 'outside'.

If they have an accident inside bear in mind that punishment does not work and can make the greyhound worse. Try and anticipate when they need to go , take them out, praise and reward when they relieve themselves.

Any accidents should be washed thoroughly to take away the smell and prevent a re-occurrence.

Take your greyhound to the toilet immediately after feeding, when they get up in the morning, before bedtime and of course in between!

Some signs to look for when your greyhound needs to go to the toilet are restlessness, pacing, up and down, circling, whining or being by the door (or scratching it) At first there maybe no signs as they will have been used to living in a kennel, but they are generally very clean and learn quickly.

If you are struggling with training please get in touch.



Feeding your greyhound

It may seem like common sense, but your greyhound's diet is very important to ensure they are happy healthy and maintain an ideal body weight. Always supervise greyhounds when they have food or treats.

WATER - Fresh water should be available at all times and should be changed daily. Never leave your greyhound without water.



Complete Foods

Complete foods are the most effective and efficient way of feeding your greyhound the proteins, vitamins and minerals they need. Look for a complete food with roughly 20% protein. There are many complete foods available and with all budgets in mind, there are now comparison websites available if you wish to use them.

If you choose to soak your greyhound's food do not use hot water or the vitamins will be destroyed. Whatever you decide to feed please follow the instructions on the packaging, we'll be happy to advise what they are currently fed to make any transitions easier, always make changes slowly.

Keep an eye on your greyhounds stools, should they become loose you may need to change brand or introduce at a slower pace. Complete foods generally come in the form of biscuit or cereal, tinned food isn't necessary but can make a meal more appetising!

Additional Items

All greyhounds appreciate fresh meat and vegetables, leftovers etc, but these are not needed everyday. Cooked eggs in any form can be enjoyed once a week or so. Oily fish (never in brine) such as sardines or pilchards are a nice treat and can help improve their coats.

You may wish to feed your greyhound from a raised bowl as it can be awkward to eat from the floor. Do not feed your greyhound before long journeys or within an hour of exercise.



Greyhound general care

NEUTERING- all greyhounds that leave our kennels will have been neutered. However if you adopt from elsewhere, we strongly recommend that you arrange to have them castrated or spayed as soon as possible.

TEETH - the importance of good dental hygiene cannot be overstated.

Gingivitis is the primary cause of bad breath in canines. Dogs, like people can get gingivitis(inflammation of the gums caused by bacteria) and can suffer from decay and even lose teeth without proper care.

We take care of their teeth whilst in kennels and it may be that they have a dental when they are being neutered. Once this is done, maintenance is down to you. We recommend at least an annual dental check up at the same time as vaccinations. Regular chews, uncooked bones and dental treats will help combat some of the plaque build up (always supervise while having treats).



Brushing teeth is the most effective for of dental care. Some dogs will let you brush their teeth straight away, but others need their confidence built up.

3 simple steps to building confidence:

1. For the first few days gently stroke your dogs muzzle
2. Once your greyhound accepts this happily, you can progress to lifting the lips and praising them for co-operating
3. Once your greyhound has gained confidence in you they will allow you to gently brush their teeth. Use a soft brush with canine toothpaste - never use human toothpaste.

Regular attention to your greyhounds mouth will save you money and prevent pain for them in the future, please check them regularly and if in doubt seek veterinary advice.



Greyhound general care

EARS & EYES - your greyhounds ears and eyes should be checked regularly to spot any infection.

If required gentle cleaning of the outer ear with cotton balls lightly dampened with warm salt water or special wipes will keep the ears free from wax that can trap germs and lead to infection. If you notice your greyhound shaking their head or rubbing their eyes and the problem persists speak to your vet. A greyhounds ears can be sensitive - take care when handling them.

PARASITE CONTROL - it is important to regularly treat your greyhound for parasites eg fleas and worms.

Speak to your vet to find the best treatment and advice, different parasites may be more common in certain areas so it is worth talking to your vet for specific advice and a routine of preventative medication.

FEET & NAILS- your greyhound's nail will need regular trimming. Your local vet or groomer will be happy to help with this. Once you have been shown how to do it correctly you may wish to do this yourself. However incorrect nail cutting can cause pain and bleeding so best done by a professional.

After your greyhound has been out exercising, check their pads, feet and legs for cuts or embedded items, if needed you can wash their feet in boiled cooled water and if you find anything seek veterinary advice if necessary.

SKIN & COAT- In order to keep your greyhounds coat healthy, groom them regularly with a grooming mitt or firm bristled brush.

If you give your greyhound a bath, make sure they are dried quickly and can lie somewhere warm. Always use a dog shampoo.

Many greyhounds have bald patches especially on their rump and thighs. This is common and nothing to worry about unless you notice sore, flaky or red skin in which case you should speak to your vet.

Sunflower or fish oil or oily fish in oil can be added to their food to help maintain a glossy coat



Greyhound general care

HOT & COLD TEMPERATURES - Greyhounds are particularly susceptible to extreme temperatures as they only carry a small portion of fat on their bodies and have a single coat of fur.

Generally, if you feel the need to wear a coat, your greyhound should be wearing one too. Coats should be big enough to cover from the neck to over the tail. There are lots of coats available from walking out coats for outdoor wear to fleece indoor jackets which are designed to keep your greyhound warm in your home on cold nights if the temperature drops excessively low indoors.

There are a wide range of retailers and some are local to us.

Like all dogs, greyhounds will get hot on warm days. They will pant and possibly be agitated. Ensure your dog is in the cool and you can offer a cool mat and make sure to limit their exposure to the sun. If there is a breeze in the garden, it might seem the coolest place, however greyhounds do not know about UV rays and can get badly burned if the proper precautions are not taken. Always have a supply of fresh water available to ensure your greyhound does not get dehydrated.

Take care to only walk your greyhound before it heats up in the morning or at night when it has cooled down. If they are reluctant to go for a walk just allow them the opportunity to go to the toilet, in extreme hot weather it may be best not to go for a walk at all. Also take care in very cold temperature too and wash paws if there is salt/de-icer on the pavements/roads.

Symptoms that your greyhound is over heating include distress, collapse and severe panting. If you think your greyhound is showing signs of this cool them as quickly as possible and seek veterinary help immediately.

Never leave a greyhound in a warm or hot room or car - they can die in minutes



Older greyhounds

Ageing occurs gradually and may not be obvious to you as you see your greyhound every day. You may see changes in coat colour, sleep pattern, appetite and thirst, body shape and behaviour as well as greying of the muzzle and a reluctance to exercise. Please have your greyhound checked regularly by your vet. Routine healthcare such as annual vaccinations, worming and flea control should not be overlooked and should be continued throughout your greyhound's life.



Diet

There are some notable differences in the nutritional requirements of older dogs. Senior life-stage diets take into account altered lifestyles, reduced levels of activity and declining organ function. Your vet will be able to give advice when changing to a senior diet.

Some older greyhounds require up to 20% less calories as they become less active, so you should weigh your dog regularly. Many vet surgeries have scales as well as breed weight guidelines. Adjust your greyhound's food intake to maintain optimum weight; obesity is likely to put more strain on the heart, lungs, muscles and joints and may result in shorter life expectancy. If your dog is overweight please speak to your vet for advice.

As activity levels fall, older dogs may start to demonstrate muscle wastage. Supplements such as cod liver oil tablets and glucosamine will help prevent joint deterioration. Normal, healthy senior greyhounds should receive the same levels of protein as younger greyhounds, but it must be of high quality. Your greyhound's appetite may reduce as the sense of smell and taste diminish.



Training your greyhound

Everyone likes a well behaved greyhound, and providing some basic training will help equip your greyhound to adjust to their new life and know what is expected of them in their new home.

Reward based training works by rewarding our greyhounds for the behaviour we want and ignoring those we don't. By rewarding our dogs as soon as they perform the required behaviour (such as 'down'), we are letting them know they have performed the correct action and giving them a reason to repeat the behaviour next time.



Greyhounds are a sensitive breed and do not respond well to punishment. Using adverse techniques such as shouting, physical punishment, or rattle cans will not teach your greyhound what you want them to do and is more likely to make your dog fearful and cause other behavioural problems as it does not address the dogs underlying emotional state.

When you start teaching your greyhound, you need to reward them as soon as they have performed the required action. The type of rewards you use need to be something your greyhound really wants, this will vary from dog to dog and can include food, praise, gentle petting and games with toys.

For most greyhounds food rewards such as small pieces of cooked chicken, cheese, meaty strips, frankfurter or sausage. They need to be easy to handle and quick to deliver and eat.

Remember, in the initial stages of training you will reward your greyhound every time they performed the required behaviour. Once you are sure that your greyhound knows and understands what you are asking you can start rewarding intermittently, eg 3 times out of 10.



Training cont...

Babies, children and greyhounds

It is essential that special care is taken when introducing any greyhound into a home where babies and small children are present. **Young babies and children should never be left unattended with a greyhound**, and children must be educated to be calm and gentle around them and to have respect for their needs and bed. An escape route for your greyhound is an excellent idea, so that when they have had enough they can retreat to their own space.



Cats, small animals and greyhounds

Many greyhounds have a chase instinct and may want to chase cats or other small animals. Due to a greyhound's speed, they are capable of catching them. During their upbringing greyhounds will have been trained to chase a fast moving lure which means their chase instinct can be strong. With careful positive training many greyhounds can live with cats or other small domestic pets.

Our volunteers will have been made aware that you have other pets at home and will have endeavoured to provide you with a greyhound which has been assessed as potentially trainable ie shown little interest in small dogs or cats when meeting at kennels. However it is not always a guarantee when a small fast moving animal appears in front of a newly homed greyhound, that it will not instinctively chase.



Anxiety in greyhounds

Separation related issues

Some greyhounds may suffer from separation related issues when left alone and find it hard to cope. Separation related issues can be distressing for both the greyhound and owner, however with careful training and management they can be prevented or treated.



There are a number of reasons why some greyhounds find it hard to cope when by themselves and these include:

- Frustration or boredom
- Phobias or fears, such as thunderstorms or fireworks
- Over attachment to the owner (or family member), resulting in separation anxiety

In the UK racing greyhounds are usually kennelled in pairs and have spent their lives surrounded by other greyhounds. Their lives follow a set schedule and a daily kennel routine. This means that some greyhounds may find it difficult to cope with changes in their routine and adjusting to periods when their owner is absent. Most greyhounds do adjust successfully to their new lives and homes after racing.

The signs of separation related distress can vary and depend on the individual dog. Some of the more common signs are:

- Destructive chewing, digging, ripping or shredding of objects when you are absent
- Barking or howling after you have left
- Soiling or urinating in the home when left alone
- Pacing, whining, panting, trembling as you prepare to leave home



Anxiety in greyhounds



Attention seeking behaviour

Often greyhounds that suffer from separation related issues become 'velcro' hounds that never leave your side and follow you room to room even to the bathroom. They may pester you for attention, by pawing, barking, nudging or leaning on you, or they may always want to be in close physical contact with you.

This attention may appear like affection and it is nice for us, however it does not help your greyhound become more independent or feel secure and less anxious when left alone. To help prepare your dog you need to increase their independence and decrease attention seeking behaviours.

Increasing a greyhound's independence

To help build your greyhound's independence and ability to cope when left alone, it is essential that you ignore all of your dog's attention seeking behaviour. This does not mean that you should ignore your greyhound completely and never give them attention; it means you only initiate attention with your greyhound when they are relaxed.

It can also help if you teach your greyhound to lie on a mat or a bed which is not next to you. If your dog follows you room to room, a baby gate across a door can prevent this, whilst ensuring that your greyhound can see you.

For some greyhounds confinement in crate (also known as an indoor kennel), can help with separation issues but only in cases where they have been trained to enjoy time alone in the crate. Many greyhounds will injure themselves trying to escape from a crate if they have not been trained to accept it as a safe place to relax.



Anxiety in greyhounds

Destructive Behaviour

If your greyhound has destructive behaviour such as chewing door frames, digging up flooring, or ripping and shredding objects while you are away, it may be that your greyhound is frustrated or bored by your absence. To help avoid this destructive behaviour it can be useful to provide your greyhound with something to do in your absence.

If your greyhound is destructive or barks in your absence, providing them with a chew toy such as a stuffed kong or feeding your dog using an activity feeder can help occupy them. You will need to find out what food your greyhound likes best and which will keep them busy trying to get it out of the toy.

For most greyhounds the smellier the food the better! Foods like meat paste, dog friendly peanut butter (ensure it doesn't contain xylitol), cheese spread or pieces of liver sausage tend to work well. Once your greyhound has got the hang of how to get the food out of the toy, you can always stuff it then freeze it, which will mean your greyhound will have to work harder and longer to get the food out.

If your greyhound destroys items, you can provide a number of items which they can safely destroy such as cardboard boxes (any staples removed), the cardboard inside of a kitchen/toilet roll or old material.

House Soiling

If your greyhound urinates or soils in the home when you are absent, it may be that your dog is not fully house trained or that you have left them alone for too long with a full bladder.

To avoid house soiling, make sure that you take your greyhound outside on a lead before you leave the house and encourage them to toilet outside. Once they have toileted, praise them and give them a food treat.

If accidents continue to happen, you will need to go back to house training your greyhound.

Fears and Phobias

Some greyhounds can develop fears and phobias, such as thunderstorms and loud noises which can trigger anxiety in your greyhound when you are absent. If your greyhound has a known fear or phobia you will need to help them overcome this.

It is advisable that you contact a suitably qualified dog trainer or behaviourist who will help you with a training plan to overcome your greyhound's fears.



Anxiety in greyhounds



Separation Anxiety

In full blown cases of separation anxiety, it is likely that your greyhound will become increasingly anxious as you prepare to leave the house.

Greyhounds are very good at picking up the signs that indicate you are about to leave the house. These are called departure cues and can be as simple as picking up your keys or bag or putting on your coat. These cues are what trigger your greyhounds anxiety and tell them you are about to leave.

Speak to your vet if you need additional help, they can put you in touch with a qualified clinical behaviourist.

Punishment - why you should not punish

Upon your return home, if you find that your greyhound has been destructive, soiled or urinated in the house, it is imperative that you do not punish them by shouting or physical means; your greyhound will not know what they have done wrong. Contrary to popular belief, rubbing your greyhound's nose in their faeces or urine will not teach them that they have done wrong; it will only serve to make them afraid of you.

Greyhounds do not make the association between events separated by a few minutes, so they are unable to make a connection between unwanted behaviour in your absence and your anger upon return. Your return home is significant to your greyhound and it only takes a few occasions of verbal or physical punishment to make your greyhound more anxious about your return. This can lead to a fearful greyhound and the development of other behaviour problems.

What to do if your greyhounds anxiety is not improving?

If your greyhound is showing signs of separation issues which are not improving, it is advisable to seek advice from us, your vet or a suitably qualified behaviourist. Your vet can recommend medication which may help your greyhound to cope and may recommend a behaviourist to support with a practical plan.



Crating your greyhound

An indoor kennel often referred to as a 'crate', is a safe place for your greyhound to rest and sleep.

It takes the place of your greyhound's bed and must be introduced slowly and carefully to your greyhound so that they create good associations with the crate, and does not feel anxious going into it.

Crates come in different shapes and sizes; the most common type is a collapsible metal cage with a plastic base and one or two doors on the side and/or end.

Whatever type of crate you choose, it should be big enough to accommodate food, a water bowl, and chews as well as some comfortable bedding for your greyhound to sleep on.

It should also be big enough for your greyhound to stand up, sit, turn around in and lay flat on their side with their legs stretched out, without being cramped.



Notes



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