

From the Track To the Couch

**A Guide To Caring For
Your Retired Racer**



Courtesy of
Bay Area Greyhound Adoptions, Inc.



Bay Area Greyhound Adoptions, Inc.

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CARING FOR YOUR GREYHOUND

Caring for your greyhound is just like caring for any other dog with a few exceptions. Greyhounds have a unique body type, and because they were raised and trained to be professional athletes, they are not familiar with things other dogs are exposed to from the time they were puppies. Greyhounds have been handled and have been around other dogs from birth, so they easily adapt to their new home environments and do well in homes with other non-aggressive dogs.

INTRODUCTION TO YOUR HOME

It is a big adjustment for your greyhound to go from life in the racing kennel to life in your home. He will have to adjust to many things he has never before seen. Everything he is used to will be gone. His going out schedule will be different, his food will be different and he will not have the company of other greyhounds to comfort him when he is frightened. Understand this and be patient with your greyhound. Do not expect perfection.



When you first bring your greyhound home, allow him to explore the house while on a lead, then go to the potty area while still on the lead. When he has relieved himself, praise him and then go back inside the house. You should expect some whining, pacing, and nervousness at first. Your greyhound may not eat well for a few days. This is normal. He may also have some loose stool until he settles in. He may shred papers, (some racing kennels use shredded paper for bedding); so don't leave papers you care about lying around. He may steal items from around the house and take them to his bed or crate. Do not punish him for a potty accident. Tell him "no" and lead him outside to the potty area, then praise him.

Some of the things your greyhound has never been exposed to are stairs, pools, tile floors, mirrors, and vacuum cleaners. All of these things can be frightening to a greyhound.

STAIRS:

Because they have been raised in kennels, greyhounds have never seen stairs. You will need to help your greyhound up the stairs and hold him while he comes down the first few times. Greyhounds do not at first have depth perception to see the stairs coming down, so your greyhound may try to

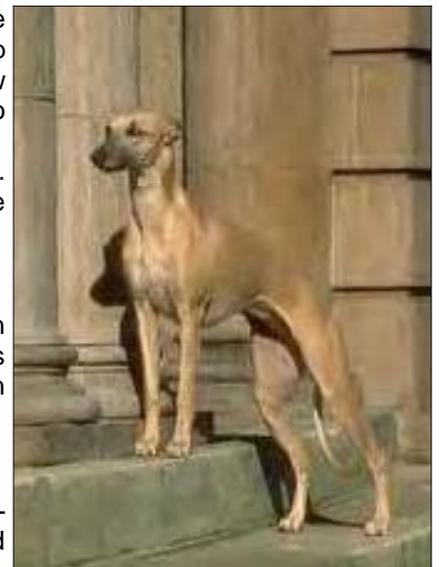
leap. Be careful to hold him coming down so he takes only one stair at a time. Greyhounds learn to negotiate stairs readily and within a few days, they will be running up and down the stairs as if they had always done it.

WINDOWS AND SLIDING GLASS DOORS:

Again, because they have been raised in kennels, greyhounds have never seen large expanses of glass and do not understand that windows and sliding glass doors are solid objects. Place decals or a piece of tape at your greyhound's eye level on any glass doors or windows so he doesn't run into them by accident.

POOLS:

Greyhounds have never been exposed to pools and do not understand that it is water. They may, at first, try to walk across your pool! Walk your greyhound around your pool and splash water up as you go. It is also a good idea to show him where the steps are in case he should accidentally fall in. Greyhounds can swim, but are not particularly good swimmers. To be safe, do not leave your greyhound unattended by the pool until you are sure he understands that it is water and that he will not walk too close to the edge and fall in.



COUNTER SURFING:

Because greyhounds are tall, they can easily reach a kitchen counter. Your greyhound will have no idea that food left on your counter is not meant for him! We suggest that you do not leave food on a tabletop or counter while your greyhound is left unattended. If he tries to counter surf, a sharp "NO" usually works fine. If he is persistent, while telling him "No" squirt him with a spray bottle filled with cold water.

TRASH CANS:

Trash cans have all sorts of enticing smells for dogs. If you do not already have one, we suggest you purchase a trashcan with a tight-fitting lid, or put your trashcan in a cupboard or closet.

TILE FLOORS:

Greyhounds have never walked on tile, hardwood floors, or other slick surfaces and may, at first, be afraid to walk on these surfaces. Be gentle and patient. It is helpful to place several small rugs or towels down at first if your greyhound is afraid, and gradually remove them as your greyhound learns to negotiate the slick surface.

MIRRORS:

Since greyhounds have not been raised in homes, they have never seen mirrors. They may be fascinated when they first see the other dog in the mirror, and may even bark at it! This doesn't last very long, and they quickly learn to ignore mirrors in their new homes.



FEEDING YOUR GREYHOUND

MEALS:

We recommend feeding twice a day, morning and evening. Use a high feeder (about 15"-16"). It will be much more comfortable for your greyhound to eat this way, and will help to prevent bloat. Feed a good quality dry dog food. Always check the ingredients on the label.



Avoid dog foods with corn as the #1 ingredient, or with by products or beet pulp listed as ingredients. Most greyhounds will need an "adult maintenance" type of kibble. If your greyhound tends to gobble his food, you might want to purchase dog food with a larger kibble size. This is important in preventing your greyhound from swallowing his food without chewing, and the chewing action helps to clean the teeth.

When they first come from the racing kennels, some greyhounds tend to be "gulpers", meaning they eat so fast that they gulp their food. This can be dangerous as your greyhound could choke. Using large size kibble and a little warm water (enough to moisten the kibble) on your greyhound's food will help. It is also a good idea to stay with your greyhound while he eats, especially if he tends to be a gulper. Most greyhounds gradually learn to eat slower.

The amount of feed your greyhound will need depends on the size and metabolism of your dog. As a general rule, greyhounds will require from 3 1/2 to 4 1/2 cups of dry dog food per day. Most greyhounds are "racing weight" when we receive them from the kennels. They will normally need to gain no more than 3-5 lbs. to be a good pet weight. DO NOT overfeed—It is not healthy for a greyhound to be overweight. They are built to be lean. In general, your greyhound will be the proper weight when you can see only a shadow of rib, but can easily feel the ribs with your hands.

You may want to add a small amount of extra canned dog food, and/or a teaspoon of olive oil, omega 3, or coconut oil to your greyhound's daily diet. This will prevent his hair coat from becoming too dry. You may also periodically add small amounts of vegetables (avoid corn, cucumbers and onions), an egg, cottage cheese, yogurt, cooked rice, potato, or pasta. Any extra ingredients should never comprise more than 10% of your dog's diet. Dry dog foods are made to be nutritionally balanced. If you add too many other ingredients, it will ruin this balance, and may make your dog ill.



TREATS:

The best treats for your dog are Milkbones and other crunchy type biscuits. These are good for their teeth, and greyhounds love them. Just be careful not to feed too many treats, as they are loaded with calories. We DO NOT recommend cow hoofs, pig ears, pork, chicken or turkey bones. They have lots of bacteria that can make your greyhound sick. Also, your dog can break a tooth on cow hoofs or bones, and could swallow pieces of chicken and turkey bones. Greenies and Denta-Stix are a good choice for treats since they help to clean your dog's teeth. Rawhides can also be a problem since your dog can sometimes bite a piece off and possibly choke on it. With any treat, it is important to check the label and make sure that you are only giving products manufactured in the United States. The manufacture of pet treats from other countries is not as regulated as in this country and could be manufactured using chemicals harmful to pets.

GROOMING YOUR GREYHOUND

BATHS:

Grooming your greyhound is a simple process. Because greyhounds have no undercoat, they have less dander than other breeds, and have no doggie odor. They need only occasional baths (every few months). Use a mild dog shampoo such as oatmeal shampoo or Adams Shampoo, which contains Pyrethrin and is safe for greyhounds. Unless it is very hot weather, your greyhound should always be bathed with warm water. It is a good idea to rinse twice to make sure you get all the shampoo out. Towel dry and you are finished!



BRUSHING:

Once or twice a week, use a soft brush or hound glove to remove any dead hair. Greyhounds shed very little, but regular grooming will keep even the small amount they shed to a minimum.

EARS:

Use a cotton ball dampened with an ear cleaner to clean your greyhound's ears once every couple of weeks. Ear cleaners or ear wipes are available at pet supply stores.

TEETH:

We suggest brushing your greyhound's teeth with a soft toothbrush two to three times a week (every day would be even better) to prevent any tartar build-up. You may want to use a dog toothpaste available from pet supply stores. Never use toothpaste meant for humans, as it will make your greyhound sick. We also recommend a product called Pet-Z-Life, which is a gel that is available at some pet supply stores or can be ordered on-line. Providing your greyhound regularly with Milkbones, nylabones, Greenies, Denta-Stix, and other crunchy treats will also help to remove tartar.

NAILS:

A greyhound's nails should be trimmed about once a month. Clippers are available at pet supply stores. Our adoption counselors or your vet can show you how to trim your dog's nails. A Dremmel woodworking tool also works well to sand off the nail. You may choose to have your vet or a groomer accomplish this task.

FLEA AND TICK CONTROL:

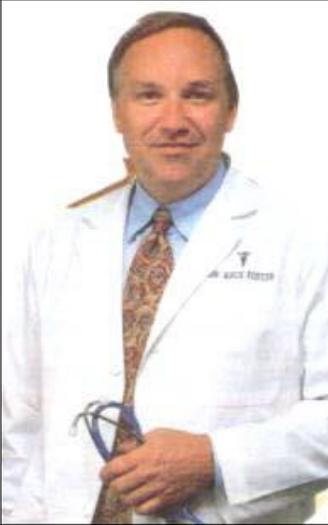
When you adopt your greyhound, he will already have been treated for fleas and ticks.

Your greyhound may, however, pick up fleas from the grass or pick up ticks if you take him into wooded areas. There are excellent products on the market, and if you use them correctly, you should never see ticks or fleas on your greyhound or in your house. Frontline, K9 Advantix, Nexgard, Simparica, and other products work for both fleas and ticks. There is also a tick collar by the name of Preventic that is safe for greyhounds and works well for ticks. Ticks will usually be found on the feet, between your dog's toes, or in your dog's ears. Remove the tick with tweezers or dab alcohol on them. Dispose of any ticks you find immediately by placing them in alcohol.



INSECTICIDE:

Greyhounds are very sensitive to insecticides as are all sight hounds. The reason for this is that they have very low body fat and the toxin goes into their bloodstream quickly. Be very careful when you are using insecticides on your lawn. Make sure the grass and shrubbery is completely dry after spraying chemicals before allowing your greyhound to go out. We also do not suggest that you use flea collars or flea spray on greyhounds unless you use a Pyrethrin-based product such as Adams Mist.



VETS:

It is important to use a veterinarian that is familiar with greyhounds. Their body type is different from most dogs and their blood work is also somewhat different. Greyhounds have larger hearts than other dogs of the same size as well as a much lower percentage of body fat than most breeds. For this reason, greyhounds are very sensitive to anesthesia and need much less anesthesia than other dogs of the same weight. The dosage of anesthesia given to another breed of dog would be lethal to a greyhound. Before you adopt, it is a good idea to discuss this with your vet and make sure he or she is familiar with the special needs of greyhounds. Our adoption counselors will also be able to recommend greyhound-savvy vets, or you may want to check the "Vets Page" on our website for more information and a list of veterinarians in your area that are familiar with the special medical needs of greyhounds.

HEAT AND COLD:

Because of their low body fat and short hair coats, greyhounds are very sensitive to extremes of heat and cold. They cannot be kept outdoors and are indoor pets only. Be very careful in the summer not to exercise your greyhound in the heat of the day. Trips to dog parks or exercise walks during the summer

should be limited to the early morning or evening hours. Never ever leave any dog in an automobile with the windows rolled up. Even if it is only 70 degrees outside, temperatures inside a closed automobile can quickly rise to 120 degrees or more.

Even in mild climates like Florida, there are some days where it is cool enough that your greyhound will need a coat. The general rule is that when you need a jacket to go out, so does your greyhound. You may purchase a lightweight jacket suitable for greyhounds from us, or you can find a variety of greyhound coats on-line. Dog coats that you may find in pet supply stores are not made for a greyhound's unique body type and will usually not fit correctly. You should, of course, never leave your greyhound outdoors in cold weather.



VACCINES AND WORMING:

The State of Florida requires a rabies vaccination. Three-year rabies vaccines are now available and are recommended. Your greyhound will have had his or her rabies and other vaccines before your adopt. You will need to have your vet administer most vaccines annually. Check with your vet for recommended vaccines in your area as strains of influenza and other viruses can change from year to year.

Before you adopted your greyhound, he tested negative for worms or was treated for worms if necessary. Your greyhound might pick up worms after being placed in your home. Tapeworms can be seen in the stool. They are white and are usually moving. A dog can get tapeworms by ingesting an infected flea. Hookworms, round worms, and whipworms are detected by your vet's inspection of a stool sample under a microscope. Treatment will depend on the type of worms. Your vet will be able to recommend an appropriate worming product.

HEARTWORMS

Heartworms can only be detected by a blood test, and are contracted from the mosquito. Because we have mosquitoes throughout the year here in Florida, it is imperative that you keep your greyhound on heartworm preventative all year. Heartworms are extremely dangerous. As their name implies, heartworms invade your dog's heart and can kill if left untreated. Even if caught in the early stages, the treatment is expensive and very difficult for your dog to endure.

There are several good products on the market to protect your greyhound against heartworms. Heartguard Plus,

Interceptor, Sentinal, and Trifexis are given in the form of a monthly pill or chewable tablet. Other good choices are Advantage Multi and Revolution, which are spot-on treatments that take care of heartworm, fleas, and also contain a wormer. For more information, check with your veterinarian about heartworm prevention for your greyhound.



COLLARS & LEASHES

Because greyhounds and other sight hounds, (dogs that hunt by sight instead of by scent), have heads and necks virtually the same size, a regular buckle collar can easily slip over a greyhound's head. This can be very dangerous, so we do not recommend that you use a buckle collar to walk your greyhound. Martingale-type collars have an extra loop, which will tighten slightly when pulled, and are the only safe type of collar for a greyhound. When you adopt your greyhound from our organization, you will receive a martingale-type collar and leash set. You may also purchase a fancy-type martingale collar from us, or you can find a variety of martingale collars on-line. While in the house, keep a regular buckle collar with tags on your greyhound at all times. If your greyhound slips out of his fenced yard or gets out the front door accidentally, you will have a way to identify him and will have a much better chance of having him returned to you quickly.

MICROCHIPS

Your greyhound was microchipped prior to adoption. You will have information in your adoption packet on how to change the microchip registration into your name. Please do this immediately as this is the best way to insure that your greyhound will be safely returned to you should he inadvertently get loose.

CRATING AND HOUSE TRAINING:

Greyhounds are trained not to soil their crates and are used to going out to potty on a regular schedule, usually four to five times each day at the racing kennel. It is normally an easy process to housetrain your greyhound if you will follow these few simple steps.

The most important thing you can do is to establish a routine schedule and stick to it as much as possible. Take your greyhound out at regular intervals and feed at the same times each day. Your greyhound will need to go out when he first gets up in the morning, 20-30 minutes after being fed, when you first get home in the afternoon, and before bedtime. Take your greyhound on a leash to the same spot to potty, usually in your back yard. Praise him when he eliminates. Your greyhound needs to learn the difference between potty walks and exercise walks. A good way to accomplish this is to take your greyhound to your back yard to potty and then go out the front door to begin your exercise walk.



We will loan you a crate for a short period of time (usually 30 days) to help establish your greyhound's potty schedule. You may only need to use the crate for a few days, but it will help your greyhound to feel safe in his new environment. Remember that crates are not cruel and they are not punishment. They are a training tool and should be viewed as such. Your greyhound lived in a crate in his racing kennel, so he is quite comfortable there. Until your dog is completely house trained, do not allow him the run of the house.

Crate your greyhound for the first few days when you cannot keep an eye on him or when you are away from home. Once your greyhound is doing well in the house, begin using a baby gate to sequester him in one room while you are gone. Always use a baby gate for this. NEVER leave a greyhound alone in a room behind a closed door. Try leaving your greyhound in one room for an hour or two and lengthen the time until you can leave him all day. Only when your greyhound is doing fine with this arrangement should you leave him loose in the house.

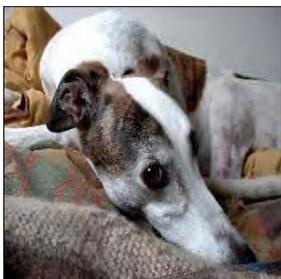


SEPARATION ANXIETY:

Greyhounds, as well as many other dogs, may exhibit symptoms of separation anxiety when you are away. Because greyhounds have never been alone in their lives, they can become frightened when they are left alone. Separation anxiety is exhibited by a perfectly housetrained dog peeing or defecating in the house, by chewing on the furniture or other objects, barking, panting and pacing while you are away. Your dog is not trying to be destructive. He is frightened and very stressed. It will do no good to punish your dog when you get home. He will not understand, and it will only make matters worse. Some of the positive things you can do to help a dog that has separation anxiety are:

- Get your greyhound used to being alone gradually. Leave him for short periods of time and gradually extend the time. Do not make a big deal out of leaving your dog.

- Change your dog's anticipation of your leaving by changing your routine. For example, if your dog becomes anxious when you pick up your keys, try picking up your keys and then go watch TV.
- Use a crate or a baby gate to sequester your greyhound in a small area, and gradually extend the area.
- Leave a radio or TV playing while you are away. It will be soothing for your dog.
- If your greyhound has a tendency to chew, use a turnout muzzle while you are away. Our organization can provide the correct type of muzzle.
- Use a Kong or other toys to keep your dog occupied while you are away.
- If necessary, use of a pheromone dispenser will often help.
- In extreme cases, it sometimes may help to get a second dog as a companion. Tranquilizing medication is also available from your vet.



THUNDER STORMS:

Here in Florida, we have to contend with almost daily thunderstorms in the summer. Many greyhounds are frightened by thunder and lightning, and may become anxious long before a storm as they begin sensing the change in barometric pressure which signals a coming storm. Often something simple like leaving a closet door or his crate open will help. He will want to be close to you for comfort. "Thunder Shirts" work for some dogs but not others. They give your dog comfort by wrapping snugly around him. Thunder Shirts are available in most pet supply stores or can be purchased on line. In severe cases, you may want to try mild tranquilizers such as Tranquil, Composure, Zylkene, or Rescue Remedy. If necessary, your vet can recommend a stronger medication..

GREYHOUNDS AND CATS:

Most greyhounds can live harmoniously with cats; however you must take certain precautions. Always use a muzzle when introducing your greyhound and your cat, even if the greyhound previously lived in a foster home with cats. We will loan you a muzzle for this initial introduction. Do not leave the greyhound and the family cat unattended until you know that they are OK together. If your cat goes to the vet, reintroduce your greyhound to the cat. The cat may have a different smell and your greyhound will not recognize that it is the family cat. If your greyhound attempts to chase your cat, even while playing, discourage this behavior immediately by using a squirt bottle filled with ice water on your greyhound while giving him a sharp "No". Your greyhound will probably attempt to eat the cat's food. Your cat and greyhound should be fed in separate areas and the cat's food should be kept out of the greyhound's reach. Even if your greyhound and cat are best buddies in the house, it is not safe to let your greyhound and cat out in the back yard together. A greyhound has such a strong chase instinct, that any small moving object that runs across the yard, (including your cat), may be perceived as prey.



GREYHOUNDS AND CHILDREN:

Because of their gentle, docile natures, greyhounds normally adapt well in homes with quiet, well-behaved children. Small children should be watched at all times when they are with the greyhound to ensure that they do not fall on the Greyhound or disturb him while he is asleep or while he is eating. Children should be taught to be gentle and never to tug on the greyhound's ears or tail, never to play roughly with him, and never to scream or shout around him. Some greyhounds have a tendency to exhibit "sleep startle", which means that they can possibly snap and snarl if they are startled while sleeping. This behavior does not mean that the greyhound is mean or aggressive, but that he has become frightened. For this reason, greyhounds should be left alone while they are asleep. You should always make sure that your greyhound is fully awake before attempting to pet him. Remember that greyhounds have not been raised with children and may be frightened by sudden movements, loud noises, the sound of a baby crying, or a child screaming. Greyhounds are also used to being left alone while they are eating, so you will need to teach your children to leave the greyhound alone until he finishes his dinner.

By nature, greyhounds are couch potatoes most of the time and they need "down time" each day away from an active family. If you have very young children visiting, a good idea is to sequester your greyhound in a location away from the children, such as behind a baby gate.

GREYHOUND EAR TATTOOS:

All racing greyhounds are registered with the National Greyhound Association in Abilene, Kansas. When your greyhound was about three months old, his ears were tattooed along with the other puppies in his litter. The tattoos will be necessary when the greyhound begins his racing career to determine that the correct dog enters each race.

The number tattooed in your greyhound's left ear is his litter number. His right ear will contain 2 or 3 numbers and a letter. The numbers indicate the month and year your greyhound was whelped (born). Each puppy is tattooed with a different letter such as "A", "B", "C", etc.

If your greyhound gets out without his collar and tags, he can be identified by his ear tattoos. For this reason, it is important to have your greyhound's registration transferred into your name as soon as possible after you adopt him. His registration transfer will cost \$30, payable to the National Greyhound Association.



EXTRA HELPFUL HINTS:

- DO NOT chain or tie your greyhound to a fixed object.
- DO keep your greyhound on a leash unless he is indoors or in a totally fenced area.
- DO NOT use a retractable leash on a greyhound.
- DO NOT take your greyhound out every couple of hours. Instead, establish a regular feeding, exercise, and potty schedule.
- DO NOT give your greyhound (or any other dog) any chocolate, raisins, or macadamia nuts.
- DO use an elevated food bowl for your greyhound.
- DO NOT allow your greyhound to strenuously exercise immediately before or after meals.
- DO NOT over feed your greyhound. A shadow of rib should show.
- DO NOT place your greyhound in a room and close the door. Use a baby gate if you want to leave him in a separate area of the house.
- DO NOT exercise your greyhound in the heat of the day.
- DO wake your greyhound before attempting to pet him.
- DO NOT bathe your greyhound too often. This will dry out his skin.
- DO brush your greyhound's teeth as often as possible.

For more information, please go to our website:

www.bayareagreyhounds.org or call us at 813/272-2332 (Tampa area) or 239/985-9035 (Cape Coral/Fort Myers area).

