



Greyhound Adoptions WA

# HANDBOOK

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# Introduction

Greyhound Adoptions WA is a not for profit organisation dedicated to saving the lives of failed racing greyhounds. Our members in their entirety are volunteers who have jobs, homes, and families. Each and every one work tirelessly in their spare time coordinating the re homing of the dogs from the trainer to foster care or adoption. Greyhound Adoptions WA receive no government funding or backing, money raised is through donations and fund raising only.

Undoubtedly you will get a lot of advice - good and bad - from other greyhound adopters! Read and research as much as you can to prepare yourself for your new family member. Understand that sometimes you may need to try more than one approach to a problem because every greyhound is an individual. Don't be afraid to ask questions. Our goal is to find the greyhounds their 'forever homes', so we are interested in helping you troubleshoot any problems - the sooner the better!

Please note this handbook is for use as a guide only and should not replace professional advice. Dog owners are encouraged to educate themselves on local laws regarding responsible dog ownership. See the Department of Local Government and Communities website: <http://dlg.wa.gov.au/Content/Community/Dogownership/DogLaws.aspx>

Most of all, be prepared to give and receive more love and affection than you ever thought possible.

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# The history of the greyhound

## Greyhounds in the Middle Ages



Prior to the Middle Ages, it appeared as though these swift hounds lost their place among the great halls of the privileged, especially when many famines swept the lands. Yet the resilient breed over time once again endeared themselves to royalty, and again became features in their courts. Moreover, the nobles became so enamoured of their phenomenal hunting dogs that it was a capital offense to kill a greyhound. Human life at times was valued less than the life of one such dog. Before long, commoners were forbidden from owning these dogs, and it was only the noble who had permission from the King to own and breed greyhounds.

## Greyhounds in the Age of Enlightenment & Industrialization



As the middle ages gave way to the age of enlightenment, the status of the greyhound did not significantly shift. Although they were no longer valued above human life, they were still considered one of the premier status symbols that a man of means could aspire to. This explains their presence in many of the portraits commissioned by the wealthy and notable clientele of the famous painters of the age.

Before long the hunt was no longer considered a worthwhile endeavour and the man of means became the man of business. While balancing ledgers and overseeing factories, the highly bred sporting dogs were put to use in the arenas of sports, where their agility once again became a highly prized asset. What may have originally been little more than a friendly competition amongst business rivals soon turned into a fully-fledged gaming venture; dog racing soon rivalled horse racing in popularity. When in the past gentlemen may have consulted the horseflesh at Tattersall's, they now discussed the merits of the likes of Snowball, one of the most famous racing greyhounds that impressed onlookers with an astonishing speed.

## The rising popularity of greyhound racing



England is credited with being the originating nation for modern day greyhound racing. In Hendon, a mechanical device was employed to persuade six hounds to race at top speeds down a predetermined straightaway. Since this did not provide the hoped-for results, operators of the racing track reverted to the use of a live jackrabbit as incentive for the hounds to race at top speed.

Before long, greyhound racing ceased to be a gentleman's sport only and soon working-class folks were betting alongside the magnates of industry and blue-blooded lords. California's Owen Patrick Smith brought the sport to America and in the 1900s he perfected the mechanical lure that made the demise of the jackrabbit unnecessary. The first track using Patrick's invention was in Emeryville, California. Round racing tracks became the norm in the United States, then made it to England, and from there also had an introduction to Ireland as well as Australia. When Governor Phillip arrived in Australia with the first colonists in 1778 he also bought Greyhounds with him.

## A racing dog's life

Living life as a racing greyhound is radically different from that of your normal pampered pooch. Puppies are given a lot of attention and handled as much as possible and encouraged to socialise and play with their litter mates. At around three months of age, they receive two tattoos, one in each ear. At about 12 months they begin basic training and must learn to identify the mechanical lure and then give chase. They are trained to properly start from a crate and not become distracted. At the end of the two-year training period the greyhounds are evaluated for their ability to run the entire track in a satisfactory period of time. The sad reality of the greyhound racing business dictates that unproductive dogs; those which are either not fast enough to win races consistently or which become hurt - are euthanised. If they fail to earn money for their kennel and owners, they have become a liability instead of an asset, and the racing business does not retain unprofitable dogs

# Frequently asked questions

## **What kind of pets do ex-racing greyhounds make?**

Greyhounds are affectionate, friendly dogs who thrive on attention and human companionship and make terrific pets. Raised with their litter mates, where they competed for affection, greyhounds love becoming the centre of attention as household pets. Greyhounds do not usually make good watch dogs. Their friendly nature is not very threatening.

## **Will I need lots of space?**

The greyhound can live fairly well in a suburban backyard. Despite being fast dogs, they do not need long daily walks because they are sprinters not endurance dogs. Nonetheless, like all dogs, regular walks are important.

## **Are they good with children?**

More so than most breeds. Being a mature dog means they are not as playful as puppies, but they are very tolerant of children and will usually walk away rather than growl or snap if children become overbearing. This is not to say that they can't be tormented for long periods of time and still not growl or snap. Even a gentle greyhound has its limits.

## **How are they with other pets?**

Greyhounds are friendly by nature and socialise well as a result of encounters with other Greyhounds in the racing kennel. Cats are unknown to a greyhound and a little extra time and care is required to make a happy home for all.

## **If I already have a dog, should I get a greyhound of the opposite sex?**

Not necessarily. The individual personalities of the dogs matter more than the sex. If your current dog is very dominant, you would want a greyhound that is more on the submissive side, and vice versa. Greyhound Adoptions WA can provide guidance on selecting the right match for your family, and we will have the dogs meet to make sure they are compatible.

## **How old are retired greyhounds and what is their life expectancy?**

The retired racers are usually between two and four years old. These pure-bred athletes enjoy many years of good health. With proper care, they have a life expectancy of 12 years or more.

## **Are ex-racing greyhounds already housebroken?**

Frequently an adopted greyhound is already housebroken. In their kennel environment, they are turned out three or four times a day to relieve themselves. Therefore, racing greyhounds are kennel-broken, which means they're trained to go outside and keep their kennels clean. Walk them frequently at first, and they quickly learn that their new home is the place they keep clean and outside is where they go to relieve themselves.

## **How big do they get?**

Greyhound males generally stand 71-76cm tall at the shoulder and weigh between 29-36kg. Females generally stand 68-71cm tall at the shoulder and weigh between 27-31kg. Some lines are larger and have reached 40-45kg.

## **How fast can they run?**

A combination of long, powerful legs, deep chest, flexible spine and slim build allows the greyhound to reach average race speeds in excess of 63 kilometres per hour. The greyhound can reach a full speed of 70 kilometres per hour within 30 metres or 6 strides from the boxes. The only other mammal that can accelerate faster over a short distance is the cheetah, which can reach speeds of 109 kilometres per hour over 3-4 strides from a standing start.

## **Why are they good for people with allergies?**

The structure of a greyhound's short and almost odourless coat, which only moults (coats in greyhound language) to a small degree means that greyhounds can be suitable to live successfully with people who are otherwise generally allergic to dogs.

## **Why do Greyhounds have to wear muzzles?**

Greyhounds can be very competitive while racing. Muzzles are necessary to provide protection while racing and deters any snapping, nipping, or biting during a race. Even after adoption, if you have more than one greyhound running together, it is best to let them run under muzzle to deter any altercations.

## **Do they ride well in the car?**

Most greyhounds do ride well in the car. Many have been transported on dog haulers to different tracks during their career.

## **Why are greyhounds tattooed?**

Ear branding is an identification code using a tattooed number inside each ear of a greyhound. All greyhounds in Australia that are eligible to be registered to race are ear branded at around 12 weeks of age. This system enables each dog to be individually identified to ensure no swapping of greyhounds can occur during racing. There are different systems of ear branding used around the world. Each state in Australia uses a different number and letter combination to identify each dog.

# Foster a Greyhound

Most if not all of the greyhounds on the re-homing program have spent their entire lives in an enclosure with limited human interaction. They have never climbed stairs, heard a television or interacted with any other breed of dog.

As a foster carer, your assistance in helping the greyhound adjust to household life speeds up the process of finding him a forever home. This may include toilet training, lead walking and socialisation.

Many ex racing greyhounds adjust quickly to a household routine, and the degree of adjustment varies with each individual dog. Our aim is to attract foster carers that are willing to not only provide food, shelter and exercise for the dog, but to provide for the dogs mental and emotional needs as well.

Because greyhounds are brought onto the program when a foster carer has been established, it can be a huge strain on volunteers to find another placement if

potential foster carers have second thoughts at the last minute, or realise it's not for them. Our foster carers do an amazing job and are truly valued; they are also committed and willing to do what needs to be done to improve the dog's chances of getting a forever home.

Points to consider:

- ✓ We are able to have a dog ie: renting or strata conditions
- ✓ We are in a financial situation to cover cost of food and bedding
- ✓ We have the time or ability to exercise the dog
- ✓ We have adequate fencing
- ✓ We have adequate shelter through summer and winter when the dog is outside

Greyhound Adoptions WA hold regular events where the public can meet the greyhounds available for adoption.

Foster carers will be notified by email of all upcoming events and are encouraged to attend with their foster dog. All events are posted weekly on our Facebook page and website.

Foster carers will also be required to interact with potential adopters as you will eventually know the dog better than anyone. Potential adopters may also want to visit the dog which means foster carers are expected to accommodate this. You will be kept informed throughout the process of the adoption. Please note that your foster grey must remain in your care at all times. Permanent placements or relocations will be coordinated by Greyhound Adoptions WA. (including day or overnight stays with potential adopters).

All greyhounds come with lead, collar and muzzle. A winter coat is also provided for foster use only. If your foster greyhound has come straight from the vet after desexing there will be included flea and worm treatment. (worm tablets to be taken all at once)

Any medical care while in foster care will be covered by Greyhound Adoptions WA.

# Adopt a Greyhound

Apart from the basic needs of food, shelter and health care, owning a dog isn't the same as owning a guinea pig. If you have decided that you want to bring a dog into your family, you need to be sure that all members of the family are on board and the timing is right.

Some points to consider might include:

- ✓ We are able to have a dog ie: renting or strata conditions
- ✓ We are ready for a commitment of between 10-15years
- ✓ We are in a financial situation to cover costs of food and veterinary care
- ✓ We have the time or ability to exercise a dog
- ✓ We have adequate shelter through summer and winter when the dog is outside
- ✓ We have the leadership qualities required for owning a dog
- ✓ We have considered possible hurdles for example digging, toilet training or barking
- ✓ We have considered who looks after the dog if we go away



## Commitment and responsibility are key ingredients in pet ownership

A dog's temperament is a direct result of the owner's ability to understand him and give him what he instinctually needs as a canine animal. Every family has its own needs, schedule, personality, medical problems, space and time limitations. When you get a dog, it is a life-long commitment, and should not be treated like a piece of furniture that you can just get rid of when you get tired of it, can't control behaviour, or your lifestyle changes and the dog is simply 'in the way'. Greyhound Adoptions WA endeavour to work closely with foster carers in assisting with preparation for adoption. Issues vary with individual dogs and their behaviour can be different from home to home so it is vital that the dog understands the rules from the start. A dog is not a robot, it is a pack animal that will not function without leadership and direction.

Greyhound Adoptions WA encourage 'forever homes' and require potential adopters to be 100% sure of their commitment, relationship breakups, job changes, relocations, and new babies happen. If you can't be as close to certain as humanly possible that your retired racer will be part of your life for all of his life, don't adopt. If you can meet all these requirements and bring a dog into your life, the rewards can be immeasurable. If you are not in the position to adopt, try fostering first.

## Adoption process

Before a greyhound is recommended, it is important for us to understand what your family is about. This will include children, working hours, and other pets.

Once a potential match has been established, a meet and greet with the greyhound is arranged at a convenient time for both the foster carer and adopter, including introductions to existing animals and other members of the family.

Arrangements will be made for the greyhound to be collected by the adopter or delivered to his/her new family by a Greyhound Adoptions WA member. The greyhound will come with a collar, lead and muzzle.

If, during the cooling off period, you feel the dog is unsuitable for any reason, you will contact Greyhound Adoptions WA and arrange a mutually convenient time to deliver him/her and all relevant paperwork, lead, collar and muzzle to a pre-determined Greyhound Adoptions WA Carer. Adoption fee if applicable, will be returned in full minus a \$25 administration fee.

The adoption fee must be paid in full before or on the day of collection unless alternate time frames are arranged.

The \$375 adoption fee can be paid in cash, by cheque or direct debit to Greyhound Adoptions WA. Pension rate - \$350.

The greyhound's personal details are mailed to the adopter after the 7-day cooling off period. Papers include: microchip change of ownership, de-sexing certificate and vaccination record.

**Please note that once the dogs have been moved from foster care it is highly likely that a new dog has taken this space. It is very difficult for the dogs to be rehomed in a short period of time if the adoption is not suitable. Your patience and support is appreciated.**

## Bringing your greyhound home

Before the big day, you'll need to make a few preparations. Include the purchases in the list below and prepare your



house for your new family member by removing any fragile knick-knacks, checking your fencing for holes or weak spots, and placing clips or locks on your gates. Clear your kitchen counter of any tempting treats and cover your waste container with a secure lid or place it inside a cabinet. Select his sleeping place and arrange your dog's blanket.

Contact your veterinarian to alert him/her about your new family member, or search for a local vet clinic you would like to join. Discuss greyhound pet rules with all family members, particularly children, to ensure an easy transition period. Review background information about greyhounds and don't hesitate to call Greyhound Adoptions WA if you have any questions.

# Secure your yard



*For lots of dog owners, a nicely fenced backyard where your pup can roam, sniff out interesting things, and snooze in the shade is a must. It's perfect — except when your dog believes the grass is greener elsewhere, and they become a master escape artist. One minute you see them from the kitchen window, the next, they're gone.*

*For diggers, you can use chicken wire, hardware cloth, or a piece of chain-link fence attached to the base of the fence. Some people bury it for aesthetic reasons. But you can also lay it on top of the grass and hold it down with rocks, gravel, mulch, or even planters.*

*Remove climbing aids such as wood piles, benches and chairs from fence lines.*

*Replace your standard gate hinges with self-closing gate hinges, available at most home improvement stores or fence suppliers.*

*Replace your standard gate latch with a latch that you can lock.*

*Install a drop rod at the bottom of your gate.*

*Make sure visiting family and friends understand the importance of securing gates and doors when they leave.*

*Any dog that gets out of a yard is not only a hassle but more importantly the dog is a high risk of being hit by a vehicle. Go the extra mile to secure your properties.*

## Shopping list:

- ✓ Dog tag, include dog's name, contact number and address
- ✓ Supply of food
- ✓ Metal dog bowls – 2 litre (raised food and water bowls optional but not essential)
- ✓ Old blankets/ dog bed (frame beds are great for outside)
- ✓ Grooming brush or glove (soft bristled or rubber)
- ✓ Dog coat for winter
- ✓ Tooth brush & tooth paste
- ✓ Play toys

For the Greyhound, adjusting to a new environment can take a few days. The following are a few suggestions to make the transition easier.

- Once you get home, you should first offer the greyhound a chance to relieve itself.
- Allow the dog to explore its new home at its own speed but for the first day on lead, and always under your supervision. It will be much easier to establish good habits early than to correct bad ones later.
- The greyhound may not know stairs when you first bring him home. Start slowly at first taking him up and down two to three steps. On the way down, he may try to take all the steps at once, so stay in front of him so he can only take one at a time. With some patience, he will learn quickly and soon will be climbing stairs like an old pro.
- Sliding glass doors and plate glass windows may be new to him. Take care to introduce him to these obstacles by tapping on the glass to let him know it's there.
- Take precautions when cooking, your stove and counters are at eye level and he will be curious about the food smells.
- This will be a very stressful few days for your greyhound, don't be concerned if he doesn't have much of an appetite for a few days, on the flipside he may eat like he hasn't been fed for a week, try and control food intake by offering small meals throughout the day for a few days. He will probably drink more water than normal and consequently need to go out more often.
- The change of diet and excitement of his new home may cause him to have diarrhoea. Should this occur, give him two teaspoons of Kaopectate every hour for four hours or until the diarrhoea stops. If unsure, give the same dosage as recommended for a small child. A couple of tablespoons of natural yoghurt can also help, if it continues for more than a day, contact one of our Greyhound Adoptions WA team members.

# Greyhounds and other pets

One basic philosophy will describe the way to handle this situation – you're in charge, they're not! When introducing your greyhound to other animals, follow these simple rules.



## Living with other dogs

Introduce them on neutral ground. This means having each dog on a leash and allowing them to meet in an area your other pet doesn't 'own' such as down the block from your house. After the initial sniffing, you should walk the dogs together for a short time and then bring them into the house at the same time, but your existing dog should always walk into the house first. This is almost like having your dog act as a host to the new greyhound. Any sign of growling or aggression should be met with a quick jerk of the leash and a sharp 'NO!'. Although greyhounds are used to sharing attention, your other dog may feel jealous and need a little extra attention. You should always respect the hierarchy of your existing pack order.

The dogs should be fed separately until you feel confident that both dogs are comfortable with each other, don't leave bones or treats around, even an empty bowl can set off a fight. Always use your muzzles on the dogs when in doubt. Once you feel that they have accepted each other, you'll be in for a treat as you watch the two of them play. If your other dog is older or overweight, make sure he doesn't overdo it trying to keep up with his sleek new roommate. The settling-in process usually takes a few months before the dogs really establish themselves and become accustomed to each other. If your other pet is a very small breed, you should supervise play situations closely, especially at first. Your greyhound's playful chase and lunge could be too rough for a toy breed. You'll need to teach him/her otherwise. Remember, you're in charge. Always use the muzzle on the greyhound when introducing your new dog to small animals and this is especially important during play.

## Living with cats

If you are introducing your new greyhound to a cat, you should shut the cat in a room and allow the greyhound to explore the house with his muzzle on. After the initial exploration one adult should take the greyhound on his leash while the other lets the cat out. Keep the dog on a leash and muzzle in place. You don't need to lead the dog, but you should follow him and be able to correct the greyhound holding the leash low and tight if he tries to rush at the cat. Stepping on the leash will also provide a quick and respectful correction for the dog. After the initial introduction, you may remove the leash, but should keep the muzzle on until you feel confident. If your cat is familiar with dogs, this process should go quickly. Cat food has an irresistible smell to dogs and should be placed in a high spot so that the greyhound can't get to it. Litter boxes should be hooded and turned into a corner to ensure peace for the cat and no access for the dog.



## Living with birds

Introduction of the greyhound to a caged bird follows the basic procedures above. Just remember, a severe jerk on the lead and/or collar accompanied by a firm but calm 'NO' will do wonders.

## Children and dogs

Although they are everyone's favourite photographic subject, kids and dogs present special problems for parents. Teaching the new greyhound his manners must go hand-in-hand with teaching the children their manners around the new pet. Please keep in mind that you are dealing with a live, adult animal with all the accompanying instincts and needs. The greyhound is one of the most easy-going dog breeds, but it is nonetheless a dog. In order to establish a loving relationship between greyhound and child, it is a wise idea to review the following ideas and discuss with your child:

- The greyhound is not a toy. It deserves respect and responsible care.
- No living creature would enjoy being pounced on while sleeping.
- Call the dog's name before startling any sleeping dog.



- Some greyhounds sleep with their eyes open, so it's easy to mistake them for being awake.
- If the dog is sleeping, he needs rest. When he's ready to play, he'll let you know.
- Small children often want to express their affection for the pet greyhound by hugging or clinging to the dog. Teach your children that this can be 'scary' for the dog and encourage gentle stroking of the neck and shoulders or brushing instead.
- Ears and tails are private things, not play things.

It is important to reinforce to your dog the idea that children are part of the 'human coaching team', not litter mates. Even though a child may be eye level, your dog must understand that the child is still a human and the dog must respond accordingly. Outdoor games with your greyhound should be closely supervised, especially initially and until both child and dog are fully trained. Instead of running and jumping with your new pet, have your child join you as you stand in place and happily encourage your dog to come to you, with each person taking a turn. This provides exercise for the dog and reminds him that all people are in control - large or small.

The main rule to keep in mind concerning children and dogs is easy - SAFETY FIRST. This applies to both the dog and the kids. Do not leave young children and dogs alone together.

-ANIMAL BEHAVIOUR IS NOT AN EXACT SCIENCE, BE VIGILENT-

# Feeding your greyhound



Breakfast - A light meal, eg 2 cups of biscuits.

Evening Meal - 2 cups of biscuits (your choice of brand) or pasta or rice with 1 cup of vegetables (carrots, cabbage, cooked potatoes, frozen mixed vegetables etc) plus 450g of meat roll (Vital, you can purchase from the supermarket) or pet mince. No cooked bones or ribs of any kind. Chicken carcasses, wings or necks or meat bones can be given raw. As treats, you could occasionally give your greyhound sardines or cooked eggs or other hound treats.

Premium dry foods are the most effective, economical and efficient way of feeding your dog the proteins, vitamins and minerals he needs. In the first instance, buy only a small bag; this saves wastage should your dog not take to that particular brand or flavour. Follow feeding instructions on packaging according to the weight of your dog. Keep an eye on your dog's stools, should they become loose due to a change of food, you may need to think again.

Pick a time that will be convenient enough to allow you to let your dog out about twelve hours after feeding to relieve himself (usually 6:00 am & 6:00 pm). Monitor your dog's eating habits. It is not unusual for a new greyhound to refuse to eat for a day or two. Pick up any wet food not eaten in 10 minutes and discard. Otherwise for dry food, save what is not eaten for the next meal. Repeat this routine at the next feeding and your greyhound will quickly learn mealtime limitations. Watch for itchy, flaky skin. Cold, dry weather can irritate a greyhound's skin.

During the dry winter months, add one to two tablespoons of fish oil, cod liver oil or Vita Shine to their food.

Treat your dog with carefully selected snacks such as pig's ears, cow hooves, & biscuits. Denta-bones, tartar busters are also excellent treats.

- DON'T let your greyhound eat everything in sight. Greyhounds generally have excellent appetites and will eat anything. Unfortunately, everything doesn't quite agree with them. Despite what advertisers would have us believe, your greyhound will be happiest with the same food every meal.
- DON'T let your greyhound drink large quantities of water or exercise immediately before or after eating; allow at least one hour. All deep-chested dogs, including greyhounds, are susceptible to bloat, a condition that can be fatal.
- DON'T be surprised if your new pet expects you to share your banana as you slice it for your cereal. Your greyhound may have eaten bananas, apricots, pumpkin, applesauce, spinach, marshmallows, apples, broccoli, and even vanilla ice-cream and jelly doughnuts on a limited level as a racer. We don't expect you to be completely perfect! Most greyhounds will attempt to drink your coffee or tea and this should be discouraged.
- DON'T EVER feed your dog chocolate, raisins, onions, grapes, and Macadamia nuts. Reactions to this tempting sweet vary from dog to dog, but none are good. Chocolate contains ingredients that can speed up your dog's heart rate, cause allergic reactions, and can be fatal.
- DON'T feed you greyhound from the table. This will only encourage bad habits that will be hard to break.
- DON'T leave alluring items on kitchen counters. Greyhounds are curious by nature and may sample items left on the counter. Remember that if it's left unattended, it's fair game!
- DON'T be alarmed at your greyhound gulping down his/her meal. Greyhounds generally 'bolt' their food without much, if any, chewing.

## Exercise

Any time you exercise your greyhound, warm him up first and cool him down afterward. That's the best way to

prevent injuries. To start, get the blood flowing with a short walk or jog. The warm-up stimulates the delivery of increased oxygen and nutrients to the muscles.

A short morning and evening walk may be enough. Greyhounds will differ, but the average is about 20 minutes a day. Use a harness or choker collar as they are good at slipping out of normal collars. Cuddly toys are a hit with most greyhounds, but please exercise caution with squeaky toys, since some dog's behaviour can change rapidly and dramatically at the sound,

due to use by their trainers to psych them up just before racing.



# Muzzles

**Greyhounds must be muzzled and on lead in public at all times**, individual greyhounds have to be tested to qualify for muzzle free status. For more information see the *Dog Act 1976* resources website

<http://dlg.wa.gov.au/Content/Community/Dogownership/DogLaws.aspx>.

Be careful near small dogs if advised by us that your greyhound is not sufficiently trained. Watch out for cats - the greyhound may bolt to chase it.

Shelter

Greyhounds cannot regulate their temperature very well due to lack of body fat, therefore they should be indoors during winter nights and hot summer days if an undercover shaded sheltered area is not accessible (day or night).

They like a soft bed or cushion to lie on.

## Your greyhound's health



### Find a greyhound savvy vet

Before allowing your greyhound to be anaesthetised or tranquilised for any reason, please be sure your veterinarian is practiced or at least familiar with the safe procedures and dosages appropriate for a greyhound. If he/she is not or does not seem interested in the topic or your concern, then find a vet with experience with greyhounds. It could make the difference between life and death for your greyhound! Your vet should also be knowledgeable of the differences in a greyhound's blood work test values.

### Pet Insurance

Pet insurance aims to cover you should something happen to your pet and you don't necessarily have the ready cash to help them. For the most part pet insurance covers your pet for medical emergencies, accidental injury and those unexpected diseases. Some policies cover preventative care such as routine vaccination and parasites prevention, but for the most part you will need to budget for these separately.

Things you need to know:

- Most companies will cover 80% of the total claim.
- Many will have an excess; this can vary from \$0 up to \$500.
- Excesses may be per claim for a condition or per calendar year.
- Most vets will require you to pay up front for your pet's treatment, then claim on the insurance, so you will still need to be able to initially cover the costs (unless you can make an arrangement with your vet).
- Many policies will have breed exclusions such as for hip problems in breeds prone to hip dysplasia or heart disease in certain breeds. Check the fine print.
- If your pet has previously been treated for a condition, even if it wasn't claimed for on your insurance, it may be considered a pre-existing condition.
- Many pets over 8 years of age may be uninsurable or incredibly expensive to insure.
- There are usually discounts if you have other insurance policies with the insurer.
- It is usually cheaper for your additional pets.
- Some policies help with legal costs should your pet injure a 3<sup>rd</sup> party (such as a human or animal via road trauma or bite injury).
- If your pet is lost or stolen some insurance policies can offer a reward to the finder
- If you are hospitalised pet insurance may cover the boarding costs.

### Post-operative care

All greyhounds are desexed before they go into foster care. The greyhound may be groggy when you get home, experiencing a "hang-over" from the anaesthesia. He/she will typically require 18-24 hours to recover from the general anaesthesia. He/she may sleep much more than normal for 18-24 hours following surgery. The greyhound may be a little agitated or aggressive due to the after-effects of anaesthesia. Avoid handling him/her too much as he/she may try to bite or scratch you. Isolate the animal from children and other pets. He/she may be more prone to snapping or nipping at other pets and even children due to the after-effects of anaesthesia.

### Incision Site

What you see on the day of surgery is what we consider normal. There should be no drainage. A very small amount of redness/swelling at incision may occur. Safely check incision site once daily for one week. Check for excessive redness, swelling, discharge, blood or if incision site is open. Do not clean or apply any topical ointment to the incision site.

### **Sutures**

If you are told that the greyhound has skin sutures or skin staples, he/she will need to return in 7-10 days to have those removed. Your local vet can provide this service, most will remove free of charge when it is indicated that the dog is a rescue.

### **Feeding**

Anaesthesia tends to make animals experience nausea; the greyhound may not want to eat when he/she gets home after surgery. You need to re-introduce food slowly. Offer a small amount of food and water as soon as he/she is fully awake. If vomiting occurs, wait until the next day to give more food.

### **Activity**

The healing process takes 7-10 days. Any strenuous activity could disrupt the healing process. Some animals are active after surgery, while others are quiet. It is very important that you limit his/her activity during the healing process. Do not bathe him/her during the recovery period. He/she should be taken for short walks only for next 10 days.

### **Teeth**

Some greyhounds suffer from poor teeth because of the soft diet they have been fed whilst racing. Do not let their teeth get into a bad condition, as the acids caused by tooth decay will cause stomach complaints. Regular chews, bones and a good brush when you groom your dog should aid good health. Check your dog's mouth for ulceration's regularly and if your dog has bad breath it can be a sign of tooth decay. Seek veterinary advice if in doubt.

### **Nails, ears and coat**

Keep your greyhound's nails clipped. Ears should be checked and washed carefully with warm water, as should eyes when grooming. One of the nicest features of your greyhound is that he is virtually permanently pressed! Grooming needs are minimal and take just a few minutes a day: Your greyhound should only be bathed when soiled. Greyhounds have little oil in their skin so they have little 'doggy odour' and rarely need a bath.

### **Vaccinations, parasite and flea control**

Greyhounds require yearly booster inoculations. As a racer, greyhounds would have had all puppy and subsequent inoculations and only require annual boosters during their retirement.

The most common intestinal worms that affect dogs in Australia are roundworm, hookworm, whipworm and tapeworm. Loss of appetite, vomiting, diarrhoea and in severe cases even death are just some of the symptoms a dog can experience from a worm infestation. Common worms are readily controllable with a routine worming treatment available through any vet clinic.

If there are fleas about, they will find a way onto your dog's coat. Whether they exist as eggs, larvae or young fleas they will soon invade your pet and their environment, your home, too. There are excellent flea control products available that are safe, effective and easy to use.

### **Flatulence**

One of the many benefits of owning a dog, is that you always have someone to blame those unusual smells on. Some dogs do appear to be particularly gassy. It should be noted that it is normal for gas to be produced and to accumulate within the gastrointestinal tract. However, in some situations this production of gas is increased and can become excessive. The most common cause of excessive flatulence is a change in diet or from the dog eating something new or spoiled (dietary indiscretion). Most cases of chronic flatulence are caused by a diet that is poorly digested by the dog. These poorly digestible diets cause excessive fermentation in the colon and subsequent gas formation. Soybeans, peas, beans, cauliflower, milk products, high-fat diets and spicy foods are all commonly associated with flatulence in dogs. Dogs and cats are lactose intolerant and if they are fed milk or dairy products they will often experience flatulence and GI upset. (except yoghurt)

Dogs that swallow air, especially those that eat rapidly, are more likely to experience flatulence. Overweight, obese and sedentary dogs are at higher risk for developing chronic flatulence, regardless of diet.

- Avoid feeding your dog foods that are difficult to digest
- Switch to feeding your dog premium (Many cheaper brands of dog food contain a lot of corn and soy products for fillers)
- Avoid giving your dog unwholesome table scraps
- Add water to the dog's food. This will help them to help slow down consumption
- Add probiotics or non-fat plain yogurt (with live active cultures) to their diet
- Serve your dog's food in a dog bowl that encourages your dog to eat slowly
- Feed your dog smaller portions more frequently.

## Injuries

Because of lack of fat, a greyhound's skin is very fragile. Therefore, any deep cuts, especially other animal bites and scratches become infected easily. If this occurs, we can be contacted on the phone number below. If life threatening emergencies or illnesses go to your nearest vet, otherwise go to either:

- **Larkhill Vets, 1774 Mandurah Road, Port Kennedy 6172 (corner of Stake Hill Road and Ennis Avenue)  
Phone: 9524 3838.**
- **Swan Veterinary Hospital, 14 Runyon Road, Midvale 6056. Phone: 9274 1845**

## Common household dangers for pets

To protect your pet, simply use common sense and take the same precautions you would with a child.

- Insect control products
- Human medications
- String, yarn, rubber bands and even dental floss
- Toys with movable parts
- Leftovers such as cooked bones
- Many of the plants we commonly use in landscaping and indoors are toxic to animals
- Chocolate and other food products that are potentially toxic for dogs
- Check fences and gates regularly

We also recommend that you put together a pet first aid kit and have a manual readily available.

## Swimming pools

While no exact statistics are available, Perth Pet Cremations reports that it is cremating on average two dogs a week after they have drowned in pools. Murdoch Pet Emergency Centre (MPEC) reports that at that rate, up to 200 dogs per year could be drowning in Perth swimming pools. These figures suggest that dog owners may not realise the need to be watching out for their pets like they do their children when it comes to safety around water.

Many people believed dogs have a natural ability to swim, but this was not true. Some dogs paddle better than others and some dogs sink like a stone. Generally, heavy dogs with short legs tend to find swimming a real challenge. Similar to children, pets should never be left unsupervised around deep water. The fenced pool area should not be used as a dog yard. If your dog is old, or has a heart condition or a seizure disorder, keep them away from the pool. Unsecured solar pool blankets are a hazard as dogs falling into the water can get trapped and disoriented making it hard for them to find the steps to get out of the pool. In addition, the weight of the blanket can push them under the water. If your dog likes to swim in the pool with the family, make sure one of the first things it learns is how to get out of the pool, if they have to be in the pool area, ensure that the pool blanket is off or a secure cover or netting is used to cover the pool and prevent them from falling in. If you are going out on the water with your dog, consider a doggie life jacket especially if they are not strong swimmers.

Veterinary assistance should still be sought for dogs that are rescued from the pool after having a near drowning incident. Complications including hypothermia, pneumonia or fluid build-up in the lungs can occur.

# Training tips

1. **Be consistent.** The whole family should work as one, every day
2. **Set the rules.** Decide what is practical and desirable for the family
3. **Provide positive physical and mental stimulation.** Training, play and exercise should be part of daily life, not optional extras
4. **Take control.** Give the dog the security of knowing that you will deal with visitors, unfamiliar dogs and strange situations. Never nurture nervous behaviour
5. **Find the off switch.** Actively and purposely teach the dog how to switch off and relax
6. **Hitting:** Never use physical contact when training your dog, this will instil fear and resentment, not trust

Dogs that exhibit poor judgement or inappropriate behaviour patterns are not necessarily bad, disobedient or aggressive; they are usually just dogs that are muddling through with their own set of rules in the absence of strong guidance and mixed messages from us.

When you bring your greyhound home for the first time, introduce him to all members of the family in a calm orderly manner, give him a couple of hours of quite time to explore his new environment and make sense of his surroundings.

Having a dog in your life can be a wonderful experience, however If you are not in control, the dog will suffer for it. A basic outline below covers the most common issues with dog ownership. Keep in mind that it is uncomfortable for most greyhounds to sit so training should exclude this command.

## Toilet training

- Stick to a routine: dogs are very regular when it comes to going to the toilet.
- Designate a **toilet area: this is an area where it is okay for him to go to the toilet:** It may be outside, a courtyard or atrium, or on artificial grass. He should be taken to this spot when he needs to go to the toilet first thing in the morning, after meals and last thing at night. Praise him for toileting in this spot.
- **Pre-empting:** if you notice a sudden change in behaviour, or obvious toileting behaviour (sniffing, circling, squatting or leg-lifting), move him to the designated toilet area and praise him for using it.
- **Clean up accidents quickly:** if he does have an accident inside, that spot may be seen as an acceptable place to toilet in the future. To minimise the risk of this, clean up all urine and faeces as quickly as possible. Wash the area with an enzymatic washing powder and lots of warm water, products such as 'Urine-Off' help remove the smell of urine which may be left behind by products that just disguise the smell (as far as humans are concerned).
- **Don't punish him in the event of an accident:** it's likely to confuse him, which can backfire – he learns that toileting in front of the owner is the unacceptable behaviour and can lead to 'secret' or 'sneaky' toileting.

## Walking

Follow these simple steps to complete a calm and successful walk.

- When getting ready for a walk, call him to you, do not go to him to put the lead on. After he comes to you make him wait calmly before putting on the collar or lead.
  - Retractable leads are not recommended, as they give the handler less control.
  - Harnesses were in the past thought to be an unsound training tool; however, they are now being used widely especially for greyhounds.
- The way you leave your house and property is also important, if you put the lead on him and/or leave the house while he is excited and leading you, then you are setting the mood for the rest of the walk to be in an excited state. Take him to the front door and open the door. Make him wait quietly; do not allow him to bolt out the door. He needs to see you are the one who decides when it's time to leave. As soon as he is waiting quietly at the exit it's time to leave.
- The collar should be far up on the neck, which gives you more control. There should be no tension in the lead. Do not allow him to pull and don't constantly pull on him. Relax!

- The lead should be short and hang loose. If he starts to pull, stop the walk until he is calm. If he starts getting too excited and you're not keeping him beside or behind you, stop and make him wait. Wait until he is calm, and start again. Do not call him when you start walking again, just start walking. He needs to learn he is following you, and tune into you, the person walking the dog. Do not praise him for walking calmly, this only creates excitement and you are more likely to pull him out of his calm, submissive state.
- He should not sniff the ground and relieve himself where he pleases; his job while walking is to concentrate and focus on following his handler. The person walking the dog decides when the dog is allowed to sniff or pee, not the dog. It is ok to allow him to sniff around and do his business, but only when you decide it is ok. He needs to see that you have got the situation under control.
- If you pass a barking dog or other distraction, keep moving forward. If he averts its attention to the distraction, move quietly the other way, if he is pulling, stop and make him wait.
- Timing is everything, this must be done right before the behaviour happens or at the exact moment it starts. You do not want to wait until it escalates, if you wait too long before correcting a dog (we're talking seconds), he may not even hear you; he will be too focused on the distraction.

### Alone training your greyhound

Alone Training makes a huge difference in how your new greyhound will feel and act when left home alone. Start by placing him in a 'dog-safe' room with a baby gate. Now act like you are really leaving by picking up your keys, putting on your coat, etc. It is very important to NOT say goodbye or talk to your greyhound when you leave. Just calmly leave, like it is no big deal. Leave for 3-5 minutes, being sure to come back into your home before the dog starts to whine or becomes stressed out.

Remember when coming back into your home you must totally ignore your greyhound for a few minutes. Do NOT talk or pet your greyhound for at least 2-3 minutes. This tells the dog that your coming and going is nothing to get excited about. When your greyhound has calmed down and his attention is NOT on you, then pet him, in a calm voice tell him 'good dog' and give a small treat for being calm.

Gradually increase the time your greyhound is left alone by a few more minutes each time and practice leaving at different times during the day and night. Keep doing 'Alone Training' until you are able to leave your greyhound alone for at least 30 minutes. Generally, if your greyhound is fine with being left alone for 30-50 minutes then he will likely be ok for longer periods of time. Statistically, if a dog is going to have a bout of separation anxiety it will usually happen within the first 30-50 minutes of being left alone.

### Your relationship with your greyhound

One of the main reason's greyhounds make such wonderful pets in that they are easily trainable. Retired racers believe that people are all-knowing and all-powerful, making you the natural choice to set the ground rules. Keeping your dog under this illusion will be a great benefit to your relationship!

A few tips that will make the training process go smoothly:

- The role as leader or coach of your greyhound is a serious responsibility.
- The messages you send will shape your dog's idea of the world.
- Outline ahead of time what is acceptable and not acceptable behaviour for your greyhound and make sure all family members abide by the rules.
- A family meeting should be held before the dog arrives to your home, in order to set the expectations and limitations with all the family members, children included.
  - Can he get on the furniture?
  - Where can he sleep?
  - Where can he eat?
  - Who will feed the dog?
  - What will be his treats?
- Be consistent. Don't allow him to do one thing one day and not the next. In most instances, a firm, sharp tone of voice will be enough to reprimand your greyhound.

- Greyhounds crave attention and this approach will reinforce his guilt. Remember that your dog will respond to your reaction, not your words. If he seems afraid of something new, and you cuddle and coo over him, he will quickly get the idea that he should react timidly to any new situation. Reassure him by stroking his neck. Be aware that this life is a new experience for your greyhound and simple things such as stairs, glass doors and shiny floors may frighten him at first. Take the time to show him that these new things are no big deal and easily mastered. Always praise your greyhound when he has done something good.
- Adults and children should participate in hand feeding the greyhound either treats or food on a regular basis. A hand that feeds is also a hand that is more likely to be trusted taking things away. Throughout the dog's life, he has relied on someone to set boundaries for him – first his mother, then his trainer, and now you. He is counting on you to tell him what is good and what isn't. Always remember, you're in charge - he's not.

*“Adopting or fostering a greyhound won’t change the world,  
but the world will change for that greyhound”*