



**Greyhound Adoptions WA**

# HANDBOOK

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 About this handbook

This handbook has been prepared by the Greyhound Adoptions WA team as a resource for foster carers and adopters. It is compiled from the team's extensive knowledge of and experience with greyhounds but it should not replace professional advice from a greyhound-savvy vet. We also encourage you to familiarise yourself with local laws about responsible dog ownership through the Department of Local Government and your local council.

Other Greyhound Adoptions WA resources are available on request. The team is always available to chat about your greyhound and provide general advice – whether your greyhound is from us or elsewhere. We are passionate about greyhounds and dedicated to supporting our local greyhound community.

## 1.2 About us

Greyhound Adoptions WA is a non-profit greyhound rehoming organisation based in Perth, Western Australia and is run entirely by volunteers. We support a 'no kill' policy, placing no restrictions on the temperament of the dogs brought onto our care. We receive no government funding and rely solely on donations and fundraising. The majority of our greyhounds come straight from racing. We also take in greyhounds from pounds and privately surrendered greyhounds, and work with other rescue groups to help rehome greyhounds who come into their care.

We have no kennel facility so all greyhounds are placed in a foster home as soon as their initial vet work is completed. Foster carers are responsible for providing love and stability, and teaching their foster greyhound all about life as a pet. We work with our foster carers to find the perfect forever home for each dog. We always need new foster carers, adopters and general volunteers so please get in touch if you or someone you know can help us and the hounds.

# 2. Frequently asked questions

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

Greyhounds are affectionate, friendly dogs who thrive on human companionship. Greyhounds are indoor dogs who enjoy being involved in the household. Many greyhounds can also live happily with children and other pets. As they do not require much space or exercise, they are generally considered to be low maintenance dogs.

## **Do greyhounds need lots of space and exercise?**

Most greyhounds don't require a big living space or back garden as long as they are walked once or twice a day. Each greyhound is different and some are even well-suited to living in a townhouse with only a small courtyard. Despite being fast dogs, they do not need long daily walks as they are sprinters, not endurance dogs. However, regular leisurely walks are important for physical and mental wellbeing. Some individual greyhounds may desire more exercise than others.

## **Can greyhounds be 'outside dogs'?**

No. As a minimum, greyhounds must sleep inside at night. Greyhounds generally enjoy being part of family life and having the company of their humans. Of course some greyhounds may enjoy spending some time in the garden but they should not exclusively live outside.

### **What's the difference between male and female greyhounds?**

The main difference is their size – male greyhounds are generally bigger than females. Some male greyhounds are reported as being more 'sooky' (affectionate and cuddly) than females but this is a general observation only.

### **Are greyhounds good with children?**

Each greyhound is different but they are generally gentle with children. As most ex-racing greyhounds are mature, they are not as playful and energetic as puppies and may be more tolerant of children. However, greyhounds are large dogs and even the most placid greyhound may accidentally knock a smaller child over! We can help match families with children with a suitable greyhound. It is important to always supervise any dog with small children and teach children how to respect dogs and other animals.

### **Are greyhounds good with other animals?**

Greyhounds are friendly by nature and generally socialise well with other greyhounds and most other dogs. Some greyhounds can live with other pets such as cats, birds and small pets, but we would only place a greyhound in a home with these pets after testing them and arranging a meet and greet first.

### **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. Generally a dynamic of one dominant and one submissive dog works well. We can help with matching greyhounds together and we insist on a meet-and-greet prior to adoption.

### **How old are ex-racing greyhounds and what is their life expectancy?**

Ex-racers are usually between two and four years old when they retire but some may be younger or older. With proper care, greyhounds have a life expectancy of 12 years or more.

### **Are ex-racing greyhounds already toilet-trained?**

Ex-racers are usually toilet-trained as a result of the kennel environment and strict routines while racing. They may take some time to adjust to life in a home but they learn quickly with patience and routine. Walk them frequently at first to ensure they have adequate toilet breaks.

### **How big do greyhounds 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 males can reach 40-45kg.

### **How fast can greyhounds run?**

A combination of long, powerful legs, deep chest, flexible spine and slim build allows the greyhound to reach up to 70 kilometres per hour! But only for short periods.

### **Do greyhounds have to wear muzzles?**

Pet greyhounds in WA no longer need to be muzzled in public. However, muzzles are a useful tool for any dog owner and we encourage their use for reactive or new/untested dogs, or for stressful situations like visiting the vet. We provide a muzzle with all foster and adoptive greyhounds. We require all fosters to wear one in public and it is up to individual adopters to use their common sense regarding muzzles.

### **Do greyhounds have to be walked on a lead?**

Yes, in WA pet greyhounds must be on a lead in public, including in enclosed dog parks. Note: we strongly advise against taking your pet greyhound to off-lead dog parks at all due to the high risk of injuries/attacks by other dogs.

### **Why do greyhounds wear special collars?**

Greyhounds wear martingale collars that are made out of two loops that tighten when pulled. This is because greyhounds' necks are often as wide as or wider than their heads. Martingale collars are not choke collars and do not harm the greyhound when fitted properly.

### **Do greyhounds really need to wear clothes?**

This depends on the individual dog and where it's living. Greyhounds have thin fur and minimal body fat so the majority of greyhounds living in Perth will need a light jumper or coat for winter walks and possibly pyjamas for sleeping in at night.

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

Generally yes as they are used to being driven to different facilities while racing.

### **Why are greyhounds tattooed?**

Racing greyhounds are tattooed inside each ear with a unique identification code to ensure they are registered and are not swapped at races.

## **3. Fostering**

Most ex-racing greyhounds have only lived in kennels and not inside a home. They have probably never climbed stairs, seen a television or interacted with other dog breeds. A foster carer's most important roles are to give their foster greyhound lots of love, introduce them to life as a pet, and help us to find them a forever home.

Introducing them to life as a pet may involve setting up a routine including meal and walk times, some toilet training, walking on a lead, and socialisation. Our foster carers not only provide food, shelter and exercise, but provide for their foster greyhound's mental and emotional wellbeing too.

Helping us to find them a forever home involves sending us a write-up and photos of the foster greyhound, attending some of our weekend events and accommodating meet-and-greets with potential adopters. We let foster carers know about events in advance and encourage them to bring their foster greyhounds when they can – they are always fun, social outings and an opportunity for foster carers to show off their fosters.

We *always* need more foster carers who:

- Are patient and have lots of love to give
- Are home a decent amount (we find foster greyhounds don't do as well with foster carers who work long hours five days a week)
- Have a suitable and secure property
- Are committed to looking after their foster dog until it is adopted – typically a month or two but it can be just a couple of weeks or many months
- Are willing to help us introduce their foster dog to potential adopters.

We provide a lead, collar, muzzle, coat (in winter) and can provide dry dog food. We also cover all vet costs while in foster care. All you'll need is somewhere for the dog to sleep, food and water bowls, and some fresh meat or dog roll to supplement their biscuits – if you need help with these items, let us know and we should be able to assist. Please note foster dogs usually come with medication and parasite treatment you'll need to administer in the first few days. If your foster dog comes with a coat, the coat stays with you for your next foster, or is returned to us. Adopters can also purchase the coat from us.

Foster dogs stay with their foster carer until they are adopted. So if you're fostering a dog and you need to go away, contact us and we'll arrange temporary care with someone else. Adoptions are coordinated by us but we'll keep you informed and you can be part of the process. Visits with potential adopters must be coordinated through us – so if someone approaches you about adopting your foster dog, please tell them to contact us to arrange a meeting or take their details and pass them onto us.

# 4. Adopting

## 4.1 Responsible dog ownership

The most important qualities for anyone looking after a dog are commitment and responsibility. Adopting a dog is a lifelong commitment and they need to be cared for even through life's challenges such as illness, break-ups, moving house or having children. Of course we believe greyhounds can make perfect pets, but they need patience, understanding, love and training to achieve this perfection! While we will always accept a greyhound back into our care, we would much rather work through any issues with you and ensure a long and happy relationship for you both.

Before adopting, make sure you consider:

- ✓ Our rental agreement or strata allows dogs
- ✓ Our property is suitable, eg we have adequate fencing and the pool is secure
- ✓ We have the time and ability to exercise the dog
- ✓ The dog will sleep inside
- ✓ We have adequate shelter outside
- ✓ Existing pets are desexed and able to cope with a new addition
- ✓ We are prepared to work through possible hurdles such as toilet training, digging or barking
- ✓ We have considered who can look after the dog if we go away
- ✓ All members of the household are prepared to help care for the dog
- ✓ We are ready for a commitment of 10-15 years
- ✓ We can financially afford food and veterinary care.

## 4.2 The adoption process

Our adoptions team has years of experience matching people with greyhounds. This is why it is important for us to understand what your family and lifestyle is about, including children, working hours, property type and other pets.

1. Submit an expression of interest (EOI) form and have a chat with one of our adoption coordinators.
2. Have one or two meet and greets with a potential match, including introductions to all family members and other pets.
3. Sign the adoption agreement and pay the relevant adoption fee.
4. Make arrangements to collect or have your greyhound delivered to you.
5. We will email you the greyhound's paperwork (microchip change of ownership form, de-sexing certificate, vaccination record) within around 7 days.

If you feel the greyhound is unsuitable for any reason, contact Greyhound Adoptions WA immediately for support. If you feel you cannot work through the issue, arrange a mutually convenient time to return the greyhound (including lead, collar, muzzle and paperwork) to Greyhound Adoptions WA. If within the 7-day cooling off period, your adoption fee will be refunded minus a \$25 administration fee. If outside the cooling off period, the adoption fee cannot be refunded. Please note once a greyhound is adopted, it is likely their former foster carers already have a new foster greyhound. Your patience is appreciated if returning a greyhound while we find a foster carer. Greyhounds must only be returned to us and not adopted out privately or surrendered elsewhere.

## 4.3 Adoption fees

The adoption fees are:

- \$425 for a greyhound aged up to and including 6 years (\$400 if you are on a pension)
- \$475 for a cat-friendly greyhound

- \$175 for a senior greyhound aged 7 or over
- \$600 for a bonded pair.

We accept cash, direct debit, PayPal or cheque. All greyhounds are desexed, vet checked, microchipped, vaccinated, and treated for fleas and worms. They come with a martingale collar, lead and muzzle. You can also purchase additional items from us including coats.

## 5. Bringing your greyhound home

### 5.1 Preparing your home

Check your fences for holes or gaps and ensure they are a minimum of 1.5m high. Check gates and doors to ensure they close properly – consider self-closing hinges, locks and drop-rods for extra security. Remove climbing aids such as wood piles, benches, bins and chairs from near fences. If your greyhound starts to dig, you can use chicken wire, hardware cloth or chain-link fence pieces under or next to your fence.

Inside, remove fragile knick-knacks and secure your pantry and bin. Remove food from kitchen counters. Set up your dog's sleeping area. Consider blocking off staircases until you're confident with your greyhound's stair-climbing abilities.

Talk with your family members about rules for your greyhound. Ensure visitors also know to close gates and doors when they arrive or leave.

Dogs can quickly drown. In particular, pool blankets are particularly dangerous as dogs may try to walk on them and get trapped underneath. If your dog has a near-drowning incident, take them to the vet to check for hypothermia, pneumonia or fluid build-up in the lungs.

Water rules for dogs:

- Never leave your pet unsupervised around water
- Consider a dog life jacket if you plan to take your dog out on the water
- If you have a pool, ensure fencing is secure
- If you have a pool, teach your dog how to exit the pool.

### 5.2 Introducing your greyhound

Adjusting to home life can take some time for your new greyhound.

- Let your greyhound outside to go to the toilet straight away.
- Allow your greyhound to explore their new home at their own speed. Supervise them closely for the first day or two in their new surroundings.
- If you have stairs, take your greyhound up and down slowly. Stay in front of them when going down the stairs so they just take one at a time.
- Introduce your greyhound to glass doors, windows and showers by showing them and tapping on the glass.
- Your greyhound will likely be stressed and unsettled for a few days. Don't be concerned if your greyhound doesn't eat much at first. They may also eat a lot and quickly. If so, control food intake by offering small meals regularly at first.
- If your greyhound experiences diarrhoea (from stress or change of diet), contact us or your vet for advice. Kaopectate can be very effective in treating diarrhoea.
- Remember the 3-3-3 rule: new greyhounds may take three days to decompress, three weeks to learn routine and three months to truly feel at home.

## 5.3 Greyhound gear

We provide:

- ✓ Martingale collar
- ✓ Lead
- ✓ Muzzle.

If you are adopting, you'll need to get:

- ✓ Bowls for food and water
- ✓ Dog bed and blankets
- ✓ Dog tag, including dog's name and a couple of contact phone numbers
- ✓ Food
- ✓ Soft brush
- ✓ Dog coat (you can purchase your new dog's foster coat from us or we sell new ones)
- ✓ Toys
- ✓ Dog toothbrush and toothpaste
- ✓ Harness (optional).

*A note on muzzles: In 2021 the WA Government repealed the muzzle-requirement for greyhounds. This means pet greyhounds can now enjoy public places without wearing a muzzle. However, legally greyhounds must still always be on a lead in public places. We request all our foster dogs wear a muzzle in public places as they are new to pet-life and likely haven't been tested in all environments. Owners of adopted greyhounds should consider the use of a muzzle if their greyhound needs one (eg is reactive) or in certain situations such as vet check-ups.*

# 6. Greyhounds and other family members

## 6.1 Children and dogs

Greyhounds and younger children should be closely supervised when the greyhound is new to your family, during outdoor play, or when the greyhound is eating or sleeping. If you can't supervise sufficiently at these times, separate them with doors or baby gates.

Any dog can bite a child and they more often happen at home with the family dog than out and about with unfamiliar dogs. Before any child pats any dog, they should be taught to ask the owner first, then wait and allow the dog to approach them.

Teach both your greyhound and child how to respect each other. Demonstrate to your child what kind, gentle interaction looks like and reinforce to never hurt, tease, frighten or surprise an animal. Greyhounds aren't toys and should never be grabbed, pounced on, or used as a pillow or ride-on. Some dogs have sleep-startle so teach all family members to call a dog's name before approaching them while asleep. Reward both your greyhound and your child for positive interactions using praise and the occasional treat.

Small children often want to express their affection for dogs by hugging or clinging to them. Teach your children that this can be scary for the dog and encourage gentle stroking of the neck and shoulders. Ears and tails are sensitive areas and shouldn't be played with by children. Reinforce to your dog that your child is part of its new 'human coaching team' and not a litter mate – as litter mates often play roughly which is normal for puppies, but not for children.

## 6.2 Living with other dogs

If introducing a new greyhound to an existing dog, allow them to meet on leads in a neutral location. After the initial sniffing, walk them together for a short time and then bring them into the house at the together,

with your existing dog walking into the house first. Any sign of growling or aggression should be met with a sharp 'No!'. Although greyhounds are used to sharing attention, your existing dog may feel jealous and need a little extra reassurance.

Feed the dogs separately until you feel confident both dogs are comfortable with each other. Don't leave bones or treats lying around.

It takes a few months for dogs to really establish themselves and become accustomed to each other. Supervise playtime, particularly if one dog is much smaller than the other. Use muzzles if in doubt.

### 6.3 Living with cats

Some ex-racing greyhounds may have a high prey-drive but others can live very safely and happily with cats and other small animals. A "cat-friendly" greyhound demonstrates low prey-drive which means they show little interest in small animals or can be easily corrected with a verbal "uh-uh" warning. There isn't a strong link between a greyhound's racing career and their prey-drive.

Even a cat-friendly dog isn't trained to live with every single cat in the world! It is important to train a dog around any new small animal. For the first couple of weeks, ensure your greyhound is wearing a muzzle and lead during every interaction with your cat. It will take some time for them to get to know each other and these tools will keep both safe. A muzzle ensures that any rough play won't injure your cat. A lead helps you to control interactions and prevent your greyhound from chasing your cat. Try to also encourage your cat to be calm around the greyhound. Once your greyhound and cat are used to each other and consistently demonstrate calm behaviour, use either the muzzle or lead for another few weeks. If your greyhound still enjoys chasing your cat, use just the lead in particular and then progress to only using the muzzle. When you are confident to let them interact without either the muzzle or lead, continue to supervise for the first few months.

The muzzle must only be used during the cat introductions and not for extended periods of time. Your greyhound must **never** be left unsupervised with a muzzle on.

This process also applies for greyhounds living with birds.

## 7. Feeding your greyhound

We recommend a balance of high-quality dry dog biscuits (kibble), quality fresh meat or dog roll (avoid too much lamb or pork), cooked pasta/rice and cooked vegetables. Suitable vegetables include carrot, sweet potato, pumpkin and zucchini. You can also add other healthy and delicious toppings such as sardines in springwater, raw or cooked egg, or bone broth. Treats should be given sparingly and include dental treats, raw chicken wings, natural dog treats or the occasional pig's ear. Never give your dog chocolate, macadamia nuts, grapes, onion, cooked bones, artificial sweetener or dried fruit. Avoid raw hide treats.

Greyhounds should ideally be fed over two or more meals per day at roughly the same time each day for routine. Feed your greyhound at least half an hour before or after their walk to reduce the risk of bloat.

The following amounts are a general guide. If your greyhound starts to leave some of their food, you can reduce the amounts slightly. If they are constantly finishing their meals and seeking out your food, increase the amounts slightly. Your vet can provide an indication of your greyhound's ideal weight range.

Per day across 2+ meals	<26kg	26-35kg	>35kg
Biscuits	1 cup	1.5 cups	2.5 cups
Meat (fresh or dog roll)	500g	650g	750g
Pasta or rice and vegetables	1/4 cup	1/2 cup	2/3 cup

When changing your dog's diet, for example trying a new biscuit brand, introduce small amounts mixed with their existing diet first. Transition to larger amounts of the new food over a few days. Just buy a small amount of the new food in case your dog doesn't react well or doesn't enjoy it, then you can buy in bulk.

Your greyhound's appetite may fluctuate while they are settling in – this is normal. Don't be too worried if they don't eat much for the first couple of days or if it seems like they can't get enough to eat.

If you're interested about healthy eating for your greyhound or your greyhound needs to gain weight, please request a copy of "Kat's feeding guide" from us.

## 8. Your greyhound's health

### 8.1 Find a greyhound-savvy vet

Greyhounds need specific medical care as parts of their bodies work slightly differently to other dog breeds, including their blood. Ensure your vet is experienced with greyhounds, particularly if your greyhound needs to be sedated or anaesthetised for any reason. Greyhound Adoptions WA is fortunate to work with Larkhill Vets in Port Kennedy and Malaga Vet and we highly recommend them. However, the majority of vets in Perth would likely treat many pet greyhounds now with the rise in the popularity of the breed.

### 8.2 Possible health conditions

Greyhounds are generally very healthy dogs but some bloodlines may be prone to certain conditions.

- **Pannus:** is an autoimmune disease that affects the cornea. It is usually painless but can lead to blindness if left untreated. Pannus often looks like a grey/pink film on the eye which gradually becomes opaque. Treatment is usually topical anti-inflammatory medications. If you notice *any* changes in your dog's eyes, see a vet.
- **Corns:** are small hard masses of keratin (what fur and nails are made from) that appear on a dog's paw pads. They can be caused by tiny foreign objects getting stuck under the skin. Some dogs are more prone to them than others. Corns look like small around discolourations or lumps. They are usually painful to walk on so you may notice your dog limping, favouring grass over hard surfaces or even refusing walks at all. It's a good idea to regularly check your dog's paws not only for corns, but for foreign objects between toes, cuts or anything else abnormal. A range of treatments are available including soaking and gently removing the corn over a few days or weeks, having the corn surgically removed, or having a flexor tendon luxation. This is surgery to cut the flexor tendons which flattens the paw, taking pressure off the corns which then usually heal on their own. Please speak to us or your vet if you suspect your greyhound has a corn.
- **Osteosarcoma:** is a type of aggressive bone cancer mostly seen in larger dog breeds. The cancer eats away at healthy bone tissue, weakening and damaging the bone which can then break easily. It usually affects the leg bones but can appear anywhere on the body. Symptoms of osteosarcoma may include lameness/limping, a sudden bone break, a hard lump, swelling, lethargy, loss of appetite and reluctance to walk or play. Treatments for osteosarcoma include chemotherapy and/or amputation of the affected leg. Osteosarcoma spreads quickly so immediate vet attention is necessary at the first sign of any symptoms.
- **Cuts and abrasions:** are common in greyhounds because their skin is thin and fragile. It is a good idea to have a dog first aid kit at home so you can treat minor scratches. Deep cuts and scratches need vet attention because they can become infected easily so stitches and antibiotics may be required.
- **Dental disease:** is the most prevalent health condition in greyhounds. Symptoms include smelly breath, redness/swelling/recession of the gums, discolouration or build-up on the teeth, pain and even food refusal. Prevention is the best treatment – brush your greyhound's teeth regularly using

dog toothbrushes and toothpaste, and let them chew on dental treats, safe toys and raw chicken wings/necks. Treatment of dental disease is usually a thorough scale and clean under anaesthetic by a vet. In more advanced cases, some affected teeth may need to be surgically removed.

- **Bloat:** is a life-threatening condition that impacts larger, deep-chested dog breeds. There are two stages to bloat: first the stomach expands with gas and puts pressure on surrounding organs, and second the stomach twists which cuts off its own blood supply. This stage quickly leads to death. A dog displaying bloat symptoms needs vet attention immediately. Symptoms include a swollen or hard belly, drooling, persistent lip licking, retching without vomiting, panting, restlessness or distress and abdomen pain. To help prevent bloat, don't exercise your dog for at least half an hour before and after eating, and try not to let them gulp big quantities of water in one go.
- **Osteoarthritis:** is joint inflammation caused by ageing and/or injury. Symptoms include pain, stiffness and lameness/limping. In particular you may notice your greyhound take longer to lay down or get up. If your greyhound has arthritis or is otherwise stiff, regular gentle exercise, losing some weight,
- **Flatulence:** is normal but excessive gas can be a sign of poor digestion. Foods that can increase gassiness in dogs include soybeans, peas, beans, cauliflower and dairy products (small amounts of Greek yoghurt are usually fine). Some greyhounds have more sensitive stomachs than others and you may need to trial a few different dog foods. Dogs who eat quickly and swallow lots of air are also more likely to be gassy – try using a 'slow feeder' bowl or feeding smaller portions more frequently.

### 8.3 Pet insurance

We recommend getting pet insurance for your greyhound, particularly if you are unlikely to have spare cash on hand to treat them in an emergency. Pet insurance may cover medical emergencies, accidental injury and unexpected diseases, and some may include some preventative care. When researching policies, consider:

- How much the excess is and whether it is payable once per year or per condition
- The percentage of a claim they will cover
- Whether you must pay the vet first and then claim the insurance or they can pay direct
- Any breed or age exclusions
- Whether your pet has pre-existing conditions that may not be covered
- Possible discounts for multiple policies with the same insurer or additional pets
- Additional things the insurer may cover such as third party legal costs, rewards for stolen or missing pets, and boarding costs for your pet if you are hospitalised for any reason.

### 8.4 Keeping your greyhound warm or cool

Greyhounds cannot regulate their temperature very well due to lack of body fat and thin fur, therefore they should be indoors when it is very hot or very cold outside. As a minimum, greyhounds must sleep inside. When spending time outside, greyhounds must have access to adequate shade and water to drink. Most greyhounds living in Perth also benefit from a light jumper or coat for winter walks and even pyjamas for sleeping in if the home doesn't have heating.

### 8.5 Post-operative care

If your greyhound undergoes anaesthetic, they may be groggy for up to two days after. They may sleep more than usual or be agitated or even aggressive during this time. Give your greyhound a safe space to recover and prevent children or other pets from approaching them. Offer small, regular meals and water. If your greyhound vomits, wait until the next day to offer the next meal. Restrict strenuous activity and do not get your greyhound wet for 7-10 days.

Check any incision sites once a day for two or so weeks. A small amount of redness or swelling at the site is normal but vet attention is required for excessive redness or swelling, or if the incision site opens or has any discharge or blood. Do not clean or apply anything to the incision site unless directed by a vet. Some stitches/sutures will dissolve but some need to be removed by a vet nurse in 7-10 days.

## **8.6 Teeth**

Some greyhounds suffer from poor teeth so dental hygiene is very important. Incorporate brushing, dental chews and raw chicken wings into your dog's routine and check their mouth regularly for ulcerations. If your dog has bad breath, seek vet advice as they may need a scale and clean under anaesthetic. Tooth decay can cause other health problems so ensure your dog's teeth do not deteriorate too far.

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

Keep your greyhound's nails clipped or filed so they can walk comfortably. Wipe dirty ears with cotton wool and warm water as needed. Wipe eyes with warm water as needed. Greyhounds don't need frequent baths and they never require clipping. They will enjoy regular brushing.

Some greyhounds fresh from racing may experience kennel coat (a temporary fluffy coat) or dandruff. Regular baths, brushing and dietary supplements such as oats, sardines in springwater or small amounts of coconut/olive oil can help.

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

Greyhounds adopted out by us are all vaccinated and will just require ongoing yearly boosters.

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

The most common worms that affect dogs in Australia are heartworm, 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. Dogs must be tested for heartworm via a simple blood test before being given preventative heartworm treatment to check they are not already infested. A dog can be infested with heartworm for months or years before symptoms become visible.

If there are fleas around, they will find their way to your dog and the surrounding environment. Administer routine flea treatments from your vet or pet supply shop.

## **8.9 Exercise and mental stimulation**

Most greyhounds are happy with one or two short walks per day (total 20-40 minutes per day roughly). Some may be interested in walking a bit further and as they age, they may prefer even shorter walks. Walking them at approximately the same time each day will help settle them into routine.

Greyhounds are legally required to remain on a lead in public places, including enclosed dog parks. However, there are private yards in Perth available to hire so your greyhound can enjoy safe off-lead time. Greyhounds generally enjoy the company of other greyhounds and members of the Perth greyhound community often organise social walks in Facebook groups – contact us for details.

Although greyhounds spend much of their time asleep, many enjoy playing with toys with their humans or treat puzzles. You can buy treat puzzles like Kongs and lickimats or make them yourself with everyday items like toilet rolls, egg cartons or muffin pans. Always ensure there is nothing your dog can choke on and supervise these activities. Even simply scattering some of your dog's food can be exciting. Always supervise children around dogs with food or toys.

## 8.10 Injuries and emergencies

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

If life threatening emergencies or illnesses go to your nearest vet, or if out-of-hours, go to a 24-hour vet:

	<b>Vet clinic</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Phone</b>
<b>North of River</b>	Perth Vet Emergency	Unit 3, 162 Wanneroo Road, <b>Yokine</b>	1300 040 400
	Perth Veterinary Specialists	305 Selby Street North, <b>Osborne Park</b>	9204 0400
	Animal Emergency Care	227 Great Eastern Highway, <b>Midland</b>	6500 3010
	Vet 24	59 Erindale Road, <b>Balcatta</b>	9345 4644
	Emergency Vet Hospital	1 Chokolich Street, <b>Wangara</b>	9200 4460
<b>South of River</b>	Murdoch Pet Emergency Centre	Murdoch Drive, <b>Murdoch</b>	1300 652 494
	Western Australian Veterinary Emergency and Specialty (WAVES)	640 Beeliar Drive, <b>Success</b>	9412 5700
	Baldivis Vet Hospital	597 Baldivis Road, <b>Baldivis</b>	9524 1466
	SAI Veterinary Hospital	Unit 6, 113 High Road, <b>Willetton</b>	6319 2390
	West Coast Vet	10 Freeman Road, <b>Forrestdale</b>	9393 3373

## 8.11 Common household dangers for pets

Use common sense to protect your pet from household dangers in the same way you would protect a child.

Keep pets away from:

- Insect control products
- Medications
- String, rubber bands and even dental floss
- Toys with movable parts
- Leftovers such as cooked bones – left on the table or even in the bin
- Many of the plants we commonly use in landscaping and indoors are toxic to animals
- Chocolate, macadamia nuts, grapes and other food products that are potentially toxic for dogs
- Hot stoves and heaters
- Balconies and unsecure fences and gates.

# 9. Behaviour

## 9.1 General training

1. Agree on the rules for your greyhound as a family so everyone knows what to expect.
2. Be consistent. The whole family should enforce the same rules at all times. Everyone should take turns feeding the greyhound to build trust.
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. Don't nurture nervous behaviour. Greyhounds crave attention and will respond to your reaction rather than your words. Reassure a nervous greyhound by stroking their neck but don't cuddle and coo them or this will reinforce the nervous behaviour.

5. Find the off switch. Actively and purposely teach the dog how to switch off and relax.
6. Never use physical contact such as hitting when training your dog. This will instil fear and resentment, not trust. Most greyhounds are physically unable to sit so do not include this command as part of your training.

Dogs that exhibit poor judgement or inappropriate behaviour patterns are not bad, disobedient or stupid. They are usually just dogs who are muddling through with their own set of rules in the absence of strong guidance from us.

## 9.2 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 you want your greyhound to go to the toilet such as the lawn, courtyard or even artificial grass. Take your greyhound to this spot first thing in the morning, straight after meals and just before bedtime. Praise your greyhound for toileting in this area.

Pre-empting: if you notice a sudden change in behaviour or obvious toileting behaviour (sniffing, circling, squatting or leg-lifting), move your greyhound to the designated toilet area and praise them for using it.

Clean up accidents quickly: if your greyhound 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 cleaner 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. Don't punish your greyhound in the event of an accident: it's likely to confuse them which can backfire by leading to secret or sneaky toileting in the wrong place when you're not looking.

If your greyhound is having lots of accidents and appears to be incontinent, seek vet advice. Incontinence may be a sign of infection or other condition and can usually be treated.

## 9.3 Walking

When getting ready for a walk, call your greyhound to you – do not go to them to put the lead on. After they come to you, make them wait calmly before putting on the collar or lead.

The collar should be far up on the neck which gives you more control. There should be no tension in the lead. Try to relax and do not allow your greyhound to pull – but don't constantly pull them either. Consider the use of a suitable harness if you need extra control. Do not use retractable leads as they don't give you enough control and can cause injury to you or your greyhound.

Leave your property calmly – lead your greyhound to the front door and open the door. Make them wait calmly and don't allow them to bolt out. They need to understand that you decide when it's time to leave.

While walking, the lead should be short and hang loose. If your greyhound starts to pull, stop walking until they're calm. If they start getting too excited to walk beside you, stop and wait until they're calm again. Don't call them when you start walking, just start walking again quietly. Don't praise them for walking calmly as this may create excitement.

Find a balance between walking, sniffing and toileting on walks that works for you both.

If you pass a barking dog or other distraction, keep walking forward calmly. If your greyhound becomes distracted, move quietly in the other direction. Practise stopping and waiting until your greyhound is calm – right before or just as the behaviour starts. Don't wait until your greyhound is fully distracted.

## 9.4 Alone training your greyhound

One of the most common canine behavioural issues is restless and destructive behaviour when left home alone. Lots of people use the term 'separation anxiety' but if someone suggests your greyhound has it, don't panic as it's probably not the case. Anxiety is a specific, diagnosable disorder and not very common. Most dogs that demonstrate undesirable behaviour when home alone are likely under-stimulated and burn their surplus energy wrecking items, just having fun because they don't yet understand it's the wrong thing to do, or simply haven't been taught the desired routines and behaviours.

- Teach the dog to associate the bed (or blanket, spot, or whatever you have chosen) with positive experiences.
  - Regularly throw a couple of treats on your dog's bed (without the dog seeing you do this).
  - Whenever your dog lies on the bed, reinforce the behaviour with verbal praise (don't exaggerate so that the dog gets up).
  - Send your dog to bed with a particular signal, eg. "bed" 10-20 times daily.
  - Send the dog to its bed often while you watch TV, read the news, do computer work, etc.
  
- Teach the dog meaning of the word "bed".
  - Send the dog to the bed with the word "bed" by pointing to the bed or throwing a treat on the bed.
  - Use only the word "bed." Don't say anything else.
  - Reinforce it verbally, calmly so it remains on the bed.
  - Start all over until the dog remains on the bed even if you walk away.
  
- Teach the dog to stay on the bed.
  - Verbally praise your dog as soon as they lie on the bed after you said "bed." Be calm.
  - When the dog lies quietly on the bed, leave the room for two seconds, then come back.
  - Repeat, leaving the room at irregular intervals and for irregular periods, eg. five seconds, 30 seconds, 45 seconds, one minute...
  - If your dog remains on the bed, do nothing.
  - If your dog leaves the bed, send them back and start all over.
  - As soon as you can leave the room for three minutes without the dog leaving its bed, repeat the process but with the door closed as you leave.
  - At first, just touch the door without closing it. The next few times, leave the door ajar. Next, leave the room for two seconds then open it and re-enter the room. If your dog remains on the bed, do nothing. Otherwise start the process with touching the door again.
  - Finally, leave the room, close the door, stay out for irregular periods, open it and enter the room. If all is well, do nothing.
  
- Maintain the good behaviour
  - Even when you're home, leave your dog alone sometimes. Do not pay attention to them all the time.
  - Always stimulate your dog properly before leaving. Remember: too little and too much are equally wrong.
  - Give your dog something to do when you leave. You don't need to invest in expensive toys – a plastic bottle with treats inside will keep your dog busy for a while figuring out how to take the treats out. Watch our dog the first couple of times and encourage them, if necessary, to toss the bottle around and not bite it.
  - Place your dog's bed in a central place in the house (eg. the living room). Most dogs don't like to feel isolated.
  - Continue using "bed" and continue making the bed attractive with occasional treats, verbal reinforcing and petting (all very calmly).

- Make sure the bed isn't too clean (most dogs don't appreciate our heavily-fragrance laundry detergent), isn't too dirty and is comfortable and big enough.
- Pick up your keys often (or put on your shoes, cap or whatever you normally do before you leave) so that your dog disassociates these cues with being left alone.
- You maximise your chances of speedy success if:
  - Your dog sleeps on their bed at night and (even better) if they don't sleep in the same room as you.
  - Your dog is routinely well stimulated (under-stimulated dogs are more difficult to teach to be home alone)
  - Your dog is not hyper-active and over-stimulated (over-stimulated dogs have difficulties in remaining in the same spot for longer periods of time).
- Important for you:
  - Be calm no matter what you do.
  - Advance step by step.
  - Be patient.
  - Control your emotions and behaviour when you succeed as well as when you fail.
  - Contact a certified dog behavioural specialist if you need further help.
  - Remember, Greyhound Adoptions WA is here for you and your greyhound.