

# **NEW HOUND OWNER'S MANUAL**



**GREYHOUND  
PETS OF AMERICA**

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## OUT OF THE GATE

You've just adopted a greyhound, one of the most regal of breeds! Now what??? We would like to offer a few suggestions in order to make your hound's adjustment to its new environment a relatively easy one. Although greyhounds do not tend to lump themselves into the "dog" category, they are still of the canine species and because of that will exhibit certain behaviors.

### **The rule of 3:**

Dogs need time to decompress and adjust to their new home. The first 3 days may be stressful for your new hound in the new environment. After 3 weeks, the hound will start to learn you and your family's routine. They will start to feel more comfortable and start showing their personality. After 3 months your greyhound will settle in and exhibit more confidence and security.

Every dog is different, but in general, it is helpful to use this model as a tool to explain why your new dog may be acting the way they are. Give your hound time and allow them to adjust at their own pace.

### **Preventing Accidents**

No one wants their home to become an indoor fire-hydrant, so to speak. The foster family has probably given you useful information on how your greyhound has done in their home, but every situation is new and needs to be treated as such. The following techniques will hopefully help eliminate many issues:

- **Containment**

There are two very useful tools at your disposal to help prevent accidents in your home, especially in the first few days when your greyhound is getting adjusted to its new home and lifestyle: the leash and the crate. When you first get your greyhound home, take them immediately outside on the leash and lead them to the spot where you want them to do their duties. If they do not go, that is perfectly normal – but it is important to give them every opportunity to do so. Once they are inside the house, continue to keep them with you on the leash while they explore the home. Letting them loose to investigate your home is only inviting trouble. After they have explored your home a little, and/or if they look like they are about to "mark" in your home, give a gentle tug on the collar (while saying "no" or "uh,uh,uh" if they were about to pee) and then get them outside as quickly as possible. If they go outside (even just a little) give them big praises!! We realize it is not easy to do your daily home activities tethered to a dog – so if you are unable to hold on to them, make sure you use the second tool: the crate. Putting them in the crate is not a punishment – it is a safety measure and a training tool. Make sure the crate you use is large enough for your greyhound. Your hound should be able to stand up straight and turn around in the crate without their back touching the roof. If housetraining is going well, we recommend that you continue to do this for at least the first two to three days, or longer, of course, if your hound still isn't getting it.

- **Establishing a Schedule**

The life of a track greyhound is very regimented. They are fed and let out at the same times every day. Getting your greyhound on a schedule they can count on will help in the housetraining process.

If your hound is still having trouble after a couple of weeks, please contact your adoption representative as this may be a sign of a more serious physical and/or behavioral problem.

### **NO KITTY!!**



Some of you may be bringing your hound home, much to the chagrin of your resident cat. We test in-coming hounds to see if they are capable of living with cats, and many of our foster homes have cats as well. Even so, there are some important safety precautions when introducing your new hound to the kitty.

Keep your hound muzzled **and** on a leash when you bring them into the house. If you cannot supervise all interactions between the cat and the hound, keep the animals separated. Keep the muzzle on your hound for several days, until you have observed how your hound interacts with the cat and are completely confident of your greyhound leaving the cat alone. Whenever the cat is present, be calm and happy. Laugh and talk happily to yourself – this will set the stage for positive behavior towards the cat. Reward your hound for paying more attention to you than the cat. Make your hound's calmness in the presence of the cat a very good thing. At the same time, any response toward the cat that is anything more than idle curiosity should be strongly discouraged. Respond to each and every incident. If you ignore even one, the reward of chasing the cat may be just too self-rewarding to overcome.

If your hound shows any interest in the cat at all (i.e. staring, whining, or attempting to chase), yell in your deepest, loudest voice "NO KITTY". It is important that you let them know that the cat is off limits. Even if they eventually do become buddies, it is not a good thing to let the hound chase or play with the cat.



If the behavior/interest persists, get a squirt bottle filled with water and set it to stream. Every time your hound exhibits an undesirable behavior, squirt it in the back of the head (not the face) while yelling "NO KITTY". Another deterrent is an empty pop can with (several) about 10 coins inside. Every time your hound starts for the cat, shake the can. Greyhounds are startled by loud noises - they are also very smart and catch on quickly. Unless your cat is particularly dog-friendly, expect him/her to hiss for about a month until he/she settles in and accepts the new member of the family.

## **HOUND-PROOFING YOUR HOME**

In a hound's mind, the fluffier the thing is, the better. If you do not want your hound up on the bed or furniture, let them know immediately by gently, but firmly, saying "no". Lure your greyhound off the undesired place and to their own cushy bed. Provide a little treat and positive reinforcement.

Remember that greyhounds are large dogs and are capable of reaching high places – countertops being one of their favorite places to explore. Move anything valuable, breakable or potentially harmful to higher ground. We recommend you store your medications in a high cabinet or on top of the refrigerator. Greyhounds have been known to chew open medicine bottles and ingest the entire contents.

## **PROPER FEEDING**

Maintaining the proper weight for your greyhound is one of the most important things you can do to ensure the good health and long life of your retired racer. . Serving your hound's food dry helps keep their teeth and gums in good shape.

Depending on the size of your greyhound, they should be fed about 4-5 cups of kibble a day. We recommend that you feed your hound twice a day (2-2 ½ cups at each feeding). A greyhound's ribs will tell you if they are getting enough – or too much. You should not be able to see all of their ribs, only a hint of the last three ribs on a pet greyhound. If you can see all of your hound's ribs, you should ask your veterinarian about increasing the amount of food they are eating. If their ribs have disappeared, you might consider cutting back on the treats or daily portions of kibble, or increasing their daily exercise. If you can't feel their ribs, then they are overweight. If you are trying to decide whether or not to put your hound on a diet, it is best to consult your veterinarian first.

Greyhounds can eat/drink out of raised bowls or bowls set on the floor. Ask your veterinarian what may be right for your hound.

### **DIARRHEA**

Some greyhounds will get diarrhea due to nerves or a change of diet/treats. Depending on the severity, the following options could be considered. Remember to always consult with your veterinarian.

Poo a little runny, but controlled? To help firm up stool, you can feed your hound a bland diet of cooked white rice and cooked ground beef. You can also mix in some white rice with the kibble.

Runny & watery? Consider fasting your hound for 12-24 hours. They can drink as much water as they'd like (do not limit water). Reintroduce a bland diet of ground beef and cooked white rice. Start with small meals and assess output. If stool starts to firm, gradually add kibble back over the course of 2-3 days.

If issues persist longer than a couple days, or your dog is having accidents, contact your veterinarian.

### **BLOAT**

Greyhounds are considered a deep-chested breed of dog and thus prone to bloat or gastric dilation. This is a build up of air and fluids that promotes gas in the stomach and can make it flip, cutting off the blood supply to vital organs. It is a matter of life and death – so if you suspect your hound has it, get it to the vet immediately!!

Sign of bloat:

- Dry Heaves
- A hard, distended abdomen
- Extreme restlessness or panting
- Uneventful vomiting (dry heaves)
- Drooling
- An arched back
- Difficulty walking



Some steps owners can take to possibly reduce the risk of bloat include:

- Feed two or three times a day, preferably at times when someone can observe after-feeding behavior
- Discuss bloat with your veterinarian and discuss emergency measures.

- Make sure water is available at all times, but limit quantities, especially right after eating and exercising vigorously
- Dogs should avoid vigorous exercise, excitement, and stress one hour before and two hours after meals
- Make diet changes gradually over a period of 3-5 days
- Feed susceptible dogs individually and in a quiet location
- Pay special attention to the above procedures after animals return home from the hospital – post surgical bloat is a risk factor
- Dogs that survive bloat are at increased risk of recurrence

If your hound is prone to lying on his or her back after a meal, do what you can to discourage this adorable but risky habit, as abnormal positioning can occur. Walking is okay, just not running.

## **KENNELING**

In order for your greyhound to become accustomed to staying in its kennel, you need to introduce it very soon after getting him/her home. A technique to acclimate your hound to its kennel is “random kenneling”.

One important thing to remember for the first couple of days is to not make a big fuss over them. Track hounds are used to the schedule of resting in their crate, getting let out 4-5 times a day for bathroom duties and exercise, and then back into the crate. They catch onto the good life very quickly and you want to make sure that you teach them what is expected of them right away.

Problems could arise if they are not crated for a couple of days, and then they are put in the crate and expect them to accept being in there for eight hours while you are at work. Start putting them in the crate shortly after you get them home. Show them the crate and see if the hound will go in on its own. Some will, some won't, and some need a little coaxing (a slight push on the hind quarters). If the hound will not go in, try taking a treat, show it to the hound and then toss the treat into the kennel. If the hound does go in, praise it highly and give it another treat. Once they are in the crate, shut the door and walk away. Some hounds are very persistent. Do not give in to their cries, but do make sure that they are not trying to communicate that they have to go to the bathroom. Leave them in their crate for 15 minutes or so and then let them out (random kenneling). Continue working up to longer times in the crate.

Try not to let the hound out of its crate if it is whining or carrying on. Wait until it is quiet to let it out or they will think that every time they carry on, you are going to run over and let them out. Some greyhounds develop separation anxiety in their new environment and getting them used to being in their crate will help curb that.

Feeding in the crate is another positive factor. They are frequently fed in their crate at the track. This follows the thought of “all good things happen in the crate”. Never use their crate as a means of punishment. This will delete all the good, positive ideas of them being crated. Discipline for a greyhound is a good, firm “NO”. Simple as that. This is a very gentle breed of dog, unlike any other dog you will ever own. With patience and understanding they will come to learn exactly what you want and what is expected of them.

It is a good idea to keep them used to wearing their muzzle. It might be needed if your hound has to be introduced to small animals (cats, rabbits, or even small dogs) at some time. Put the muzzle on them for about 10 minutes, once a week, just to keep them familiar with it. They will act as if it is a totally foreign object to them – rubbing against you or the furniture or whatever, in an attempt to get it off. Do not be fooled by this, they know exactly what it is and it isn't going to hurt them to have it on.

## DEALING WITH SEPARATION ANXIETY

Some greyhounds are prone to separation anxiety. Separation anxiety is the common term used for stress behaviors that only appear when a dog's owners leave them alone in the house. These behaviors can manifest themselves in various ways, depending on the dog. The most common behaviors are:



- **Destructiveness** (chewing, digging, tearing up its bedding or other household items, trying to escape by breaking windows and doors).
- **Self-mutilation** (excessive licking or biting at its own body – usually the paws or the tail).
- **Vocalization** (excessive howling or barking when left alone).
- **Salivation** (soaks the dog's body and bedding).
- **Pacing**
- **Urination/Defecation** even if housetrained.

These behaviors usually start within minutes of the owner leaving and peak at around 30 minutes after the owner has left. They will usually then decline after about 30 minutes. These behaviors are a reaction to stress, and therefore punishing the dog for these behaviors is ineffective and inappropriate.

If your dog exhibits separation anxiety, there are several things that you can do to help alleviate it. Start by leaving your dog for several short periods of time. At first, you may only take a walk around the house and then come right back inside. Give your hound a verbal cue such as “see you” or “I’ll be right back”. *Make sure you don’t make a big fuss upon leaving and especially upon returning.* This just reinforces the idea that your leaving is a terrible thing and something for your greyhound to get worked up about. Use a normal tone of voice when giving the verbal cue and ignore your dog for the first minute or so upon returning. You can gradually work up to leaving for longer and longer times. A dog that can be left for an hour or so can gradually learn to make it the whole day.

Other things that help alleviate anxiety:

- Turn on the radio or the television. The background noise seems to soothe the anxious dog.
- Give your dog something to do.. Many people fill the hole in the Kong with peanut butter and treats and stick it in the freezer. It takes a while for the dogs to get the peanut butter out, and by that time they have relaxed enough to make it the rest of the day.

If your greyhound has separation anxiety, using the crate may or may not help. For some hounds the enclosed space creates a safety zone, but for others the kennel creates a claustrophobia that only increases the panic. If your greyhound seems to be trying to tear its way out of the kennel we have a couple of recommendations:

- Use a baby gate to confine your greyhound to a room giving your greyhound a comfortable, yet safe, place.
- If your greyhound is exhibiting destructive behavior as part of its separation anxiety, put its muzzle on when unsupervised.

Some hounds do just fine if they are left free in the home. If you are going to choose this option, make sure you start by leaving them out for very short periods at a time and then gradually work up to longer times.

Separation anxiety can be frustrating, especially if you have never dealt with it before. If you are experiencing any problems with your hound and separation anxiety, please contact your GPA MN adoption representative immediately. Most of us have dealt with it with our own hounds or fosters, and we will try our best to help you get through it as well.

## **Sleep Aggression – “Let Sleeping Dogs Lie”**

Sleep Aggression is not a “condition” – It is an animal reacting to being rudely awakened. Fight or Flight – it is what animals (and the human animal as well) live by. If you wake up a dog out of a sound sleep - and yes, they can and do sleep with their eyes open – you risk unleashing this basic instinct. It is what keeps all such creatures alive. It is a fact of life – not a condition called Sleep Aggression. This does not make your dog a bad dog. You simply have to be aware of it and wake any sleeping dog carefully. Say your dogs name until he responds; speak loudly to rouse him, do not bend down and give him your face.

Use common sense with sleeping dogs. It is not Aggression – it is nature. It is up to us to not put our pets in a position where they feel triggered to react negatively. It doesn’t know any better. We have to know better.

## **FINAL TURN**

### **VET CARE NEEDS**

When choosing a vet make sure you pick one that has had experience with greyhounds. Because of their unique constitution they are very sensitive to certain medications and anesthesia. Do not be afraid or embarrassed to discuss these needs with your vet. There is a list of GPA MN recommended Vets that do most of the vetting for our foster hounds. This list can be found on our website.





## WORMING MEDICATIONS

Consult your veterinarian

## INSECTICIDES AND OTHER TOXINS

Greyhounds, because of their low body fat and fast metabolism, are especially sensitive to insecticides and other substances. Substances to watch out for are:

- **Flea and Tick Products. DO NOT USE FLEA COLLARS!**

Flea collars contain chemicals that go directly into a greyhound's blood stream and can cause serious health problems and possibly death. Flea and tick shampoos and sprays that are safe are those with PYRETHRINS as the main ingredient. You can also try one of the citrus-based products. DO NOT use any flea/tick products that contain organophosphates. An example of an organophosphate is Carbaryl which is commonly found in flea powder, some shampoos and sprays. The long acting flea and tick products (Defend, Dursband) are unsafe for greyhounds as well. Products like Frontline, Advantage Multi, etc. are okay to use on your greyhound, however, always speak with your veterinarian before starting or stopping a treatment/medication.

Cedar is a natural flea repellent and can be used in bedding. However, some greyhounds are allergic to cedar so watch for any skin reactions if you choose to use cedar bedding. Diatomaceous earth (found in health food stores) can be dusted onto rugs, furniture, bedding, etc. It is harmless to pets and people and kills fleas. Care should be taken to not get this product into the dog's eyes.

- **Lawn Chemicals**

These can be fatal to greyhounds. Do not allow your greyhound to walk on chemically treated areas while the grass is still wet. Lawn services are required to mark treated areas. If you suspect your dog has walked on treated areas, wipe their feet off with a wet rag.

- **Common people foods that are harmful for your hound (NOT all encompassing)**

- Chocolate
- Onion/Onion Powder
- Grapes
- Raisins
- Cooked bones
- Sugar free foods.

- **Call your veterinarian or emergency vet immediately if any of these items have been ingested or you suspect your hound has ingested a poisonous item or foreign object**

## ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS

Sometimes the little things in everyday life can lead to big problems for your greyhound. The following is a list of more common things to watch for while out and about. It is by no means a comprehensive list.

- **Barbed Wire Fences**

Greyhounds might see something on the other side of the fence and begin the chase. At full speed he cannot see the fence and will crash into it. The result can be lethal.

- **Birdbaths, Wading Pools, Puddles, Ponds, Etc.** Do not allow your greyhound to drink out of these. Stagnant water, combined with bird droppings or other animal feces can lead to serious illness such as giardia.
- **Sticks and Stones**  
It is a good idea to keep the twigs, small branches and stones picked up in the yard. While racing around, your greyhound can hit them or step on them leading to injury.
- **Outdoor Grills**  
Keep your greyhound inside while grilling. Your steak dinner could be his if you turn your back for a moment. The risk of your hound getting burned is very real as well as the risk of accidental poisoning from the lighter fluid.
- **Swimming Pools**  
Greyhounds are not the best swimmers. Do not leave them unattended in the backyard with a pool. Usually, once your greyhound finds out he can't walk on water, they will steer clear of the pool.
- **Bee Stings**  
Greyhounds can get stung too! Remove the stinger and ice the sight. Watch for signs of allergic reaction and contact your vet if necessary.
- **Recliners**  
Make sure your greyhound is not in the way when you let the chair down. They like to lie close to your feet and could be in jeopardy of a smashed nose, tail (which can be a bloody mess...) or paw.
- **Car Windows**  
Do not allow your greyhound to hang his head out of the car window. There is too great a risk of injury from flying debris or your greyhound making a great escape to chase something they saw on the roadside while flying down the highway. With electric windows, be sure that needle noses or floppy ears aren't sticking out of the window when you close it. Use the child safety controls to disable the door and window controls on the doors your hound has access to. Your hound can put his paws up on the door and inadvertently raise or lower the window.

## CARE AND GROOMING

Greyhounds are very used to being handled at the track making it easy for you to groom your greyhound.

The following are a few things to help you in grooming your greyhound:

- **Teeth**  
Brushing your greyhound's teeth is the most important thing you can do for their care and well being. You should brush your greyhound's teeth daily. Greyhounds have notoriously bad teeth and suffer from periodontal disease. Keeping your greyhound's teeth clean will help keep them healthy and will help avoid expensive and potentially risky dental procedures by your veterinarian.
- **Ears**  
Your greyhound's ears should be cleaned at least every other week. You should use cotton balls and a mild ear cleaning solution. Dampen the cotton ball with the solution and clean inside the flap on your greyhound's ears. **NEVER** stick anything in your greyhound's ears, as damage can result. If you feel your greyhound may have deeply embedded dirt inside his ear, a few drops of the cleaning solution dropped directly into the ear canal and



massaged on the outside will allow your greyhound to “shake out” some of the dirt. Only your vet or groomer should do extensive ear cleaning.

- **Nails**

Your greyhound will have to have its nails trimmed at least once a month. This may vary with the amount of exercise your greyhound is getting and how much natural wear their nails get. You should keep styptic powder on hand in case you clip too short. In a pinch, flour, cornstarch or chalk will work. Another method of keeping your greyhound’s nails short is filing them with a Dremel tool.

- **Skin**

If your greyhound seems to have dry, flaky skin you can apply a good conditioner directly to the coat or adding fish oil to their meals. If skin problems persist, consult your Vet.

- **Brushing**

You should brush your greyhound about once a week. Brushing helps pull out the dead undercoat and reduce any shedding.

- **Bathing**

Greyhounds do not need frequent bathing. They do not have the oils in their coats that other breeds produce and therefore their coats do not attract much dirt. Brushing once a week is usually sufficient to keep them clean. Bathing too often can cause skin problems.

### **Coats**

Because of their low percentage of body fat, they need to wear a coat when the temps are below 40 degrees.



### **Collars and Leads**

Always use a humane choke collar (or martingale collar), like the one provided to you by GPA MN.

Their skin is sensitive and thin and can not tolerate

a metal choke chain. **NEVER** use a retractable leash. There is not enough control with these. A short leash (6’ or shorter) provides enough room for them to sniff around when they are walking, yet enough control in case they get spooked – especially when they first come from the track. When they run, they exert up to 228 pounds of pressure on your arm. The martingale collars are to be used only when walking your greyhound and should be removed when inside. Your greyhound should have a separate collar with identification tags attached. This is to be worn at all times so they always have their identification tags on.

### **NEVER Stake or Tie Out Your Greyhound**

Greyhounds reach top speeds in three strides and can snap their own neck when they hit the end of the tie-out. They always need to be on hand-held lead unless they are in a completely fenced area. Be sure to double check for open gates or gaps in the fence. If there is one, you can be guaranteed that your hound will find it. Remember that they have been bred for over 2,000 years for one sole purpose – to run – FAST. If they are off leash, that is exactly what they will do. As a sight hound, they can spot a moving object from a mile away and once the chase instinct sets in, no amount of calling, whistling is going to stop them from running. Since they do not stop to look for cars, a car is often what stops them.

This is why we **ABSOLUTELY STRESS** the fact that you **CANNOT LET THEM OFF LEAD NO MATTER WHAT!!!!!!** It does not matter how long you have had them or how much training they have had.

# HOME STRETCH

## TRAINING - STAY POSITIVE

Greyhounds can benefit from formal obedience training. It gives them some guidelines as to what is expected of them in their new life off of the track and can be a good relationship building experience. Greyhounds respond to praise, treats and repetition. The most important part of training is to keep it positive and to have lots of patience.

- **Discipline**

Dogs are only disciplined to get them to stop inappropriate behavior, so discipline can only take place while the dog is doing something wrong. Anything after the fact will not register in the dog's mind as to why it is being disciplined. With greyhounds, ONLY non-physical discipline is appropriate. Two examples of non-physical discipline:

- **Time Out**

Remove social contact with the dog by turning away, avoiding eye contact and generally ignoring them.

- **Distraction/Redirection**

Use a sharp vocal signal ("Ah! Ah!" or "No!") to get their attention and then possibly offer them another toy or something to get them to change their behavior

## Canine Mental Health

# CROSSING THE FINISH LINE

## GREYT TIDBITS

Recognizing the adjustment period and successfully managing it without undue stress is a very important part of the greyhound adoption process. It must be remembered that becoming a house pet involves a very dramatic change in routine for your greyhound.



Greyhounds are very intuitive and sensitive dogs with a lot of smarts. They can open gates, cage doors, refrigerators, drawers, trash cans, and all kinds of containers. The Greyhound is an observer of everything. Their eyes and the brain are working all the time – even when they sleep. And sleep is what they do best – besides loving you. Upside-down resting (known as cockroaching) is a greyhound trait. The third eyelid will appear, followed by a lolling tongue.

Greyhounds also do a funny thing called “nitting”. They nibble or pinch at your hand or whatever body part is closest to them. Some of them will just do it in the air – which makes it look like their teeth are chattering. They will do this when they are glad to see you, or get excited about something like going out for a walk or for a ride in the car.

The greyhound has a heart the size of a human's and has a body composition that is 65% muscle. They smile, laugh, grumble, growl, yodel and whimper in an attempt to communicate. These are not aggressive acts. The showing of gummy teeth while the dog is relaxed and happy is generally considered a smile, which is a common trait.

Cat-like, they will sometimes ignore you. Don't be offended – this is their temperament. They are also cat-like in cleanliness. They will lick and wash themselves like a cat. Your greyhound might also be compared to a child in that they have very selective hearing.

Sharp objects in the yard that could become lodged in your greyhound's mouth or throat should be removed, along with low hanging tree branches. Keep in mind that a greyhound will fix its sight on whatever it takes an interest in and will tend to crash into or step on anything and everything in its path.

Take time to get to know the personality of your new dog and build your relationship with mutual trust and fun. He will fill your days with countless hours of enjoyment and fun!!

## **LET'S BE SOCIAL**

Your greyhound has lived with lots of other greyhounds all its life.

GPA MN has lots of opportunities to take your hound out to meet other greyhounds (and greyhound owners):

- **Meet and Greets**

Meet and Greets are held at Twin Cities area pet stores. The schedule is listed on the GPA MN website. You do not have to call ahead or stay the whole time. Bring your Greyhound and drop in and say hi.

- **Como Walk**

This fun walk takes place every Sunday at 11am (sometimes earlier in the summer if it will be hot). Walkers meet at the Como Pavillion and stroll around the lake.

- **Special Events**

Dog Shows, State Fair, Baseball Games, and so much more. Show off your hound and generate interest in greyhound adoption. Special events are also posted on our website and our social media channels. [Greyhound Pets of America - MN | Instagram, Facebook | Linktree](#)

## **AND THE WINNER IS... YOU !!!!**

This manual is filled with a lot of **dos and don'ts**. This is not intended to discourage you in any way. We are trying to give you as much information as possible in order for your greyhound to successfully integrate into your family and into your hearts. Chances are, you will have few problems with your dog. With a little patience, time, and lots of love, you will have a "fast friend" forever.

We love hearing from you. Find us on social media [Greyhound Pets of America - MN | Instagram, Facebook | Linktree](#)