



### Welcome to Our Greyhound Family

Congratulations on adopting your retired racer! Your Greyhound is one of the most ancient and prestigious breeds. Known for over 4,000 years as extraordinary hunters and loyal pets, these canines were revered by royalty in Egypt, Persia, Europe and the Middle East.

Your Greyhound, whether a racer for a month or for several years, is accustomed to a very regimented lifestyle. The schedule for feeding, turn-outs (bathroom breaks) and the rest is very strict in a racing kennel and, consequently, the transition from professional racer to pet can be very confusing.

Your retired racer has no idea of what you expect from him. He has never been in a home, heard phones ring, seen a TV, heard door bells or vacuum cleaners. Mirrors and sliding glass doors are a new experience, and stairs are a very scary new challenge.

**Patience** and **encouragement** on your part will do wonders in easing your Greyhound into his new environment. He will learn quickly, but he needs your help. The following will help ease that transition and help you to acquaint your Greyhound to his new role in life — being your best friend and companion.

### Now What Do You Do?

Use these tips to introduce your Greyhound to his new home.

**Walk Him/Her Before Going Inside:** When you bring your new Greyhound home, be prepared to leash-walk him (even in a fenced yard) outside for at least 10-15 minutes or until he relieves himself. Let him get familiar by sniffing and becoming acquainted with all the smells associated with your yard. The combination of the car ride home, coupled with all the excitement of a new family and home will cause him to have to relieve himself more often. So, give him plenty of opportunities in the beginning. If you have a special place in your yard you wish him to use for urination and elimination, encourage him to go in that area (and then praise him when he does.)

If your new Greyhound is a male, he will most likely want to "mark" his new territory (especially if he detects there are or have been dogs living here previously.) This is his way of making himself at home and should only occur outside. Females often exhibit "marking" behavior too.

**Keep Him/Her on Leash When Entering Your Home:** A male may still "mark" a doorway, plant or chair when he first walks in your home. This is out of nervousness (or he may smell remnants of another dog), so it is best to keep him on the leash when first bringing him inside. If he starts to lift his leg on something, give him a short jerk on the leash and tell him "No," and he should stop immediately. Then take him outside and when he relieves himself, give him tons of praise.

Remember, a female Greyhound may try to "mark" in your home too, and they give even fewer indicator signals that they are about to squat.

**The Umbilical Cord Method:** Remember, your new Greyhound cannot make a mess or have an accident in your house if you watch him/her closely by keeping him in the room with you. The first day you bring your Greyhound home, use a 4- to 6-foot flexible leash and attach one end to your belt loop on your pants and the other end to your Greyhound's Martingale collar. This is called the "umbilical cord" method and is successful because your dog can not do anything or go anywhere in your home without you knowing

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about it. During this first day or two, you are able to safely show your new Greyhound your home, introduce him to the house rules, and successfully reinforce house breaking rules.

**Spend Time with Your Greyhound:** Take some time off work or try and arrange the arrival of your new Greyhound for a weekend (or both). The more time you spend with your new Greyhound in the beginning, the shorter his/her break-in period will be. Your Greyhound will be stressed and will look to you for reassurance by following you around from room to room. He also needs to spend the first few days with you in order to learn to trust you, get on your schedule, and start to learn the house rules.

**Use Baby or Dog Gates:** After your new Greyhound successfully graduates from the "umbilical cord" method and has been reliable, use a few baby/dog gates to easily restrict him/her to "dog-proof/dog-safe" rooms in your home. Make sure your Greyhound earns his/her house roaming privileges.

Racing Greyhounds are "kennel broken," which means they know to keep their sleeping areas (crates) clean and to relieve themselves outside. This knowledge is usually readily transferred to their new adoptive homes, but he must be taught that your home is now his "sleeping quarters" to be kept clean. Bear in mind, that if your Greyhound has a few accidents, it does not necessarily mean he is not housebroken. Remember, he is used to someone coming to the kennel at regular intervals during the day and letting him outside in a fenced-in yard to relieve himself. He has never had to "tell" anyone that he wants to go outside.

**Get Your Greyhound on a Schedule:** Develop and use a consistent daily routine for feeding, exercising, and bathroom duties. Greyhounds are creatures of habit. If you do the same things in the same way and in the same order, he will settle in more quickly and learn what is expected of him and when.

For example, walk your new Greyhound or let him out in the fenced yard as soon as you rise in the mornings. Feed him in the morning after a short walk or bathroom break in the yard. Give him one more chance to relieve himself about 30 minutes after breakfast and again before you go to work. If you work all day 8+ hours, then either come home at lunch time to let your Greyhound outside, or have a responsible friend/neighbor come to your home to let your Greyhound go outside to relieve him/herself around the middle of the day. Gradually over several weeks, you can build them up to several hours before they must go outside. Upon returning home from work, he should get an immediate bathroom break and exercise. Do NOT wait, let him out as soon as you walk in the door. He will need another bathroom break anywhere from 30 minutes to a few hours after his evening meal, depending on his age. He should be given at least one more potty break right before you go to bed for the evening.

To keep middle of the night bathroom breaks to a minimum, you may need to withhold water and dog biscuit snacks after a certain time in the evening. If he is really thirsty on a hot late night, treat him to a little cracked or chipped ice instead of water.

**The Sleeping Arrangements:** We strongly suggest having your Greyhound sleep in the bedroom with you, as he has never slept alone in his entire life. Being in the bedroom with you will be reassuring and you will know if/when your Greyhound is distressed or needs to go out during the night. Place his crate next to your bed, or put his dog bed on the floor next to the bed and use a baby gate to block him from leaving your bedroom, or just close the bedroom door to be sure he stays in there with you and is not roaming around your house. The first few nights he may cry a bit, but as soon as he learns to trust you and that he is a part of your family, he will sleep like a baby. In fact, Greyhounds normally sleep 16 -18 hours a day!

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If your new Greyhound is made to sleep in a room alone, he will most likely panic, cry or even howl in fear.

**The Stairs:** Your Greyhound has probably never seen nor had to use stairs before, so you have to teach him to climb them. Never try to pull or force him up the stairs by yanking on his leash from above. Greyhounds have a tendency to "freeze" and not move when they are afraid or overwhelmed (kind of like a mule, they just refuse to move). Instead, just stand behind him and move one paw at a time to the next step, first his two front paws and then the back two paws. By this time most Greyhounds are actually leaning back onto your legs. If he does not shift his weight forward after you have moved his back two paws up to the next step, then use your leg to lift his rump up to the next step and his back two paws will follow. Go slowly, step by step. Give lots of praise and never force him.

To get your Greyhound back down the stairs, you can try attaching his leash and gently going down the stairs or use the "suitcase" method and just hold his collar like the handle of a suitcase and quickly guide him down the stairs.

Greyhounds catch on fast and are able to navigate stairs by themselves in a few days. Once they do learn to go up and down stairs by themselves, don't be surprised if they speed up and down them at lightning speed! Their body shape makes it easier for a Greyhound to take the stairs fast, the slower they go, the harder it is.

Greyhounds occasionally "get stuck" in the middle of going up the stairs and not know how to get started again. Just go to your Greyhound and take hold of his collar and get him moving up again and he will take off and happily finish going up the stairs by himself.

**The Mirrors:** Your Greyhound may spend hours looking at himself in any mirrors at his eye level. He has no idea who the other Greyhound is, or why he keeps staring back. It may take several days before your Greyhound is able to understand how a mirror works.

**The Sliding Glass Doors:** Sliding glass doors can be a very real danger for your new Greyhound because he does not see it as being solid, and may run through it at full speed before you can get it open! Windows and sliding glass doors must be shown to your Greyhound. Take his paw and touch it to the glass and then knock on the glass to show him it is solid. In the beginning it is best to keep window views blocked by closed curtains and to place large stickers or decals at the Greyhound's eye level on all sliding glass doors.

**The Entry/Exit Doors:** Anytime you or anyone (adult or especially a child) enters or exits your home through the front, back, or garage door, you must be very careful not to let your Greyhound slip out the door to an unfenced area! Remember, these dogs have been trained to react to doors swinging open by running right through them! Never answer your door without either putting your Greyhound in another room with the door closed, or have someone hold his collar firmly. Teach all family members and friends to open doors slowly and carefully or you will find your Greyhound happily running outside, possibly into an unfenced area and then down the street. Greyhounds are notorious for ignoring your calls to come back when they are excited and running, so please be very careful not to let your Greyhound slip out the doors to your home to unfenced or dangerous areas.

**The Honeymoon Period:** All newly adopted dogs go through a "honeymoon period." For the first week or so, the Greyhound may be very quiet and extraordinarily controlled and good. His/her "full" personality usually appears four to eight weeks later — after he/she has figured out the house rules, the schedule, and the personalities of his new family. At this time, he/she may start testing out his position in the pack

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order, and may regress to puppyhood behaviors or pushy behaviors. We recommend reading *How to be the Leader of the Pack...and Have Your Dog Love You for It* by Patricia McConnell, Ph.D. This excellent 12-page booklet clarifies how to be a good leader and avoid aggression related to fear or dominance. If you want to be a natural leader to your dog pack and teach your dog that being polite is fun, this booklet explains how to do it in a peaceful way. The ideas and exercises in this booklet are based on the way dogs communicate with each other, so they are highly effective and easy for your dog to understand.

**Bonding with Your Greyhound:** Occasionally new Greyhound adopters do not want to discipline their new Greyhound because they think the dog was abused or that he won't love/bond with them if they discipline him. Unfortunately, these are the adoptions that tend to have serious problems several months down the road. After a few weeks of no discipline or corrections, your Greyhound learns that he is in control (and he actually is). Any dog who believes he is in control of all situations thinks he is the rightful leader (alpha dog) of his new family pack. Once a Greyhound thinks he is alpha he will not react very well to you or others in your family suddenly trying (challenging his position and authority) to get him to pay attention to what you want him to do. This is usually displayed by ignoring you, growling at you, and can in very extreme cases lead to a snap. Greyhounds are more aware of pack order than other pure breeds because they are raised/kept with their littermates until they are 12 to 18 months old. The pack order in a Greyhound litter is established early usually by the age of 2 or 3 months old.

Therefore, it is up to you to become a confident and fair leader to your new Greyhound. A foolproof way to establish yourself as a good leader of the pack is by using the NILIF (Nothing In Life Is Free) method of training, located at the web site: <http://www.k9deb.com/nilif.htm> As described by Deb McKean, an expert on this training method, "The NILIF program is remarkable because it's effective for such a wide variety of problems. A shy, timid dog becomes more relaxed knowing that he has nothing to worry about, his owner is in charge of all things. A dog that's pushing too hard to become "top dog" learns that the position is not available and that his life is far more enjoyable without the title and responsibility."

We recommend you and your family become familiar with the NILIF method. The only modification to make in the beginning, is to train your new Greyhound to do something easier like "wait," instead of trying to tackle the sometimes very difficult "sit" command as the first command you teach your new Greyhound. Because of his huge muscles in his rump, the "sit" position is generally not a common position your Greyhound will take on his own, but he can be taught using positive, non-force, Greyhound-specific methods, such as are described in chapter 8, pages 105-107, of the book, *Retired Racing Greyhounds for Dummies* by Lee Livingood. Teaching a Greyhound to sit can take some time and a lot of patience and is better left as a command to teach after you have established yourself as his trusted leader and bonded with your new Greyhound.

To teach the "wait" command, put a treat on the floor, hold your Greyhound's collar, say "wait," place your other hand in front of his face like a stop sign, and hold him for 5 seconds, then say "OK" or "get it" while pointing at the treat and release your hound and let him eat the small treat. Repeat two to three times several times a day until he learns to wait/not move forward for a least 5-10 seconds until you point and use the release command. Eventually you will not have to hold his collar and will be able to use just the command and signal. This can take several days or weeks to teach, but be patient it is worth the effort. To your Greyhound, the "wait" command means, "give this a few seconds" and "don't take that biscuit just yet." Said at the curb, it means, "we'll be moving again in a moment." This simple command has many uses and teaches your Greyhound to be patient.

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The more you understand your dog from his canine perspective, the easier it will be to modify behaviors and integrate him happily into your family "pack."

### **Introducing Your Greyhound to...**

**Other Dogs:** We recommend that all human and canine family members participate in the selection of one of our Greyhounds. For the adoption to work, everyone must be in agreement, including your other dogs.

The meeting between dogs may have gone wonderfully at the adoption kennel, but now you are bringing another dog into your current dog's home. Introductions and the first few days are critical. It is wise to introduce your current dog(s) one at a time, on neutral territory, and have both on leads. Do not let them out in the yard alone together until they are comfortable with one another.

Once in your home, your current dog may not be comfortable initially with the presence of the new Greyhound and make his displeasure known in a number of ways, including: marking, housebreaking accidents, and sudden possessiveness to toys he used to not care about (but doesn't want the new Greyhound to have.) The current dog may act jealous and a little insecure about his place in your family's pack. Your current dog will need reassurance during this time, but should not be permitted to misbehave or treat your new Greyhound poorly. While it may be hard on you to watch either or both dogs being insecure during this transition period, don't be tempted to spoil either dog. Let them work out who will be the leader and who will be follower between themselves.

**Cats:** Cats are another story. Even though we cat-test all Greyhounds who are placed in adoptive homes with cats, there are no guarantees when it comes to dogs and cats living peacefully together. When bringing your new Greyhound home to meet your feline pack for the first time, you must keep your Greyhound muzzled and on leash, under your complete control. You want your Greyhound to get the point that the cat is a member of your "pack" and not fun to chase or otherwise harass or harm. You may need to hold or even leash your cat during these introductions. Being a Greyhound, he will most likely want to chase the cat if she runs, but occasionally, a stronger prey drive may make the Greyhound more cat aggressive.

Again, if he tries to dart for the cat, firmly correct your Greyhound with a low growly sounding "NO" and a firm jerk of his leash. Don't unmuzzle or unleash him around your cat until you feel comfortable with their interactions. Very often the cat has a word or two to say, and emerges as a pretty bold and tough character. Be very careful at first and never leave the cat and the Greyhound loose together in the house.

Chances are once the cat can leave your "meeting room," you will not see her for several days until SHE is ready to accept your Greyhound. Your cat may also take a liking to sleeping on tall tables, shelves or perches until she feels comfortable around the Greyhound.

You will need to rethink how you feed your cat, so that your new Greyhound will not eat her food (which is irresistible to Greyhounds). Also, Greyhounds tend to love to eat cat poop out of the litterbox. So, placing the litterbox up high or in a room which is blocked by a baby gate about 12 inches off the floor (so the cat can go under but not the Greyhound) is also something to think about.

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Please understand, although your Greyhound may have totally accepted your cat while in the house, his acceptance may NOT apply to your cat or your neighbor's cat when they are outside together. If a cat and a Greyhound get into a fight, the cat will LOSE the fight and may be killed.

**Children:** Hopefully, all family members participated in the selection of your newly adopted Greyhound and those introductions have already been successfully made. But you may have friends and neighbors eager to come over and meet him. Don't forget that he is already nervous. With too many people reaching out to touch him or crowding over him, he might panic a bit. It is not unusual for kids to get bitten or nipped if they rush up screaming at the dog and try to pet him roughly. He has no idea what the child's intentions are and has not yet become relaxed in his new environment.

Put off introductions to outside people until the next week after your Greyhound has had a chance to settle in. Teach your children and any others that will come into contact with your new Greyhound how to properly behave around the dog, and never allow them to mistreat or harass the dog at any time but especially while he is sleeping, eating or chewing a raw hide bone.

Teach children how to act when with your Greyhound! Small children often want to express their affection for the pet Greyhound by patting/slapping the top of the dog's head, hugging or clinging on the dog. Though Greyhounds will endure all sorts of irritating treatment initially, in silence, their limits will be reached and they may growl, bark, or even snap. Greyhounds never intend to do harm, but if the child's body is in the path of their snap, harm could unintentionally occur. They'll also start avoiding your children and will cringe when they approach. You don't want this to happen, so teach your children the correct way to interact with a Greyhound by gently stroking the neck and side of the shoulders or gently brushing instead. Also enforce that tails, ears and mouths are private things, not play things.

Do not let young or inexperienced children play with your Greyhound (or any dog) unsupervised. New human introductions should also be one at a time, preferably on leash for extra control should it be needed. Let your Greyhound take the initiative to greet the new person or child. He may want to sniff the person first, before any gentle petting is done. Take your cues from your new Greyhound -- How comfortable does he appear with all of this extra attention? Many Greyhounds are real hams and love to be the center of attention. For them, the more the merrier with new people. Others may be a bit more overwhelmed with their new situation.

Common sense should rule the day!

### **Housebreaking Your Greyhound**

**Feeding Time: When and How Much?** Because of your new Greyhound's nerves and excitement, it is best to withhold food and water for the first few hours until he begins to relax. If it is a hot day or your Greyhound is extremely thirsty, it is better to offer a few cracked/chipped ice cubes. Nervous Greyhounds have a tendency to drink too much water too quickly, taking in too much air and causing them to throw it back up almost immediately.

Try to establish a feeding schedule that will be as consistent as possible. We recommend two feedings (morning and evening). Most likely your Greyhound will be so overwhelmed with his new home, he may not be interested in eating at all the first day. Even so, put the food bowl out where you wish him to eat and leave it there for 15 to 30 minutes. At the end of that time, remove the bowl and any uneaten food. Do not offer food again until the next scheduled feeding time.



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This teaches your Greyhound when and where mealtime occurs, and that he is expected to eat at this time. Free feeding (leaving food out at all times) encourages housebreaking accidents since he may be nibbling constantly, and when two dogs are present, there is no way to monitor how much each dog is eating. In fact, until everyone is comfortable, other dogs should be fed away from the new Greyhound to prevent fights over food. During this insecure transition period, dogs can become more possessive of their food. You can feed them in the same room, but use opposite corners, putting the dominant dog's bowl down first. This is usually the resident dog on the first few nights — but that situation may change over time! You may want to arrange having another adult in the room for the first few weeks of feedings to monitor the pack behavior. Make sure that each dog sticks to his own bowl. Stay vigilant over feeding time for a couple of months until the pack positions are worked out.

You can start by feeding as recommended in your adoption folder (typically 3 to 4 cups per day for females and 4 to 5 cups per day for males}. Feed half in the morning and the other half at night. When feeding add warm water to the kibble to soften it a little (you can add a small spoon of yogurt once a week to keep the gut healthy) and try to feed at the same times each day. A half-hour to 1 hour after feeding, let your Greyhound go outside to relieve himself. Doing this will help your Greyhound get on a regular daily schedule for eating and outdoor "bathroom breaks" and thus speed the housebreaking training, too.

Try not to put on more than 4 to 8 pounds to your Greyhounds current weight. Greyhounds will always try to convince you that they need more food and are experts at begging. Be firm and don't let those sad puppy eyes fool you into letting your Greyhound eat like a pig. If your Greyhound has gained more than 8 pounds then start to scale back the amount of kibble and treats you feed or switch to a reduced-calorie kibble, until you learn the correct amount to feed your Greyhound so that he stays lean, muscular and you can feel his ribs. On the other hand, very large Greyhounds (95 pounds +) may need to eat a little more than the recommended amounts of kibble given above. Experiment a bit until you learn how much to feed your Greyhound in order to keep his weight stable and his body lean.

**Don't Let Them Steal Your Food Off Your Plate or Countertops:** To keep the nosy Greyhound from stealing items and food off of your countertops, use a baby gate to block him from that area or remove anything and everything from your countertops, because he will get to it. It will never become a problem if you just block his entry with a baby gate.

To keep your Greyhound from pulling up his own chair at the dinner table, use a small squirt bottle filled with water. It quickly trains your overly curious Greyhound to leave you and your food alone when you are eating. Just a small squirt on the head and a firm "No" and he will learn to approach you only after you are finished. After you are finished, and not before, treat him (not from your plate) and praise him when he minds his manners. Be consistent, never feed food from the table or your plate and don't let his sad puppy eyes fool you! And remember, keep your Greyhound from getting into trouble or possible harm by keeping your kitchen garbage can out of his way, in the garage or under the sink.

### **Leaving Your Greyhound Home Alone**

**To Crate or Gate? That is The Question:** Initially, your new Greyhound may have varying degrees of separation anxiety when you leave him. Crating the dog in the beginning will eliminate accidents, most chewing destruction (which may be dangerous besides frustrating), and any other mischievous activity that may be rooted in nervousness and insecurity. A crate can provide a place where the dog feels safe

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in your absence. Unless your Greyhound has very bad separation anxiety, then please try to use baby gates to confine your dog. Crating a Greyhound for more than 4 to 5 hours is not recommended.

To confine your Greyhound to a "dog-safe" area or room you can use a few baby gates in the kitchen or other room during the day. Never confine your Greyhound to a bathroom. Experience has shown that this room is way too small for a Greyhound and is loaded with dangerous items your Greyhound could ingest, or get into.

Using baby gates allows your Greyhound to be in a familiar place with familiar things without being totally confined. If the area of confinement is too large, however, you may begin to have problems with housebreaking accidents. For those with bigger Greyhounds, you may need to piggyback a set of gates atop each other in the door frame.

**Start "Alone Training" your New Greyhound:** Alone Training makes a huge difference in how your new Greyhound will feel and act when left home alone. Start by either placing your Greyhound in his crate or place your Greyhound 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 to 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 to 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/her attention is NOT on you, then pet him/her, in a calm voice tell him/her "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 to 50 minutes then he will likely be fine 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.

If your Greyhound has an accident, chews up something, or demonstrates signs of true separation anxiety while alone, do NOT scold him/her it will only make your dog more anxious. Clean up the mess and start at the very beginning of Alone Training. Alone Training can take a few days, a few weeks, or up to a few months depending on the individual dog.

**Anti-Anxiety Remedies for Dogs:** There are now many safe "over the counter" anti-anxiety remedies that can help calm your dog so that "Alone Training" can be productive. Thunder shirts and compression vests also have been credited with calming anxiety.

**Give Your Greyhound a Filled Kong Toy:** Each time you leave your Greyhound confined, whether to a gated area or crate, make sure the dog knows he is a good boy. Give your Greyhound a Kong Toy filled with frozen peanut butter, cream cheese, or try one of the many Kong recipes listed at the web site, [www.KongCompany.com](http://www.KongCompany.com). The Kong toy treat will keep him happy and busy for hours licking at the yummy filling inside. Give your Greyhound a filled Kong Toy when you leave home, so that it is a special treat he looks forward to receiving at that time. It makes him actually look forward to the times you leave!



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**Make Leaving Him/Her Alone Unexciting:** ALWAYS make all "good-byes" when you leave the house and all "hellos" when you return as nonchalant and unexciting as possible. These are the times that your Greyhound will be the most excited all day, so if you keep it calm so will he. When you leave the house and make a big deal out of leaving and saying "good-bye" over and over while kissing or petting him, you will actually get him VERY wound up and excited and therefore he will be VERY upset and let down when you leave him behind, alone!

When you return, very calmly say "hello" and if all is in order, praise the dog for being good while you were away. Take him outside immediately so he can relieve himself and then play a bit with him out there. Note: It is not fair to get upset with the dog if he has an accident, but was left home alone for 10+ hours. How long can you hold it? Try to hold it for 10 or 11 hours sometime just to see how it feels. Be realistic and consistent in your expectations and demands on your dog and you will have a happy well-adjusted companion.

Two great books on separation anxiety in dogs, available at Amazon.com:

- The Dog Who Loved Too Much by Nicholas H. Dodman (Bantam Books)
- I'll be Home Soon: How to Prevent and Treat Separation Anxiety by Patricia McConnell, PhD (Dog's Best Friend, Ltd.)

### **Greyhound Hygiene**

In addition to our annual Dog Wash, MSGAO offers spa services by appointment to keep your Greyhound clean and its nails trimmed. If you prefer to do it yourself, we offer the following guidance.

**Bathing Your Greyhound:** One of the nicest features of your Greyhound is that they are virtually "permanently pressed." Grooming needs are minimal.

Greyhounds have very little oil in their skin thus have very little "doggie odor." They do not need frequent baths, usually a bath every 6 months is more than sufficient to keep your Greyhound clean. When you do bathe your Greyhound, be sure to only use lukewarm to medium warm water. If you use very warm to hot water, your Greyhound will eventually faint and slide down the shower wall. It can be helpful to have a second person help you when you bathe your Greyhound. The second person can help keep the dog from jumping out of the bathtub or shower stall and also prop up your Greyhound when/if he starts to get wobbly in the knees.

It is also important to never use cold outside tap water to bathe a Greyhound, even in the summer. Greyhounds do not have enough body fat to regulate their body temperature very well in hot or cold water, so be careful not to overheat or chill your Greyhound.

Never use human shampoo on a Greyhound (or any animal) the PH level is not good for their skin and they will end up with very dry and flaky skin if you do. Use a gentle conditioning dog shampoo, gently place a dry cotton ball in each ear to keep water out and remember to rinse, rinse and when you think you have rinsed enough, then rinse him one more time. Even the soapy residue of dog shampoo can be very irritating to your Greyhound's skin. And always dry your Greyhound completely so they do not get chilled.

**Cleaning Their Ears:** Clean their ears once a month with a cotton ball with a little baby oil on it or buy an ear-cleaning solution for dogs from a pet supply store. Never use cotton swabs in a dog's ear, as you can

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injure the eardrum or canal. If your Greyhound's ears have a very bad smell and black crust inside, it could be ear mites. Take your Greyhound to the vet for diagnosis and treatment.

**Trimming Their Nails:** Most Greyhounds are used to having their nails trimmed while they stand. Bend each foot backwards, so that you can see the underside of the nail and trim off a little bit at a time.

Many adopters report that using a hand-held Dremmel grinding tool is the most pain-free way to keep Greyhound nails short and smooth. If you use a Dremmel to grind your Greyhound's nails down, just be aware that holding the grinding tool down on a section of toe nail for too long a time can cause a lot of heat to build up from the friction.

Whatever method you use, be sure to trim a little bit off your Greyhound's nail tips every month, then you don't have to worry about over grown nails or causing the dog to bleed the next time you trim. Ask your vet or local dog groomer to show you how much to trim and what method works best. Have some styptic powder like Kwik Stop, or just have handy a bit of corn starch when you trim their nails, to stop any minor bleeding, just in case.

### **Healthcare for Your New Best Friend**

**Keep Vaccinations Updated:** Your Greyhound was spayed or neutered, received a vet check-up and had its teeth cleaned, vaccinations updated, as well as receiving the Rabies inoculation. The health sheet in the adoption folder will give you the exact dates of this care.

Annual check-ups and vaccinations should be scheduled near the anniversary of your Greyhound's adoption.

**Find a Greyhound Savvy Vet:** Before allowing your Greyhound to be anesthetized or tranquilized for any reason, please be sure your veterinarian is experienced 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 and the Sight Hound group. It could make the difference between life and death for your Greyhound! We are providing an appendix with a chart showing the critical differences between Greyhounds' bloodwork and that of other breeds. Keep this information handy for your vet visit, especially if your veterinarian has not seen a lot of Greyhounds in the past.

We have included the name and phone number of the veterinarian who spayed or neutered your Greyhound on your dog's paper work. Please insist that your vet contact this vet if there are any questions.

### **Exercising Your Greyhound**

**How Much Do They Need?** In the home environment your Greyhound, an outstanding athlete on the race track, may become a regular "couch potato." Like any dog, however, they need regular exercise to maintain their good health. A completely fenced back yard makes a nice playpen for your Greyhound, and a nice brisk walk on lead a couple times a week is much enjoyed and highly recommended.

Greyhounds love to play with their new family members, although it may take a little while for your Greyhound to show his silly side. Greyhounds seem to have a penchant for soft stuffed animals (with

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buttons, eyes or anything that could be swallowed by your hound removed) and fleece dog toys with squeakers. They will often "adopt" their own so we suggest giving your Greyhound one of each. You will find your Greyhound either snuggling up with his fuzzy friend or throwing it up in the air. Playing with your Greyhound is fun for both of you and great exercise too. Take your cues from your Greyhound, and when you see the classic "play bow" with his bottom up and front end down pose bouncing in front of you, you'll know it is time to play!

**Always Keep Them on Leash When Outside!** Exercising your dog off leash in an area that is not entirely fenced in, could cost your Greyhound his life. Your Greyhound may be entirely devoted to you and never leave your side at home, but you must remember that this breed is the product of 4,000 years of breeding to produce a 45-mph hunter with exceptional eyesight. It may be something as simple as a leaf blowing by or a small animal or piece of trash rolling down the road, and your always loyal Greyhound is off and running as fast as a horse at full gallop! They are not street wise and no car or bus could stop in time! Your Greyhound's life is not a risk worth taking.

### **A Word About Advice**

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. 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 make sure these dogs never have to be uprooted again, so we are interested in helping you troubleshoot any problems — the sooner the better before they become big problems that threaten the placement!

**All They Need is Love?** Actually, your Greyhound needs more than just love, he needs you to be very patient, very consistent with his schedule and your demands, and gentle but firm with his training. Use positive reinforcement and lots of praise when he's good. When mistakes are made, correct him only when you actually witness it happening, and praise him when he modifies his behavior.

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

### **Now that You've Adopted**

**Learn About Your Dog's Racing Life:** Learning about what your Greyhound's life was like during his career is extremely important because it will help you immensely when attempting to understand his or her behavior.

Greyhound puppies are born on a farm where they begin the early stages of training. They are raised with their littermates and sometimes stay with them through training and on into their racing careers. Greyhounds are constantly handled by people, and as a result, these puppies become very well socialized from a very early age. This is one of the reasons retired racing Greyhounds make such wonderful pets.

At about 18 months old the Greyhound puppies have had all of their necessary training and are ready to go to the track and become race dogs. While they are racing, they are kept on a tight routine, which is why they prefer to live in a scheduled home environment. Racing Greyhounds generally retire at about 2 to 4 years old, most commonly from loss of interest, injury, or age.

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The longer your Greyhound's career, the better racer he or she was. Keep in mind, though, the length of a dog's racing career is not linked in any way to his or her ability to make a fabulous pet!

MSGAO encourages you to attend the races at Southland Park Gaming and Racing so you can see first-hand what your Greyhound's life was like before he came to his or her forever home.

**Become a Volunteer:** MSGAO depends on volunteers to help spread the word about the joys of sharing life with a retired racer. Among the activities that build awareness about our wonderful program are regularly scheduled meet-and-greet (M&G) events as well as attendance at pet-related festivals.

MSGAO often needs volunteers to man (and dog?) our booth at special events throughout the Memphis/Shelby County area as well as eastern Arkansas. Becoming a meet and greet volunteer generally takes about two hours a month. If your schedule doesn't allow a monthly commitment to attend an M&G, please don't hesitate to drop in occasionally. MSGAO and your dog will thank you!

When you meet and greet you get the opportunity to dispel the myths about Greyhounds — e.g., they're hyper, they need a lot of exercise — while your dog gets to spend some time with his pals. An added benefit is seeing the wonder in people's eyes as they discover how gentle and loving Greyhounds are.

**Support MSGAO:** The cost of preparing a Greyhound for adoption far exceeds the adoption fee. We ask you to support our mission through monetary or supply donations. You can sign up for sustained monthly giving on our website ([www.msgao.org](http://www.msgao.org)). We have an Amazon Wish List for our most needed supplies, which include first-class postage stamps, two-pocket folders, canned mackerel, Simple Green, Odoban, paper towels, large Milk-Bones, Charmin toilet paper, new or gently used bath towels, new or unused toys and blankets, Dawn dish soap, laundry detergent for high-efficiency machines, or Walmart or Costco gift cards. All donations are tax-deductible to the full extent allowed by law.

*This information was adapted from the Greyhound Care Manual compiled & written by Marnie Grosz of Recycled Racers Inc - © Copyright 2003.*



## Appendix

### Blood Tests for Greyhounds

This information is presented separately so you can have a handy reference to take to vet visits (particularly the chart of blood values), especially if the veterinarian does not routinely care for Greyhounds. When your veterinarian sends your Greyhound's blood to a lab, she/he is most commonly asking the lab to run a CBC (Complete Blood Count).

This common analysis covers these items:

- **RBC** = Red Blood Cells
- **Hgb** = Hemoglobin
- **PCV/HCT** = Packed Cell Volume/Hematocrit
- **WBC** = White Blood Cells
- **Platelets** = Help to form blood clots to stop bleeding.

For a more in-depth look, usually to determine kidney/liver functions, your veterinarian may also ask for a "Chem Panel." This will give them information about:

- **T.P.** = Total Protein Globulin
- **Creatinine** = A waste product filtered out of the blood by the kidneys.
- **T4** = Thyroid level

If you don't understand what your veterinarian has ordered, ask for details!

Greyhound blood work has enough differences from "other dog" blood work to sometimes make it deceptively "normal" or "abnormal" if your veterinarian isn't familiar with these differences. The salient differences are discussed below.

### Greyhound Blood Values Compared to Other Breeds

#### Greyhounds:

RBC: 7.4 - 9.0  
Hgb: 19.0 - 21.5  
PCV: 55 - 65  
WBC: 3.5 - 6.5  
Platelets: 80,000 - 200,000  
TP: 4.5 - 6.0  
Globulin: 2.1 - 3.2  
Creatinine: 0.8 - 1.6  
T4 (Thyroid): 0.5 - 3.6 (mean 1.47 +/- 0.63)

#### Other Breeds:

RBC: 5.5 - 8.5  
Hgb: 12.0 - 18.0  
PCV: 37 - 55  
WBC: 6.0 - 17.0  
Platelets: 150,000 - 400,000  
TP: 5.4 - 7.8  
Globulin: 2.8 - 4.2  
Creatinine: 0.0 - 1.0  
T4 (Thyroid): 1.52 - 3.60

Greyhounds have significantly more red blood cells than other dog breeds. This elevates parameters for **RBC**, **Hgb** (hemoglobin), and **PCV/HCT**, and is the reason Greyhounds are so desirable as blood donors. Most veterinarians are aware of this difference.

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Never accept a diagnosis of Polycythemia, a once-in-a-lifetime rare diagnosis of pathologic red blood cell overproduction in a Greyhound. Conversely, never interpret a Greyhound PCV in the 30s to 40s as being normal just because it is for other dogs. A Greyhound with a PCV in the 30s to 40s is an anemic Greyhound. Generally, a Greyhound PCV less than 50 is a red flag to check for Ehrlichia.

Other Greyhound CBC changes are less well known. The Greyhound's normally low WBC has caused more than one healthy Greyhound to undergo a bone marrow biopsy in search of cancer or some other cause of the low WBC.

Likewise, Greyhound **platelet** numbers are lower on average than other dog breeds, which might be mistakenly interpreted as a problem. It is thought that Greyhound WBCs, platelets, and total protein may be lower to physiologically make room in the bloodstream for the increased red cell load.

Compounding these normally low WBC and platelet numbers is the fact that Ehrlichia, a common blood parasite of Greyhounds, can lower WBC and platelet counts. So, if there is any doubt as to whether the WBC/platelet counts are normal, an Ehrlichia titer is always in order. The other classic changes with Ehrlichia are lowered PCV and elevated total protein. But bear in mind that every Greyhound will not have every change, and Ehrlichia Greyhounds can have normal CBCs.

Greyhound **total proteins** tend to run on the low end of normal T.P.s in the 5.0s and 6.0s are the norm. While the albumin fraction of T.P. is the same as other dogs, the globulin component is lower.

Greyhound **creatinines** run higher than other breeds as a function of their large lean muscle mass. A study at the Auburn University College of Veterinary Medicine found that 80% of retired racing Greyhounds they sampled had creatinine values above the standard reference range for other dogs. As a lone finding, an elevated creatinine is not indicative of impending kidney failure. If the BUN and urinalysis are normal, so is the elevated creatinine.

The **thyroid** figures are from a University of Florida study of thyroid function in 221 Greyhounds — 97 racers, 99 broods, and 25 studs — so it included both racers and retirees. While Greyhound thyroid levels are a whole chapter unto themselves, a good rule of thumb is that Greyhound T4s run about half that of other breeds.

And lastly, the good news — Greyhound **urinalysis** levels are the same as other dog breeds. It is normal for males to have small to moderate amounts of bilirubin in the urine.

*Information Adapted from What's in those Blood Tests? by Suzanne Stack, D.V.M.*