



*Registered charity in England
and Wales no.1069438*

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Dear

Thank you for your enquiry about adopting a greyhound.

Please read through this information and when you feel ready, kindly complete the questionnaire attached and return it to us and then we will be able to arrange a home visit and consider from where a dog can be obtained.

We feel it is fair to point out that in line with other welfare groups who do similar work, we would appreciate a donation of at least £75 on adoption of one of our dogs, to enable us to continue to take in, maintain and prepare for adoption (with vaccination, dental cleaning, sterilisation etc) more dogs in need.

If in the special circumstances of a dog not already having been operated (ie straight from a dog track or being unsafe due to recent oestrus/heat), we require you to undertake this, including the dental cleaning, as soon as possible and to arrange for the veterinary bill please to be sent to us for payment and for us to know that it has been done.

With best wishes,

The Trustees of Greyhounds in Need

March 2009

Founded by: Anne and Arthur Finch

Trustees: Carl Boyde MRCVS, Terrance Dickens, Martin Humphery, Liz Mason

General Manager: Carolyn Davenport Treasurer: Geoffrey Levy FCA G.I.N. Shop (Bournemouth): Sue North

Homing UK: Pat Whipps Webmaster: Leigh Dworkin

(Your copy to keep)

GREYHOUNDS IN NEED

Please do not be offended by this questionnaire. We are anxious that the Greyhounds should go to homes where they will be understood, happy and cared for on their retirement. They have served well as sporting animals and now deserve a loving, secure and comfortable life. We try to match the dog to the home.

(Please see below)

Do you want a male or female?		
What other pets do you have at home?		
Are all the members of the family equally keen to have a Greyhound?		
Have you owned a dog before?		
What happened to it?		
Do you have children? What are their ages?		
Do you live in a house? Other? Flat? Which floor?		
Will the dog live inside as a family pet?		
Do you have a private garden?		
Is it securely fenced? How many metres/feet in height?		
Are you sure that you can spare the time exercising your dog?		
Where would the dog sleep at night?		
Where would the dog live during the day?		
What are your working hours?		
What will you do with your dog when you are on holiday?		
Do you know a local veterinarian?		
Would you have your dog neutered/sterilised?		
Can you afford the following care:		
Annual Booster : £35 approx.		
Regular Worming : £15 approx.		
Dental Cleaning : £300 approx.		
Spaying / Neutering - £150-£220		
Name :		Address :
		Post Code :
Home telephone number :		
Daytime telephone number :		
Mobile number:		
Fax number :		
E-mail :		
I am over 21 years of age and have read and understood the information on handling a sighthound as described in the homing pack or the book "Pet Owner's Guide to the Greyhound" by Anne Finch available at £5.99		Signature : Date :
Greyhounds in Need 33 High Street Wraysbury, Middlesex. TW19 5DA		* If you are interested in adopting one of our greyhounds, please complete & return this questionnaire to us as soon as possible *

(To complete and send to us, please)

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'GREYHOUNDS IN NEED' (GIN) HOMING AGREEMENT

In respect of the following Greyhound: -

Pet Name	Racing Name	Ear Mark/ Microchip number	D.O.B	Colour/ Sex	Last Vaccination date	Origin /Trainer	Date of neutering/ last season

Thank you for giving a home to this Greyhound. The dog may have been rescued from abandonment, may have suffered cruelty or become unwanted due to domestic upheaval or was simply retired from racing. Strenuous exercise may exacerbate old racing injuries. Most of these dogs have never been in a home before. As we do not know their entire history, we can give no assurance on any aspect of their temperament or long-term physical condition. Please refer to our "Guidance Notes for Greyhound owners"

1. I am the new owner of the dog whose details appear at the head of this Agreement.
2. I acknowledge that I have received a copy of GIN's "Guidance Notes for Greyhound Owners" and that this will be my guide in assuring a long and healthy life for my dog.
3. I have made a donation to GIN (minimum £75) on adopting this dog as my contribution to the costs of sterilisation and other expenses. I accept full responsibility for all regular and emergency veterinary treatment.
4. I agree to consult GIN if I need further help or guidance and that, if necessary for this purpose, I will allow a representative of GIN to inspect the dog. Should the dog go missing I will inform the council dog warden, the police and GIN.
5. I understand that, in the event of my being unable to meet essential veterinary expenses, GIN will, on application by me, give consideration to financial assistance. Any such assistance, and its amount, will be at the absolute discretion of the Trustees of GIN.
6. I will take good care of the dog as a respected family pet inside my home. It will not be raced, bred, used for blood donation, or sold. In the event of my being unable to continue to give the dog a home I will consult GIN regarding the dog's future.
7. It is a legal requirement that the dog shall wear an identity disc carrying his/her address, **at all times.**

Signed	Date
Name (please print)	
Address (please print)	
Telephone	Email
Signed on behalf of "Greyhounds In Need"	Date

White copy – New Owner

Green copy – Homing Officer

Pink copy - Head Office

GUIDELINES FOR NEW OWNERS OF RETIRED GREYHOUNDS

Thank you for offering a loving home to this most abused and undervalued breed of dog. In England, at one time they were permitted to be owned only by Kings and Noblemen, and to kill a Greyhound was a capital offence. They are the dog of dogs; gallant, gentle, generous and ever grateful for love, care, comfort and companionship which has been denied them since they were born into the world of racing.

We will be asking the new owner to sign a contract, which will safeguard the dog's interests for the rest of its life. It will state that the dog will not be used for personal gain, for racing or for breeding.

Ex-track racing dogs have not been in a home. The racers from Spain are usually bred in kennels in Ireland and transported there in lorries at about 18 months old. All racers have been trained to chase small, moving, furry objects, so great care must be taken with regard to their contact with cats or small dogs. Some dogs are safe immediately they are retired; others respond to detraining; others can never be trusted. A muzzle can be used. On the positive side, Greyhounds are very well mannered on the lead, and will not tug and are generally very happy kept on the lead walking beside you. Do not let your dog run free for at least three months or more, or even never, until you are quite sure that he/she will come back when called. They do not need vigorous exercise. By nature they are very lazy and in addition they probably have joint, toe and muscle injuries from racing and should only have gentle exercise. Their injuries will then not normally be apparent as companion animals.

Toilet training needs to be done sensitively. In the kennels the dogs are usually clean in their sleeping area but regard the floor as the toilet. Some adapt immediately to the notion that the floor of the house is taboo and that they must be taken outside. Others need patience, understanding and encouragement and time to understand the new regime. Frequent attention to taking the dog outside hourly during the first day and praising him/her when he/she performs, may be all that is necessary. Punishment after the accident indoors, serves only to frighten the dog, and perpetuate confusion, panic and more accidents.

A Greyhound has a sensitive physiology and may not be able to eat all he/she needs in food just once a day. It may be best to divide the meals into three smaller meals per day. Usually they are not greedy and should be given all they want. As a racer they are usually kept underweight and should be fatter as retired dogs. The sacro-iliac joint and ribs should not be visible. A well-fed dog makes a happier more restful companion. Bitches generally should weigh 24-29kg and males 27-32kg.

The dog should have a soft bed of its own; somewhere to retreat from the children and hubbub of the home where he/she will not be disturbed. It can be an old duvet, eiderdown, or settee cushions. Their leanness necessitates protection of the bony prominences and joints over which sores and swellings can develop

An identity disc should be worn at all times, even in the house and particularly during the very vulnerable time when the dog is being transported somewhere.

Leaving a dog alone can be a problem for some. They have always lived with many other dogs in kennels. A dog should not be left for more than 4 – 5 hours because of the need for the toilet. Greyhounds crave companionship. Adopting a second greyhound can help.

Dogs can be looked after in apartments if the owners are dedicated enough to take the dog out 3-4 times a day, especially late at night and early in the morning. A garden must be fenced 2 metres high if the dog is alone in it. They can jump when motivated but are usually too lazy.

If you have any problems, please contact

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.(Taken from Greyhound Rescue Inc.USA)

Greyhounds are wonderful dogs however they do have a few simple needs.

- 1. A Greyhound is: Eager to please Quiet (rarely barks) Clean with minimal shedding, Gentle and non aggressive, Good natured with children and other pets, Grateful for his new home, Highly Intelligent, 26 - 29 inches at the shoulder, between 59 and 80 pounds, Affectionate and friendly, The perfect companion*
- 2. They are better with children than most breeds and will usually walk away rather than growl or snap at children if they become overbearing. They cannot be tormented for long periods of time. Even a gentle Greyhound has his limits.*
- 3. Due to their very low body weight, Greyhounds are indoor dogs. They are very sensitive to cold or hot weather; A run in a fenced enclosed garden for exercise is fine. However they should not be left in a garden all day while you are not at home.*
- 4. Greyhounds do not require a lot of exercise, as people tend to imagine. Their exercise may consist of a run in a fenced garden or a walk on a lead. A Greyhound should not be walked off a lead. Greyhounds are sight hounds and can see for as much as a kilometre away. They might see something in the distance that you won't see and take off after it. If they do run off you will not be able to catch them, they can run at the speed of a racehorse. Because they have been around many dogs for their entire life. Greyhounds usually accept and even welcome other dogs you might have. A common myth is that Greyhounds do not get along with cats. That is not usually the case. Many of our adopted families have cats.*
- 6. A former racing Greyhound can be a wonderful addition to your home. As all dogs, each Greyhound will have its own personality, but this affectionate animal can be very loving and kind in its adopted home.*

GREYHOUNDS AS PETS

(Taken from Greyhound Friends NY USA)

Greyhounds make great pets! They are intelligent, affectionate, "laid back" and exceedingly clean. Although they are classified as large dogs, they are also relatively unobtrusive, polite and easy to live with. They do well with cats and other small animals. They are also good with children.

- About 70% of ex racing Greyhounds have no interest in cats • About 20% can easily be trained to be cat compatible*
- Only about 10% are not able to live with cats*

Greyhounds have virtually no "doggy" odour, even when wet. They have short hair, do not shed much and do not require grooming, other than the occasional bath and nail clipping.

Greyhounds eat about 4 cups of dry kibble a day, but some do need a premium dry dog food. A good quality lamb or chicken formula without corn or soy is generally a good choice.

Greyhounds are generally very healthy dogs, and live to 12 to 15 years. Hip displacia and other genetic defects are very rare in ex racing Greyhounds. Health problems are absolutely minimal compared to other breeds, although tick borne diseases in USA are a potential health risk.

Greyhounds do not need a lot of exercise, but will enjoy as much as you have time to give them. A good run in a fully fenced field once a week will keep your Greyhound fit, healthy and happy. Your Greyhound will love to go for walks, and both you and your dog will benefit from walking as often as possible. Racing Greyhounds are trained for sprinting short distances....

Greyhounds are members of the Sighthound group, and have exceedingly keen eyesight, they can see clearly for up to half a mile. The also have a genetic chase instinct and a love for running. This combination of genetic traits makes it necessary to keep your Greyhound on a lead when not in a completely enclosed area. Greyhounds hunt by sight, not by smell, and if they become lost are very unlikely to find their own way home.

Greyhounds have very little body fat (less than half that of other breeds), thin skin and short fur. Thus, they are sensitive to heat and cold, making them strictly indoor dogs. Fortunately their unusual cleanliness and lack of odour make them excellent indoor companions.

"DOGS DON'T LIE ABOUT LOVE" 1997 USA Taken from Psychologist Jeffrey Massons Book

" I went to see some Greyhounds that had been rescued by a woman who had turned her ranch into a sanctuary for them. These had been in danger of being shot because they were not fast enough. Many people assume that because racing dogs make money for their owners; they are treated well. In fact, they are often confined in small cages, except during the race, and are never shown any affection on the grounds that they need to be aggressive to win.

After brief careers, they are no long profitable and are difficult to place as pets, so they are often simply destroyed.

What struck me about these dogs was their extraordinary forgiveness. They forgave all the terrible things that had been done to them.

When you step on a dog's foot by mistake, somehow it knows that it was a mistake. The dog will immediately make up with you, lick your hand and let you know that it holds no grudge. The Greyhound does this at an even more profound level. As the dogs were brought out of their cages to see me, I found that each Greyhound gazed up at me with absolute trust and sweetness to be almost unbearable. How could their friendliness have survived their being neglected, abused and then discarded, like so much rubbish?"

"Worm Your Dog"

<i>Why Worm?</i>	<i>Because roundworms can effect any dog at any age. They can cause sickness and diarrhoea in young animals but adult dogs show no symptoms. In rare cases, roundworm larvae can cause eye damage to children. Worming your dog is easy, effective and costs very little</i>
<i>What to do?</i>	<i>Adult dogs should be wormed every six months. Expectant bitches and bitches with young puppies should be wormed more frequently, so should puppies, before and after they are weaned. The dose required depends on your dog's weight. Follow the maker's instructions carefully. If in doubt, always ask your veterinary surgeon for advice.</i>
<i>Where Can I Obtain Worming Treatments?</i>	<i>It is best to ask your vet for the correct worming tablets, because those that really work for all worms are only available from veterinary surgeries. You will need to know your dog's weight, which would be between 24-28 kilograms for a bitch and up to 35 kilograms for a male.</i>

Don't forget cats need worming too !!

FATAL DISEASES IN DOGS

There are four major infections effecting dogs today – PARVOVIRUS, DISTEMPER, HEPATITIS and LEPTOSPIROSIS. All are highly contagious, difficult and expensive to treat.

CANINE PARVOVIRUS

Perhaps the most serious and common of canine infectious diseases, "Parvo" is a relatively new disease, first being recognised in the late 70's. It rapidly became an epidemic and many hundreds of dogs died before an effective vaccine could be produced. It is still a major problem in young dogs in the UK. and outbreaks occur regularly. The onset is sudden, with vomiting and bloody diarrhoea leading to rapid dehydration and collapse. Death can occur within 24 hours. The virus may also attack the heart. The only protection against this deadly disease is by vaccination every year.

CANINE DISTEMPER

Whilst Distemper is not as common as it used to be (thanks mainly to widespread vaccination) it still occurs regularly, often in the form of local epidemics, when it can spread like wildfire through the unvaccinated dog population.

It is highly contagious and often fatal. Dogs that survive the initial viral attack are often left with a permanent disability such as deformed teeth or a predisposition to epileptic fits.

Symptoms include a high temperature, a yellow / green purulent discharge from the eyes and nose, diarrhoea, vomiting and often a cough. The pads of the feet may become cracked and hard, hence the term "HARDPAD" a name given to the particularly severe type of the disease.

Treatment is lengthy, expensive and often unsuccessful and, as the incubation period is long (about three weeks) it is often too late to vaccinate when an outbreak occurs.

CANINE HEPATITIS

Another very contagious viral disease of dogs, which is often fatal. As its name suggests it attacks the liver and symptoms include acute abdominal pain, vomiting, diarrhoea, fever and loss of appetite. Death may occur within 24-36 hours in acute cases, on the other hand the disease may take a mild form, with the dog being just dull and off it's food. In some animals the virus attacks the eyes leaving them cloudy, often referred to as "Blue eye". Animals that recover may become carriers and spread the virus to other dogs.

LEPTOSPIROSIS

Bacteria cause this disease that is spread in the urine of the infected animals. Two major forms exist in dogs. One, which causes acute illness and jaundice, is often caught from rats, either by the animal being bitten or coming into contact with rat's urine. The other type can also cause acute disease but frequently takes a chronic form leading to slow destruction of the kidneys with renal failure occurring many years after the original infection. Human beings can contract the disease by skin contact with infected urine - which is as good a reason as any to make sure your dog is free from Leptospirosis by re-vaccination.

Why You Need To Vaccinate Your Pet Every Year

PRIMARY VACCINATION

For the first few weeks of life, puppies and kittens are often protected against disease from the immunity they receive in their mother's milk. Unfortunately, this maternal immunity may also neutralise the vaccine. Gradually this protection decreases and reaches a sufficiently low level for the animal to be no longer protected and also to be able to respond to vaccination. This can occur at any time between 6 and 18 weeks of age and varies not only with each disease but also between animals even from the same litter.

There is no simple way to determine when the vaccine will "take". It is customary to give a series of vaccinations to fit in with your pet's particular needs and the local disease pattern.

ANNUAL BOOSTER

Immunity from primary vaccination is not life long and it is necessary to boost your pet's immunity by annual re-vaccination. For further advice on a suitable vaccination programme for your pet please consult your vet.

Many people believe that if they have their animals vaccinated when they are puppies or kittens the immunity they receive will protect them for the rest of their lives.

Unfortunately this is not the case. Gradually the protection weakens and in time the pet will become susceptible to the disease again.

Treatment of such diseases is difficult, and even if the animal's life is saved, it may suffer life long after effects and never again be the happy healthy companion it was. The only effective way to protect your pet is to make sure that it is vaccinated every year to ensure that it remains protected for life.

FACT	<i>A dog that has not been vaccinated against PARVOVIRUS in the last 12 months stands a much greater risk of being infected and it can be dead within 24 hours of showing the first symptoms</i>
FACT	<i>Many dogs "lucky" enough to recover from DISTEMPER will remain brain damaged for the rest of their lives, often being left with a nervous twitch or develop fits in later life.</i>
FACT	<i>CANINE HEPATITIS is often not diagnosed until it is too late. The animals may be dead within the onset of the illness</i>
FACT	<i>FELINE ENTERITIS is a killer disease of cats. In some outbreaks 60% of cats will die some before the symptoms are known.</i>
FACT	<i>FELINE RESPIRATORY DISEASE or Cat Flu affects cats of all ages and causes great suffering often for several weeks. Animals not vaccinated within the last 12 months are at risk</i>

VACCINATE YOUR PET EVERY YEAR ... FOR LIFE

REDUCING ADAPTATION ANXIETY IN THE RETIRED RACER

By Judy Kody Paulsen (Taken from Greyhound Rescue USA)

Bringing home a new dog presents a multitude of training challenges. A retired racing Greyhound has a unique background that needs particular consideration during the introduction to its adoptive home.

Your Greyhound has led a very structured life that presented very few changes on a day-to-day basis. Familiarising them properly with a different routine can make the initial adjustment much less stressful for you and your new pet.

Remember that they have been in the company of other dogs since birth. They have essentially never been alone and they could depend on seeing one or more humans at least four times a day, like clockwork. Greyhounds should be "weaned" gradually from this predictable environment, especially if brought into a home with no other pets where the family is gone most of the day.

A retired racer can be taught to accept being alone provided each family member, during the adjustment period, is patient and doesn't try to rush the process. Each dog responds differently, but in most instances they will learn to patiently await your return and suffer little or no anxiety.

Your Greyhound should be brought home when someone will be present to supervise the adaptation for at least two or three days. When you arrive home with your new Greyhound, make every attempt to stay with the dog the rest of that day and night. During this period, you can concentrate on introducing the dog to the house and the area that is to be used for relieving itself. The following morning leave the house (dog inside) for 10 to 15 minutes. Take a walk around the block, then return. That afternoon, repeat the same procedure, only stay away about an hour. The next day try two hours in the morning and two in the afternoon. The first day the family leaves for work or school, someone should return home at lunch. Repeat this for the next two or three days, continually reassuring your pet that you will be back. Hopefully by the end of the week, your Greyhound will understand that someone will always return home. This helps alleviate the dogs fear that it has been abandoned whenever you leave the house.

Having more than one dog (making sure that they have been introduced properly) reduces the likelihood of anxiety, when the dogs are left alone. Leaving the radio on helps too, as this is a common practice in many Greyhound kennels. Always "child proof" your house before leaving your dog inside, especially now, if the crate is no longer necessary. Don't leave the closet door ajar and be sure no food is within reach on any counters. Put shoes away and remove any articles that may be conceived as "toys", do leave a blanket or dog bed on the floor where the dog normally sleeps, or leave the crate door open. Some Greyhounds like the accessibility of their crate even when they are accustomed to their new home. Remember, the learning process can be very easy for some dogs and not so easy for others, so be patient and you will be rewarded with a loyal loving companion.

YOUR BEST FRIEND. THE RETIRED GREYHOUND

Taken from Greyhound Rescue MD, USA

*Greyhounds needs are quite basic. The main point to keep in mind when you and your Greyhound get home is **don't take anything for granted.** The Greyhound you are adopting has never seen the inside of a house. He has lived his whole life in a kennel. He will be nervous, scared and stressed. They usually adjust within two weeks but more often it's only a matter of days. To help relieve the nervousness and stressfulness walk your dog often during the first few days. This also brings about a bonding between you and your Greyhound.*

Greyhounds are easy to house train since they are kennel trained. Take him outside a lot in the first few days. If he has an accident in the house, take him to the spot. A sharp verbal "No" is all that is needed. Never hit him. When he goes outside praise him. Tell him he's a good boy and give him a pat or a hug to ensure his security for the first few days. All Greyhounds have never seen stairs. Many Greyhounds will go halfway up and become confused, panic and refuse to move. A little help and patience is all that is needed. Help him one paw at a time. They quickly learn this and become pros. Occasionally their long legs become clumsy and he will fall. Ensure he's not injured and persuade him to try again.

A Greyhound can become a best friend with a cat or small dog. Yes, we have successfully placed Greyhounds into homes with other dogs, cats, birds and even rabbits. Be very careful at first. The first few days are critical. Instinct is telling your Greyhound to chase the smaller animal, and can injure or accidentally kill it.

The Greyhound should be introduced to your other pets slowly and carefully. Greyhounds are quick to respond to all kinds of encouragement. Try to show your Greyhound that the smaller animal is a loved member of your family and is off limits. Time and patience is needed. Always use a muzzle. This way no matter how the first meeting goes the Greyhound cant hurt the smaller animal. Never leave the Greyhound and the smaller animal alone together until you are comfortable that a relationship has been formed. You as the owner must make this decision based on your personal feelings and observations

Remember that your Greyhound has never seen a cat before. If you are lucky your cat will help by being bold and swat the Greyhound with its paw making it clear the cat is not to be messed with.

If you have small children, you will be happy to know that Greyhounds are one of the best breeds for children. They are very tolerant, affectionate and gentle. But, Greyhounds do have their limits as most animals do. Children must be taught how to handle the pet. Do not allow your children to pull tails, poke eyes or sit on the Greyhound. You cannot expect any dog to tolerate pain and torment and not become upset. So please teach your children how to treat your new Greyhound.

Always be careful when your Greyhound is sleeping. He is used to sleeping in a kennel and alone. Always talk to your sleeping Greyhound before you touch him. Some Greyhounds sleep with their eyes open, so take care not to startle him. Do not shut your Greyhound away from everyone, he wants to be a member of your family and will much prefer to be in the same room as you. Always watch your Greyhound closely with children during the first few weeks.

Often the change in the Greyhounds life style from track to your home and the change of food can give him diarrhoea. Give him plenty of cooked rice with dry dog food. Dog food that looks pretty is bad for the Greyhound because of the dyes that are used.

Be sure to walk your Greyhound outside often, as he can't hold it for long. If the diarrhoea has not cleared up in 2 to 3 weeks, please seek veterinary treatment.

Greyhounds make great jogging companions, but remember they can't tolerate the summer heat. Please don't take your Greyhound out without a lead, not until you are extremely comfortable with your decision that he won't run off. The problem is the Greyhounds know nothing about roads. They hunt by sight not smell. Your dog could spot a squirrel or rabbit up to half a mile away, lose all sense of trained behaviour as instinct take over, run out into traffic, and possibly be hit and killed. No matter how well trained your greyhound is and no matter how long you own the dog this is always a possibility when you expose your Greyhound to the outdoors without a lead. The Greyhound is safe in a fenced area without the worry.

Spaying / neutering must be done within 90 days of adopting and a copy of the certificate must be returned to the relevant rescue group. If necessary have their teeth cleaned at the same time to avoid risk by anaesthetising

Please make sure your veterinarian understands the anaesthesia used on a Greyhound. The wrong types or doses can kill them. Please call Greyhounds In Need (01784 483206) and we can refer you to a vet who does. Enough of warning. After you work through the first few days of adjustment, I am sure you will find your Greyhound to be a faithful companion. Remember, time, patience and affection work wonders. Few things in life are as rewarding as taking one of these gentle dogs into your home.

I Promise To Be Good By Judy L Arthur, USA

I never ceases to amaze me...Whenever I am invited to speak to the public on adopting retired racers, I get asked the same basic questions over and over with many terrible misconceptions about the breed.

"Are they vicious because they wear muzzles?" "Do I need a football field for them to exercise?" "Are they ruined as a pet, being a race dog?" "Are only old or injured Greyhounds up for adoption?" etc.

I guess the best-kept secret across America (and other countries) is what absolutely wonderful pets retired racers make. Let me try and clear up some of the major misconceptions and to answer some basic questions concerning these loveable, dear and gentle Sighthounds.

Very young Greyhounds are sometimes up for adoption. If they are not fast enough on the track, they are ready for new homes as early as 18 months. The majority are up for adoption at 3 to 4 years of age, usually because they have been replaced with a younger and faster dog. Greyhounds live to be 12 or 14 years old or more so a four-year-old has a very long life ahead of him.

Many believe a racer runs 24 hours a day with never ending energy. Not true! A Greyhound is a couch potato. Two minutes loping in the garden brings about a four hour nap! The official race at a track only lasts a matter of seconds and the Greyhound needs at least three days of rest before he is allowed to race again. As with any breed, the ex racer needs adequate exercise; a nice walk per day in an average garden is fine. However, if you would like to see beauty in action, visit your fenced in grass football field or school yard occasionally.

How about Greyhounds were being ruined as a pet after being used as a racer? Let me try and explain something. If Greyhounds come from good trainers and good kennels, we say he's been to "boot camp." He is regimented trained, has been to school. He is kennel trained (house trained), lead trained, crate trained and extremely obedient.

By the time they are at the age to race, they have passed life's health test. A sick dog cannot race. Hip displacia is virtually unknown. They have no doggie odour, if brushed no shedding problem. They usually have good conformation. Wrong conformation makes slow dogs.... does all this sound bad to you?

In this day when most couples are both working, bringing home a dog which is already kennel trained has got to be a plus! Racers are kept in indoor heated / air conditioned kennels year round, let out every four or five hours to go to the toilet during the day so house training usually takes only a weekend for the new owner.

Greyhounds are "love-dogs" with a tremendous will to please. Patient, extremely adaptable clean, sociable creatures, if introduced slowly and properly; they love the company of other pets.

Many chapters and groups are working by educating the public as to how wonderful retired racers are. Thirteen thousand were adopted last year, but it still never ceases to amaze me how much is still unknown.

Humble, gentle, picturesque in stature, fun loving and so appreciative. I remember when I went to adopt my own Greyhound as she patiently lay in her crate, I could feel her heart pounding as her soft gentle eyes said, "I'll be good if you take me home.....I promise to be good...."

Judy Arthur lives near Charleston, W. Virginia, USA, with her husband, son and three dogs. The dogs are active in adoption presentations, have appeared in two nation-wide videos, on greeting cards. In several dog magazines etc.

Give A Greyhound A Home

Introduction

Greyhounds are, with laboratory beagles, probably the most abused breeds of dog. They are bred in their thousands in Ireland and in Britain, to race at the 70 or so race tracks in the country. They start their racing careers at about 18 months and are retired, if they survive the course, at about 4 years old. Hence, they have 10 or more years of life ahead of them (they can live until 16 years old) when a loving, comfortable, understanding environment is so well-deserved by these beautiful, valiant dogs.

Those of us, who have come to know the greyhound, fall under a spell. They change our lives, our priorities and our sense of values. Their gentle, apologetic, often timid nature draws strong protective emotions from us and once touched by this breed, it is common for owners to say they would never choose any other breed but a greyhound.

Their Lives as Racers

A greyhound is almost always born in kennels in Britain or in Ireland, from where they are exported. Irish greyhounds may have been reared on a farm where they are allowed as youngsters to run wild, to hunt and fend for themselves. At 12-14 months they are kennelled and schooled and their freedom ends. Some have had very little contact with humans and when they start competing, they are treated as running machines and are rarely called even by name. An N.G.R.C. (National Greyhound Racing Club) kennel is traditionally a sleeping bench with paper bedding and 1.5 metres or so off concrete floor area. The dogs are usually kennelled in pairs, male and female. They are released in twos and threes, 4 or 5 times a day into a paddock area. They are fed commonly, boiled meat and vegetables with brown bread at about 1 p.m. and the kennels close mid-afternoon to allow the trainers to prepare their racers for the evening's race meeting. They are left then until 7.00 the next morning. They adapt well to this routine. They know no other.

The Chasing Instinct

They are trained at 12-16 months to chase a furry object that runs away from them. The 'lure' at a racetrack is often a soft toy like a teddy bear on a wire. I tell you this because one family in Germany euthanased a bitch we had taken enormous trouble to rescue and import from Barcelona because in her first two weeks in their home, she destroyed a toy rabbit. Such tragedies haunt us forever. Some greyhounds are given a live kill. It is illegal but it happens. Hence it is supremely important to understand that these dogs have had their hunting/killing instinct cultivated by man. Pups whom we have had from birth will usually live happily with any small animal. I always say there are four categories of 'keenness'.

1. non – existent
2. mildly interested, be careful
3. trainable
4. can never be trusted

The most delicate time is when you first introduce your dog into your home. Beware of your parrot, your cat and your hamster. A muzzle is essential to test the dog safely. Racing kennels and rescue groups know where to get greyhound muzzles, which are slightly different from the usual dog muzzles, found in shops. You may in the end only need to use it when you go to the vet's surgery where cats and tortoises may be running free, or if you are testing your dog off the lead for the first time in a public place. On introducing your dog to a cat, hold on to the lead, speak firmly, and do not strike your dog if he lunges at the cat. An empty 'drinks' can with pebbles inside, thrown on the ground or icy water squirted at the dog's face, can shock your dog into reconsidering what he has always been trained to do. He will look at you with questioning eyes, 'But I've always been told to do that! Are you mad?' When you insist with these techniques he will become conditioned to resisting from attacking because he soon learns on what side his bread is buttered.

Detrain with love, firmness, understanding and patience or he will have a nervous breakdown!

Exercise

Use a lead about 44" long well wrapped round your hand. Do not be fooled by the magical, slow pace at which your greyhound walks. You may even forget you have a dog on the end of your lead. Until he sees a cat, then he may turn into a bullet and this is why the firmly held lead is essential. Only some dogs do this, but don't get caught out. Regarding letting your dog off the lead, well, be careful. They either do as my Sarah does, who walks away from me always just that bit faster than I do, so I can't catch her, much to the amusement of other dog walkers, or they may take off into the blue at 40 mph. I admire the courage of sight hound owners who trust their dogs to come back (Afghans are the same). You will get to know your own dog. Start by having him run between you and your companion, calling him by name and saying 'come' and greeting him profusely when he arrives, however long he takes.

This leads me on to say that obedience classes, as long as they are fun, are an excellent aid to training your dog to socialise and obey and they cultivate the communication between you and your dog. Take a muzzle the first day. Your dog will not sit because his hind leg muscles are too toned and developed but he will excel in the 'down stays' as he is so lazy he will not want to budge anyway. Greyhounds are low on stamina and he will tire towards the end of the class.

Greyhounds are the laziest of creatures. Three short walks a day will be all he may require. He will love your car. Some will go on hikes but may need building up for this.

He could clear a fence lower than 6' but probably wouldn't unless motivated. You could block his view with solid fencing over the lower 4' so he doesn't see next-door's cat.

Feeding

Forget the fact that he was probably fed a high protein diet as a racer. It is not suitable for a retired dog. Neither is rich tinned food, which goes straight through a greyhound. A maintenance dried food, moistened with warm water or standard quality tinned food with mixer or brown bread is perfectly suitable. It is best to feed a greyhound's sensitive stomach three smaller meals a day (when you eat) than one big meal. Greyhounds do not generally eat more than they need. Keep a record of your dog's weight. Bitches should weigh between 25kg-28kg and males 30kg-34kg. The pin-bones on the back (hip bones) should be well padded and not visible and the outline of the last three ribs should just be made out. I cannot bear to see hungry, thin greyhounds constantly anxious for food, discontented and dissatisfied. It has to be said however that in old age, 12 years onwards, greyhounds tend to lose weight naturally rather than put it on like other breeds.

Accoutrements

The traditional greyhound collar is leather, wide, and fish-shaped. Your greyhound rescue group should be able to get you one, as they are not always available in pet shops. However, I note that in USA martingale collars are always worn which are of double fabric with rings and tighten on exertion. When fitting a leather collar make sure it is cosily fastened at the narrowest part of the neck just behind the ears as greyhounds have a habit of wriggling out of them backwards! I don't surely have to say that an identity disk should always be worn. Greyhounds have thin skins, they lack fat and they feel the cold (they were originally desert dogs). It is customary for them to wear a waterproof fleece-lined coat when out walking in the rain or cold. At night, if your home is without heating, then he should wear a kennel coat of wool. The galgos and podencos particularly feel the cold. They are Sahara dogs in origin.

A soft bed is essential to protect his bony prominences; for example, a duvet folded over or a couple of old settee cushions on the floor. You may need to consider whether you want your greyhound to occupy your sofa! Remember he was used to jumping up on to his bench to sleep. Start as you wish to continue.

Veterinary Care

We recommend sterilisation but check carefully with your vet that the anaesthetic to be used is correct for a greyhound without the fat to metabolise the drugs. A greyhound bitch's seasons may come 6/9 or 12 monthly. We suggest that the teeth if they are not too bad be cleaned at the same time as long as they do not prolong the anaesthetic too much or release infection. Their teeth can be in very poor condition due to sloppy racing foods and the frequent use of muzzles. Afterwards keep the teeth clean yourself with regular brushing. Your dog won't mind at all!

Greyhounds get worms badly in racing kennels so de-worm on adopting your dog with the best wormer from your vet, which takes care of tape and round worms, and continue this 6 monthly.

Your dog may experience some musculo-skeletal aches and pains from strains and stresses from his racing days. The damp cold weather exacerbates them. The wrists ('knee-like joints of the front legs) are the worst affected. Hocks (the rear elbow-like joint) are also vulnerable when an old mended fracture becomes arthritic later in life. Apart from their thin skin however, which tears easily, greyhounds have no particular inherited defects and their careful breeding which has to be made public on a race card, prevents problems, both physical and mental, of consanguinity which sadly affects so many other pure bred dogs.

Alone in the House

Some greyhounds develop a strong attachment to their saviour immediately. Be careful of this, as leaving your dog alone may then become a problem. They may be destructive, 'toilet' inappropriately or whine. From the start, teach your dog independence even though this will be difficult for you also. Don't let him follow you everywhere. Getting a second dog may solve some of these problems. Greyhounds are used to living with their own kind, and you will feel more comfortable about leaving your dogs in each other's company.

Toilet Training

Be aware that your greyhound has always lived with the notion that the floor is his toilet. Some adapt immediately to the new idea that this is taboo on internal floors, while others need to be gently guided through the new regime of toileting outside. Don't punish your dog harshly. Gently lead him outside when he starts circling or starts to 'toilet'. A firm 'no' and a loving cuddle when he performs outside may be all that is needed. Severe punishment or punishing him after the event will make matters worse and he will start toileting inside out of insecurity and fear. If overnight bowel movements are a problem then do not feed him after 2 pm after which time he can 'empty' before settling for the night.

So where do I find a Greyhound?

Several greyhound rescue groups exist throughout Britain. Most N.G.R.C. race tracks have homefinders attached to them; ask the racing manager. Most refuges and dogs' homes have greyhounds. There are thousands of retired and unwanted greyhounds condemned to kennels up and down the country, longing for individual recognition, companionship, comfort and a happy new life as much loved pets.

Anne Finch

REHOMING AN EX-RACING GREYHOUND

Getting your greyhound to successfully adapt to his new life depends not only on you offering him the stability and environment for him to thrive in, but also trying to see his new life from your dog's point of view.

Arrival Home

Depending on the history of your dog, this may be the first time he has ever been away from kennels and inside a house. Everything will be new (and possibly frightening) to him. Although it may be tempting to make a huge fuss of him, it is better to allow him a few hours just to explore this strange new environment and settle down. He is not used to having someone to turn to for reassurance, so until he learns to do this try not to be disappointed if he seems a little aloof. The two most common difficulties experienced at this stage tend to be glass doors and stairs. If your dog has come straight from kennels it is unlikely that he has ever come across either of these before. He may get up stairs easily, but need help to get back down on the first few occasions, either that or he will be too uncertain to attempt them for a little while. If this is the case it is best not to try and pull the dog up, but simply wait until curiosity gets the better of him. Large windows or patio doors need to be introduced before your dog sees a cat in the garden and tries to run straight through them. This can be done by slowly leading or calling the dog over to the doors, tapping them, then encouraging him to touch the glass with his nose or paw.

Before your dog arrives it is a good idea to decide exactly where he will be allowed to go within the house, and think about some ground rules. If you do not want him to sleep on the sofa or go upstairs, then it is unfair to let him do these things even once. He will not understand why something which was alright one day but not the next, whereas if he is never allowed to do these things then he will never expect to. Areas you want to prevent him from entering can be blocked with a stair gate, which avoids shutting him off behind a door and allows him to see and hear what is going. Sofas are particularly inviting as not only are they soft, but in many kennels the dogs sleep on a raised platform at the end of their kennel which is set about the same height off the ground as the average sofa. If you do not want your dog to lie on the sofa, offer a good alternative such as a large duvet folded in half on the floor (a thick double duvet can be bought for example from IKEA/Argos for under £10).

If you do decide that your dog will not be allowed upstairs or in the bedroom, then you must understand that they may find being totally on their own for the first few nights very difficult. If you are determined that he should remain downstairs, it may be necessary to either sleep down there with him or accept that there will possibly be a certain amount of whining or barking. If noise at night becomes a problem, it is often reassuring enough for you to come to the top of the stairs where the dog can see you, and speak gently to him. Remember that if you go downstairs and pat him every time he whines/barks, you may be establishing a behavior pattern, which could be difficult to break.

Establishing a routine

For all of his racing life your dog has been used to doing the same thing at the same time every day. He has always known what to expect, and suddenly this has changed totally. Obviously this will make him feel very insecure and uncertain, and different dogs react in different ways to this uncertainty. One of the quickest ways you can help your dog to settle is to establish a routine and stick to it. If possible it is helpful to find out roughly what time things such as feeding and exercise took place at the kennels he was in, and try to follow this at least for the first week or so. Once your dog has settled down it will become easy to gradually change his routine so it fits in more easily with your lifestyle.

Other than helping your dog to settle in more quickly a routine is particularly helpful to aid the process of house training. Most greyhounds are naturally clean, and even though they have never lived in a house before, it is generally quick and easy to housetrain them. As long as adequate opportunities are provided for them to relieve themselves outside, it should not be necessary to lay paper in the house for them as you would with a puppy. Routine plays an important part in establishing where you require them to relieve themselves. By providing regular walks or access to a garden most dogs by choice will wail to go to the toilet. This can be further aided by going on the same route at the same time each day, as the dog will quickly learn just how many lamp posts and grassy patches there are before you return home. If your dog does have an accident in the house it is better to clean the area with a product specially designed for this purpose (available from most pet shops), as many common household cleaners are ammonia based, which simply encourages the dog to use the area again. If you catch your dog in the act of relieving himself in the house you should say 'No' firmly, and take him outside immediately. When he performs outside it is important to let him know that this is good behavior by praising him.

General Care and Training

Teeth

The vast majority of greyhounds have terrible teeth for their age. They are usually covered in tartar and the traditional method of removal involves scraping the teeth while the dog is under general anaesthetic. If your dog must have an anaesthetic for another reason such as neutering, then it is worth asking the vet to do his teeth at the same time. The other way to improve the condition of his teeth is to provide hard things for him to chew. At first many greyhounds are reluctant to even eat a hard biscuit, as they have only ever eaten soft soaked food in kennels. Many dogs that will not eat hard foods still find things such as pig's ears irresistible. Other things such as 'Jumbones' and 'Rasks' are also good. Many dogs are keen on rawhide type chews, although there are some concerns over them swallowing large unchewed pieces. The best thing to do if you do decide to give these, is to watch the dog carefully for the first few times to make sure he is careful about chewing them thoroughly (my two both regularly have rawhide chews and have never

had any problem). Over several months the plaque build up on your dogs teeth should decline which should also improve his breath. Most greyhounds are fairly amiable about having their teeth brushed which is beneficial, even if only done a couple of times a week.

Stiffness/Lameness

Depending on the reason your greyhound was retired, and the amount of exercise he has been used to, you may find that initially he becomes stiff or lame after exercise. This will often pass in time as your dog becomes fitter, and adjusts to a new exercise regime. In the short term or after any particularly arduous bursts the homeopathic remedy Arnica can help to ease bruising and stiffness. A more long-term measure is to add Green Lipped Sea Mussel to his food on a daily basis (Seatone is a good brand, which is also relatively cheap - under £10 for 90 tablets). Although it may take several months for the benefit to be visible, there are many people who swear by this for long term maintenance of their dogs.

Stomach Upsets

Upset stomachs are another common problem. Quite often this will appear to get worse over the first few days, as it is probably at least partially stress related. Usually this will settle down of its own accord over time. Although it may be tempting to spoil your new pet with lots of treats, it is best to avoid these as much as possible at first, and just stick to the complete food you have decided to feed. There are several homeopathic remedies that seem to help. These are Arsen alb. and Merc sol. which are available from most chemists. One of the things which commonly cause upset stomachs are dairy products.

Diet

If your dog has come straight from kennels it is most likely that he is used to being fed twice a day on a mix of complete dry food mixed with wholemeal bread, all of which will have been soaked with water to soften it. It is not common for non-racing dogs to be given meat on a regular basis. If you find that your dog bolts his food, try to feed several small meals rather than one large one. Unless your dog is overweight it does no harm to feed him as much as he seems to want to eat, and if you do this then he will quickly become far more relaxed about food- If you have a large dog or slippery floor surface where you feed him, raising his bowl up off the floor will make his life a lot easier. You can do this simply by placing his bowl on a box or nearby chair, or buying a specialty made bowl stand (usually between £20 - 30).

Teaching Basic Commands

To begin with your main objective is to have a well-behaved dog that is under control in a variety of situations. This can be achieved with just a few basic commands.

No - At first it may seem like you say this word more often than the dog's name! When the dog does something undesirable (jumping on the sofa for example) say the word No gently but firmly, and if necessary take his collar and move him to where you intend him to sleep. Once he is in the area you want him to use for a bed give him lots of praise thereby reinforcing the idea that this is a pleasant place to be. If you calmly repeat this every time the dog gets on the sofa he will quickly learn what is expected. It is also important to fuss him just for going on his own to his bed, and not always wait until he has been guided there by you.

Come - The ultimate goal with this command is that eventually you will be able to have your dog off the lead in safe locations' and always get him back to you, regardless of the distractions around him. To achieve this he must want to come to you more than anything else, and this will only happen if he always associates his return to you as pleasant. You can begin teaching this command in the house by calling the dog at dinnertime. Say the dog's name followed by the word 'Come'. It may take a little while for him to catch on initially, as many greyhounds won't actually know their name, so you are introducing two new words. This can be carried on out in the garden, and the dog rewarded with a tit bit when he responds. It is important at this stage that you never chastise the dog, even if he has taken quite some time to return, otherwise chances are that next time he will return even slower. Once you think that he actually understands the come command you can begin to reduce the tit bits until they are given only for the fastest returns. Work on building up fast returns with more distractions and in different places (on a flexi lead in the park is good).

Letting your dog off the lead

Many people believe that greyhounds should never be let off the lead as they can cover such great distances very quickly, particularly when motivated by a moving object. They have a very well developed sense of sight and will often spot something long before you. If you have reason to believe that your dog would attack another animal or not return if called you should wait a little longer before letting him off the lead. Most greyhounds really enjoy the opportunity to have a good fast run at least once a week. It may take some time to achieve a level of control where this is possible, and as all dogs are different it is difficult to put a time scale on how long it will take.

In many cases, letting your dog off in the small confines of a crowded local park will never be an option, and under these circumstances it is a good idea to consider the alternatives. Depending on where you live it may be worth approaching a local farmer or landowner and asking if they have a fenced field that you could let your dog off in (when there are no livestock using it of course). You may be surprised at how helpful people are when the situation is explained- Many parks have fenced dog exercise areas, which are only usually busy at certain times of the day. Talking to other local dog owners is often the best source of information about facilities in your area. It often also helps to have a friend with you the first time you let your dog off. If you are worried, get the friend to hold his collar allowing you to walk away from him, then call him, this often works particularly well if you can borrow another dog that your dog knows and likes, so even if he decides to ignore you, he will usually follow the other dog. As long as the second dog can be guaranteed to return to his owner, then you may find yours will simply follow. One further piece of advice before you let your dog off

the lead is to attach two metal tags to his collar instead of the usual one. Even if the second contains no added information, it means that together the tags will jingle, making it easier to keep track of your dog if he disappears into long grass or a hedge.

Common Problems

Chasing other animals. One of the most common problems with ex-racing greyhounds away from the track environment is their reaction towards small moving animals such as cats and squirrels. This is not unexpected as you are dealing with a dog that has not only been conditioned from birth to chase, but also selectively bred for thousands of years to do exactly that. This is a deeply rooted instinct, and must be prepared for it to take a little while for him to understand that this is no longer what he needs to do. Try to bear in mind that up to this point it is his enthusiasm for the chase that has kept him alive. Many greyhounds have a reputation as cat killers, but what most people conveniently forget is that many dogs chase cats. The only difference between other dogs and greyhounds is that greyhounds are fast enough to catch them. Although initially this may seem like an insurmountable problem, in most cases it can be overcome and again it is just a matter of getting your dog to understand that this type of behavior is no longer expected of him or is acceptable.

The best method is simply an extension of the 'No' command. Whenever your dog becomes excitable about other animals you need to be able to distract him and get his attention back on you. This is best done by throwing something on the ground in front of him designed to make a noise (an empty aluminum drinks can with a few stones in the bottom is ideal) and simultaneously saying "No" in a firm voice. Do not try to grab his collar or pull on the lead. The noise of the can hitting the ground coupled with its unexpected appearance from nowhere should break his focus of attention from the animal in question. This backed up with your voice should cause him to stop and look up at you for reassurance.

As soon as you have his attention praise him both physically and verbally, so he understands that turning back to you when he is unsure is a good thing to do. Eventually this will become habit and every time you shout No he should look back to you, giving you the opportunity to give him further commands (such as 'Come' if he is off the lead) and keep the situation under control. Be patient if this takes some time to achieve, as you are trying to override his natural instinct to lock onto prey and chase. If your dog does not respond to the noise from the can, there are other things you can try to divert his attention. Sprays designed to deter dogs from jumping up are available from most pet shops, or even a small squirt of water from a squeeze bottle at the back of his head can be effective. It is simply a matter of trying one thing at a time until you find the most effective one for your dog- The success of this depends on the dog not associating the noise/spray with you, otherwise he may become distrustful and confused. Eventually you can start to use the No command prior to the can/spray and save these as back up measures when he doesn't respond immediately to your verbal warning. All of this gives him an opportunity to make choices (respond immediately to your voice or ignore you) and once he realizes that immediate response removes the noise or spray aspect he will usually choose to listen to you.

Aggression towards other dogs.

Occasionally greyhounds that are perfectly friendly with other greyhounds will show aggression towards other breeds of dog. This is usually due to a complete lack of exposure and socialization with anything except their litter and then later kennel mates. This can be overcome simply by giving your dog time to work out that dogs come in different shapes and sizes. Rather than avoiding areas popular with other dogs and their owners, it is important to take your dog to these areas as often as possible (this works on the same principle that children who are never allowed to watch the television, are consequently far more excited and absorbed by it, than their peers who have had greater exposure). To begin with your dog should always be kept on a lead until you have had the opportunity to observe how he reacts in a variety of situations. If you know that there will be lots of other dogs around, and you are worried that they may approach your dog, then it is best to keep a muzzle on him, again until you know how he will react. It is not law to have a greyhound muzzled in public once his racing career is finished, but initially it can prevent problems and make you more confident handling the dog. Attending dog training classes is another good way to expose your dog to lots of others in a controlled situation, with the added back up of experienced people on hand to assist and advise. If after providing many opportunities for you dog to come into contact with other dogs he is still showing aggression, the same method as outlined above for cats and squirrels can be used. Do try to remember though that other dog owners will not always understand why you are throwing things near their dog! However if it was their dog that was off the lead and approaching yours then they should have checked that this was ok before allowing their dog to approach. Most people are pretty reasonable if you take the time to explain the situation, as many are well aware of the plight facing ex-racing greyhounds.

Fear of people.

Depending on his previous experiences your dog may show a fear of people in general, or to a specific group (men/children etc). This can be easily overcome by altering your dogs perception of the person or group in question. The dog must be allowed to do this of its own free will, but the process can be aided by the use of an incentive such as food. The person/people who your dog appears wary of should never force their affections onto him, but wait until the dog approaches them. When this happens they can offer a small treat and then ignore the dog again. Slowly build this up until the dog will allow itself to be stroked once before receiving the treat. Eventually the dog will begin to realize that this person is actually a source of many pleasant surprises, and will not harm them. If the problem is a little more severe and the dog shows no interest in even approaching, then whenever that person arrives home take the dog out for a walk with you handling the dog and the person of whom he is frightened simply coming along (if this is inconvenient then feeding the dog will achieve the same result). What this is doing, is showing the dog that the arrival of the person in question is not something to be feared, but rather an event to look forward to.

Destructive behavior when left.

Your dog has so far spent his entire life in kennels surrounded constantly by noise, people and dogs. While many dogs are happy to be left alone in their new environment others find this a stressful and frightening experience. This can be shown in behaviors such as barking and chewing. In most books on dog training it is recommended that to overcome this you vary the times you go out to prevent the dog anticipating your departure and becoming stressed and nervous before you even leave the house. In the case of greyhounds I have always found the exact opposite to be true (again it all comes back to them feeling secure with routine). When you leave, your dog is frightened because as far as he is concerned you may never come back, so right from the start it is a good idea to leave him on his own for short periods of time. This can be achieved by simply going into a room where he is not allowed, or going into the back garden for five minutes. If he does begin to whine as soon as you disappear, it is important to try not to return to him until he is quiet.

This reinforces the idea that being noisy gets him nowhere, and being quiet is rewarded. Try to build up the time he is left very slowly, and try to do this at the same time each day. Although it may seem like a mammoth task to get from five minutes to four hours, once he gets the idea that you are always coming back it will happen very quickly. Most dogs, if they are going to exhibit any separation anxiety, will do so within the first thirty minutes of your departure, so once he can be left without problem for half an hour then there is no reason he won't be fine for longer.

Another method that can help your dog to understand that he is expected to remain at home is to give him a signal just before you get ready to leave the house (I use a chew or bone). The only time he should ever have these particular treats is when you are going out without him.

If your dog is ok when left for short periods, but becomes destructive when left for longer then this may be because he is bored. Leaving long lasting chews and bones can help by giving him something to do, but many dogs will not show any interest these. Toys such as a Kong, or a specially designed ball with holes, can be filled with smaller more appealing treats that must be worked for, can often alleviate boredom. Failing that, a hollowed out bone (available from most pet shops) can be filled with something which the dog then spends hours trying to lick out (peanut butter or cream cheese seem to be popular choices).

Above all please bear in mind that like people, every dog is different, and will react in different ways to the experiences that life has dealt them so far. They will take time to adjust to their new lifestyle. and many 'problems' suffered in the first few weeks may simply disappear of their own accord as the dog settles down. In all of the methods outlined above remember that greyhounds are gentle and sensitive creatures who will thrive in a secure and loving environment. You should never hit your dog for bad behavior, but rather try to focus on and praise good behavior. Chances are that he is trying desperately hard too not only adjust to a new lifestyle, but understand what it is you want, so he can please you. A few months of patience and understanding will be rewarded by many years of loyal and loving companionship.

Fiona Mason 13/02/2000

Identifying your greyhound – ear tattoos

English bred greyhounds will have a tattoo usually consisting of three letters and a figure in the right ear. The figure denotes the number of the pup in the litter. If the number in the letter litter is more than nine, another letter will be used. Irish bred greyhounds have green tattoo marks in both ears, two letters in the right ear and three letters in the left. Rarely there can be a combination of both types of tattoos if an Irish dog is reared and registered in the UK or the other way round. The approximate age of the dog can be read from these tattoos.

Irish marks.

Look at the first letter of the right ear. It denotes the year of birth.

Q= 94 R= 95 S= 96 T= 97 U= 98 V= 99 X= 2000 Y = 2001 Z= 2002 A= 2003 B=2004

English marks are more difficult, but the Newmarket Stud book is very helpful.

It is important first to contact your adopting group before delving into your dog's history, as the origin of your dog may be sensitive. For example a vet may have been asked to put a dog down and then passed it to welfare to save its life.

Once your adopting group has given you the all clear to check out these details, the English and Irish Stud Books hold information on the name and whelping date, but should not reveal the name of the registered owner. Also the web site <http://www.greyhound-data.com/statistics.htm> can give some_details

English Stud Book, UK (01638 667381)
16, Clocktower Mews, Newmarket, Suffolk CB8 8LL

Irish Stud Book, Eire (00 353 5222611-namings)
Irish Coursing Club, Davis Street, Clonmel, Co. Tipperary. Eire.

For a copy of the 5 generation pedigree certificate for your dog, contact the Stud books to ask how much it costs. They will need ear marks, colour and sex of dog. We regret that due to the intricacies of these researches, telephone costs and lack of time and staff, we are unable to spend time on these ourselves. Sorry and good luck!

Anne