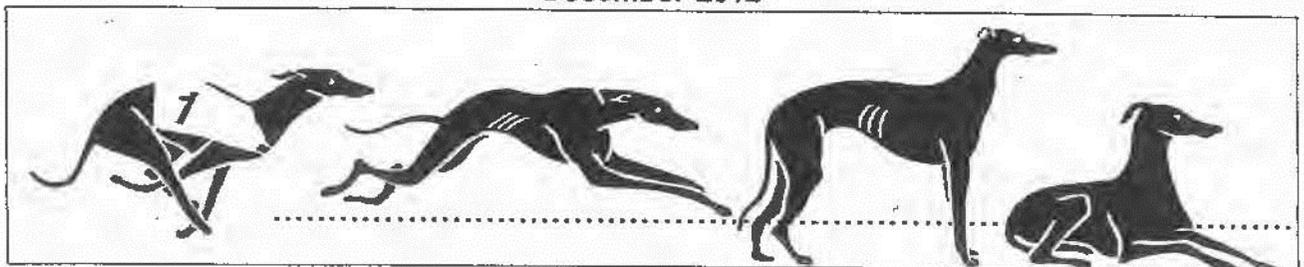


ABOUT YOUR RETIRED RACER

A Manual for Greyhound Adoption

Produced by Kara Rudgis and Gretchen Gallagher for greyhounds

December 2012





CONGRATULATIONS!

You have been adopted by a greyhound!

They were active racers who had reached “retirement age” from their successful racing careers, and were housed at a racetrack before arriving at our kennel. Track life prepared them well for kennel life; since they are used to sleeping in crates with periods of socialization and exercise, they adjusted quite well to living in a kennel situation. However, there are many “real-life” experiences that they have never had, and these former athletes have just begun their journey to a whole new world! They have made many friends, human and canine, during their stay here and adjusted to new freedoms, each growing at their own pace.

We would like to share what we have learned about the beautiful, comical and kind-hearted dogs with you in order to help your new dog settle happily into “the good life.”

The information included in this manual comes from many sources. We have had the good fortune of speaking with greyhound-knowledgeable people, and consulted written material on the subject of retired racers. Books we highly recommend for further reading include:

Retired Racing Greyhounds for Dummies, Lee Livingood, Hungry Minds, Inc. 2000
ISBN # 0-7645-5276-7

Adopting the Racing Greyhound, Cynthia A. Branigan, Howell Book House 2003
ISBN #0-7645-4086-6

Care of the Racing & Retired Greyhound, Linda L. Blythe et al, Hall Commercial Printing 2007
ISBN # 0-9641456-3-4

Born To Run, Ryan H. Reed, Thoroughbred Times Company, Inc. 2010
ISBN # 978-1-59378-689-2

By all means, the best way to learn about greyhounds is from the greyhounds themselves, but these references and other breed-specific rescue groups, fancier clubs and websites offer a wealth of information for the inquisitive owner!

We hope this information is helpful as you begin your new life with your adopted grey!

Imagine you are a greyhound. You are used to sleeping a crate, eating soft food, wearing a basket muzzle, chasing a lure around a dirt track and playing with other dogs. In your mind, all dogs are greyhounds, all people are handlers and all running is competition. You are a fine-tuned athlete in a routine world, and you are content with this life.

Now imagine that you are taken from your racetrack and placed in a kennel. Here, there is no lure, no dirt track, no hours of resting before races. You are surrounded by strange sounds, busy people, and other animals that might be dogs, but you're not quite sure. You have a lot of friends, and they want to pet you and walk you and teach you to do this thing called "sitting", which you seem to have no use for but you do it because it makes your new people happy (and it earns you a few tasty treats). You have a comfortable bed to curl up in, hard food to munch on and a fenced-in field to run and play in. You learn to play with toys, to walk on a leash and run outside without a definite destination and that those other animals are, in fact, dogs and that they speak your same language. These things are not at all bad, but they are new, and it takes time before you adjust to this new place. But your new friends are kind, you begin to enjoy these different activities and you grow content with this life as well.

Now you are heading off to something called a "home."

So what's going to be new this time?



JUST ABOUT EVERYTHING!

Your adopted greyhound has never lived in a home environment as an adult. This is something that deserves your consideration and vigilance, as your grey will need your help to understand his or her new environment. Following is a list of things that will most likely be brand new in your dog's world.

★ **Floors & Stairs** - Greyhounds are used to walking on flat surfaces that have good traction. Linoleum, hardwood or other smooth flooring might be difficult for your dog to walk on without leading to slipping and sliding! Each dog will respond to this differently, but caution should be taken not to force your dog over a surface they are fearful of or allow them to race onto a slippery floor! Allowing your dog to explore these surfaces at their own pace, or offering strategically placed carpeted mats should help your dog feel more secure and avoid

injuries! Wall-to-wall carpeting is also a new surface for a greyhound. While it is soft and does provide good traction, it may also provide a comfortable place to urinate without making a puddle! While the greyhounds at Becker College have been introduced to short flights of stairs, long or steep staircases are most definitely new to them and will pose more of a challenge to some dogs than others. Many will show no interest in climbing stairs, others may go up them, but have trouble getting down (or vice versa), and a rare few may try to race up or down a staircase without thought to their own footing and safety. It may be useful to use baby gates or otherwise block off areas of your home that could pose a risk to your grey when unsupervised!

★ **Doors** - Most greyhounds are used to passing through several doors, while on leash, before being able to access the outdoors. Accidents have happened when an unleashed grey suddenly bolts out of the front door or through an insecurely latched gate, unaware of the potential dangers they face on the other side. Not only are greys not street-savvy, but they are able to reach speeds of 40 miles per hour within three strides! A greyhound who gets off-leash outside is most likely a lost greyhound...or worse. It is best to teach your greyhound to be leashed before doors are opened, and to make sure he or she is properly managed when people are coming or going. See the following section on crate training to see how crates can be great tools in maintaining your dog's safety!

★ **Appliances** - Greyhounds have had very limited exposure to common household appliances. Televisions seem to be an item of particular interest, but sounds of blow-dryers, telephones, doorbells, vacuum cleaners or clothes washers may intrigue or frighten them. You should also be careful of hot stovetops and ovens, as a counter-surfing grey will not foresee the danger!

★ **Sharing Space** - At both the track and the kennel, the greyhounds have always been housed and fed individually. They were either let out into playgroups, muzzled, only with other greyhounds or leash-walked at a polite distance from other greyhounds and have never had to share sleeping space with people or other pets. As such, they are not used to sharing their personal space and resources with others and each dog will have their own level of comfort doing so. As discussed later in this document, crate training is a wonderful way to allow your greyhound their own personal space, while gradually adjusting to the "newness" of home life. If you choose to offer your greyhound a bed outside of his or her crate, please be aware that they may need some time to adjust to people or other pets walking close by while they are resting. Please see the enclosed handout called "Sleep Aggression: What You Need to Know" to get more specific recommendations on helping your hound share space peacefully. Also, it is important to remember that every dog is an individual who has their own comfort level with close physical contact. Keeping physical attention at a polite and respectful level (avoiding tight hugs, rough play, sudden movements toward their heads, ears, feet and tails, opening their mouths or touching them while they are sleeping, etc) while you are getting to know your dog will help you learn the body language they use to express their feelings. Some dogs will be perfectly happy to respond in kind to physical attention, but some may need more time to feel comfortable. Offering your new dog respect by keeping physical attention calm and reassuring will go a long way toward building a trusting relationship!

★ **Other Animals** - As noted previously, most greys have only really known other greys. Most likely, the dogs in the Becker Program have not had an opportunity to meet and play with other breeds. Some breeds of dogs, most notably toy breeds, will still present a new and exciting stimulus to a greyhound and they will all react differently when introduced to

another dog. After most introductions, greyhounds appear to truly enjoy contact with other dogs, but interactions should be well-supervised! Not all dogs appreciate the vocal, physical, and sometimes spastic play of a happy hound and very small dogs may be overwhelmed by a greyhound's exuberant interest! Cats, birds, and small animals are also new and exciting to retired racers. Many greys learn to live in harmony with other pets (look online to find hundreds of photographs of adopted greyhounds and other pets peacefully sharing space,) but a safe and trustworthy relationship takes time and training to build. Some greys have a high "prey drive" and other animals may be too much temptation to prevent a chase! Introductions should take place gradually, with your grey leashed and wearing a basket muzzle. All interactions should be supervised, and like any dog, a greyhound should never be left alone with another animal if the situation hasn't been repetitively safe and successful. If introducing to cats, make sure your cat has a guaranteed escape route and do not leave your grey alone with a caged pet. If introducing to other dogs, it may be best to feed pets separately and closely monitor everyone's access to favorite toys and sleeping spots. Preventing a squabble is much easier than breaking one up!

★ **Car Rides** - Your greyhound has had some exposure to cars and traveling, but their education will certainly continue when living life as a family pet! Most greyhounds are a little nervous, but mainly well-behaved in the car. To make your trips easier on your hound, start small! Do not take your dog on a long car trip shortly after a full meal, but cover the seat with an old sheet or blanket, just in case carsickness is unavoidable. It may be necessary to lift your dog into the car until he gets the hang of it on his own. Take short trips that don't involve you exiting the car, and gradually build up the length and destination of the rides over time. Never leave your dog in the car in hot weather, and do not roll down the windows enough to allow a greyhound escape! Also, be careful to have a good hold on your grey before throwing a car door wide open! Making car rides pleasant will go a long way toward keeping your grey safe and happy during travel!

🐾 “If It’s Free, It’s For Me!” 🐾

Part of the “greyhound charm” is their somewhat naïve but wholehearted fascination with new things. They innocently explore the most everyday things, and are notorious “collectors.” As noted by author Lee Livingood, “if one of your blue socks is missing, check your greyhound’s bed.” Although greyhounds are not notorious for chewing up and ingesting foreign objects, this endearing pack-rat behavior could easily become a health hazard if your dog takes special interest in chewing or eating household objects! Keep a close eye on your grey as you are getting to know them, and make sure to limit or supervise their access to items that could cause a problem! Although it is fairly rare for a greyhound to jump up without reason, they are most definitely tall enough to become masters at “counter-surfing.” Be aware of food or other items left at greyhound height! They may also discover the joys of furniture and decide that the sofa or your bed is now “theirs.” Since your grey will be open to new information as they learn about their new surroundings, it will be very important to make sure you set the right limits in their first few weeks at home! Decide which furniture, if any, they will be allowed to snooze in, and gently discourage them right away if they attempt something you wish to keep off limits.

CAUTION! It is never a good idea to reach for a dog’s collar to pull them off a piece of furniture, or to grab at something they have “stolen” or are chewing with particular enthusiasm! It is a set-up for “resource guarding” and any dog might react to your behavior with a growl and or a snap in your direction! You may find it helpful to keep a leash on your dog when they are supervised in your house - do not leave leashes on when they are alone to prevent any injuries due to tangling! The leash can easily be used to redirect a dog who is heading toward “forbidden” items! Most greys are very responsive to a happy, non-threatening “Leave it!” followed by a reward (in the form of treats, petting or praise) when they abandon the item of interest and direct their attention back to you. Remember - it is easier to prevent access than to reclaim it! If your dog shows signs of resource guarding, especially in the presence of children, we recommend contacting an animal behaviorist to help you establish an effective training plan!

🐾 “Love Is Like Oxygen” 🐾

There is no doubt that bringing home a new pet is an enormously exciting event! It is exceptionally satisfying to give a dog that has never had a home life the chance to experience the joy of family living. But please remember that this transition, positive and beneficial as it may be, is still a major life change for your greyhound! It can be a stressful process, and your greyhound will need your compassion and support to be successful. Keeping the following tips in mind should help you make this adjustment period enjoyable for your dog!

- ★ Allow your dog to explore your home with your guidance on the first day, but do not allow free access to your entire home right away! Your grey will need some time to learn the “ground rules” and should not be set up to make early mistakes!
- ★ Allow your dog free access to a comfortable sleeping place, such as a large dog bed or an open crate with cozy blankets. Greyhounds are known as “40mph couch potatoes” - they may sleep for 16 - 18 hours a day and need this rest to be happy, confident dogs! Try to avoid waking them unless it’s necessary and teach children not to disturb your greyhounds “beauty sleep!”
- ★ Avoid the temptation to invite your entire circle of friends over to meet your new pet! Dogs should be introduced to people gradually and are easily overwhelmed by lots of attention or excessive invasion of their personal space! Affection is nice - smothering can be stressful!
- ★ Also avoid the temptation to throw your dog into too many new experiences at once. Their first few weeks should not be filled with trips to the groomer, shopping at the pet store or visiting friends’ houses, and play groups with other dogs should **definitely** wait until you and your hound know each other better! Let your dog ease into his or her social calendar - quiet time in your home is valuable for a successful adjustment.
- ★ Your dog’s activities during the first few days at home should mimic a “normal” day’s activities as closely as possible. Three days of solid attention might make the first time you have to work away from home for 8 hours difficult for your dog to understand. Let your dog adjust to your everyday life! If you choose to offer a crate for your grey, allow for short periods of crate time, so your dog learns to be alone gradually!

🌀 Special Bodies, Special Needs 🌀

Your retired racer is built for his or her sport from head to toe! Their specialized structure necessitates some specialized care.

★ Greyhounds have thin skin that is prone to tearing. Even light bumps or stumbles can cause skin injuries, so pay close attention to any cuts or abrasions. Small wounds can increase in severity in a short amount of time and may require veterinary attention.

★ Greys are sprinters, but overactive play can lead to sore muscles and joints. Monitor your dog for any signs of lameness and contact your veterinarian if you are concerned about a possible injury! Several 20-minute walks throughout the day should leave your retired grey satisfied - an occasional romp in a securely-fenced area can be enjoyable, but remember your dog's safety and security above all else!

★ Greyhounds can be extremely sensitive dogs (one of the reasons we love them so dearly), and even slightly bumped toes or a lightly-stepped-on tail can result in a very startled, vocal and grumpy greyhound! Their thin, long tails are prone to injury (hence the tail wrap that may have followed your grey home) and care should be taken to avoid injury to these areas. Use extra caution around household and car doors - these dogs may take longer to get through them than you would think!

★ Some greyhounds have an easier time eating dry food and drinking water from raised dishes. While not necessary for all greys, it might be a solution for dogs that cough up or feel that they need to protect their food when eating from a floor bowl. Adding a bit of warm water to dry food can help the kibbles go down a bit easier, too. Many of the greys here at Becker seem to enjoy carrying their meals, piece by piece, from their dishes to their beds. They may produce a whole lot of crumbs, but they usually enjoy cleaning up after themselves when their meal is through!

★ As large, deep-chested dogs, greyhounds may be susceptible to a condition called "bloat," otherwise known as gastric dilatation and volvulus (GDV). This is a painful and life-threatening condition caused by gas build-up in the stomach. To help prevent GDV, avoid heavy exercise or water-guzzling immediately before and 1-2 hours after meals. Small, frequent meals (at least two per day) are preferred over a large meal once a day!

★ Greyhounds are not meant to be chubby! They have a naturally thin, muscular build and, at a healthy weight, may look a bit thinner than you are used to. A healthy, non-racing greyhound should still be muscular, and the last two ribs and the very top of a few lumbar vertebrae may be visible beneath the muscle. You can expect a happy and healthy grey to gain a few pounds after retirement, but care should be taken to avoid obesity! Stick to a high-quality diet and go easy on the treats! You should consult your veterinarian if you notice any of the following:

- Rapid weight loss or weight gain
- A decline in the quality and condition of your dog's hair coat
- Repetitive regurgitation or vomiting
- Consistently soft stool or diarrhea
- A dramatic change in your dog's water intake

★ The grey's short, fine coat and amount of body fat make them relatively intolerant of extreme weather. There are many businesses that sell clothing and accessories designed specifically for greyhounds. Do a "Google" search online for the following items to see how many options you have to provide for your grey in style!

- **Greyhound (aka Martingale) Collars** - Greyhounds have a thick neck and a tiny head compared to most other breeds of dogs. Regular flat collars are useful to hold ID and other tags, but will easily slip over a grey's head and will not provide reliable restraint. A martingale collar is a flat collar with an extra loop of fabric that allows the collar to tighten to a controlled degree. These are not designed for correction, but for safety and they should be used at all times when a greyhound is on a leash! However, they should not be left on when your dog is unsupervised because they are fairly inescapable if they become entangled.
- **Boots** - Greyhounds have very sensitive foot pads that may become cracked, calloused or sore when walking on hot or rough surfaces or in deep icy snow. Some greys may need to wear boots to protect their feet in these conditions. Luckily, they seem to tolerate and adapt to wearing boots fairly easily! There is a wide variety of styles available, but many greyhound enthusiasts recommend Muttluks boots for their fit and durability.
- **Coats and jackets** - Greyhounds need a bit of extra protection in wet or cold weather. Investing in a high-quality, weather-proof coat is a wise idea! A blanket-style coat with a soft, fleecy inner layer and a moisture-resistant outer layer will help keep your grey warm and dry! Most coats are sized specifically for your dog, so check measurements carefully before ordering!
- **Sun protection** - Because of their sensitive skin and thin hair coats, greyhounds may be sensitive to the sun and should not be exposed to it for long periods of time (greyhounds are not well-suited for outdoor living). Some companies sell special coats designed to reflect sunlight to help keep your grey "cool and comfy!" Avoiding excessive exercise in warm weather, providing access to sheltered, shady areas and keeping a supply of clean, fresh water available should keep the average grey comfortable in warmer weather.
- **Basket muzzles** - We will provide you with the basket muzzle that came with your dog when they retired from the track. The greyhounds are used to wearing these muzzles, though they may attempt to rub their face on fences or walls when wearing them, and they should be used whenever an introduction (to children, dogs, cats or other small animals) or new play group is taking place! The dogs can easily breathe and even drink while wearing a basket muzzle, and the muzzle adds a layer of safety to any situation! When fitting the muzzle, make sure it is not so tight that the edge of the muzzle rests against the eyes, but tight enough that it doesn't easily pull over the head or slide down low on your dog's nose. There are many styles and colors of basket muzzles available - if you choose to purchase a new one, do your measurements carefully to avoid ordering the wrong size!

🐾 There's No Place Like Crate! 🐾

It is impossible to keep your eye on your dog twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. In addition, your dog was probably not spayed or castrated until they had reached an adult age over two years old! The temptations of household life, as well as the influence of years of "intact" behavior, may prove more challenging than a new owner expected. In addition, everyone needs a safe place to call their own, even your grey! Since greyhounds have grown up resting and sleeping in crates, crate training is a built-in tool that can help your dog adjust to his or her new home. Especially recommended in homes that will need their greyhound to share space with children or other pets, crating provides a secure, comfortable environment for your dog when they are tired, overwhelmed or unsupervised. Be sure to teach children not to disturb your greyhound while they are sleeping in their crates, or to use the crate as a playhouse - your dog's crate should be his sanctuary! See attached handout entitled "Crate Training 101" for more information.

🐾 "Man Pants" 🐾

To aid in housebreaking, some male dogs benefit from the use of a belly band to help curb any unwanted urine marking in indoor spaces. Belly bands can be a useful tool in helping a male grey learn the "rules" of the home. They work on the same idea as "pull-ups" training pants for toddlers. They are worn snugly around the greyhound's waist while the dog is indoors to protect furniture and other surfaces from urine-marking. The absorbent pad catches any "leaks" and lets the dog feel enough wetness to be slightly uncomfortable.

Belly bands should not be left on at all times (ALWAYS take them off when the dog is outdoors) and caution should be taken to change wet belly bands so the dog's skin does not become irritated by prolonged contact with urine. Many greyhound owners recommend having several on hand to change out when one needs to be washed. Some utilize disposable sanitary pads and some have permanent pads that can be run through the washing machine. There are many different styles and fabrics available, so go with your personal choice.

Belly bands allow the owner to have an extra level of household protection in case accidents occur while the dog learns that urinating outdoors is the way to go! Belly bands should only be used *in conjunction* with a comprehensive housetraining plan and close supervision. Please see the included handout from "Never Say Never Greyhounds" for more hints about housetraining a retired grey!

🐾 A Word About the GSOD 🐾

Greyhound parents will come to learn the unique likes, dislikes, curiosities and tendencies of their grey, but one behavioral trend stands out from the rest. Greyhounds can be very sensitive creatures. Although they can adjust to new people, environments and activities in time, many greys tend to like things "just so" and can be overwhelmed by "too much too fast." As you are getting to know your grey, be aware of stress signals (such as panting, freezing, averting the eyes or head, a sudden increase in dandruff or dander in the coat, or a reddening of the eyes and gums) and calming signals (lip-licking, whole-body shaking, scratching, sniffing or yawning). These body language cues can help you assess how your grey is handling his environment and experience, and allow you to take the pressure off if needed. Greyhounds also appreciate knowing what you are going to do before you do it - suddenly grabbing a foot, pulling on a collar, bumping toes while opening a door or waking up a sleeping pup can result in what is affectionately termed the "Greyhound Scream of Death" (aka GSOD). This is a loud, piercing and often heart-stopping vocalization made by a startled, injured or insulted grey. Sometimes this occurs when real pain has been caused, but sometimes we can only guess at what provoked such a dramatic reaction! Many times, a little attention helps your grey feel better about the situation and they quickly resume life as usual. But it is never good to assume your greyhound is "just a big baby" - always double-check that there is no cause for pain! If your dog emits this sound regularly, it may be wise to journal the events (when it happened, what your dog was doing at the time, what position were they resting in and whether they paid extra attention to a certain area of their body afterwards) so you can discuss it with your veterinarian. In general, it is always a wise idea to talk to your greyhound when you approach them and slide your hand down their body to the area you need to touch so they are aware of your presence and intentions!

Shopping for Your New Greyhound

Here is a list of online vendors that offer products that may be useful for retired racing greyhounds. If you find a good site that we do not have listed, please let us know & we will add it to the list for future adopters!

- 2 Hounds Design - beautiful martingale collars for the well-dressed hound!
 - www.2houndsdesign.com
- Homeward Bound Hound Boutique - online store of local group Greyhound Friends!
 - <http://www.homeward-bound-hound-boutique.org/catalog/>
- Premier Pet Products - Gentle Leaders, Sure-fit harnesses, Easy-Walk harnesses, leashes, martingale collars, enrichment toys
 - <https://www.premier.com/store/CMSView.aspx?page>
- Kris Koats - custom-made fleece coats, proceeds benefit greyhound placement*
 - www.kriskoats.com
 - *The fleece coat/snood that followed your greyhound home was made lovingly by Kris and paid for by a fundraiser done by the students in the Becker College Kennel and Animal Health Club!*
- Weatherbeeta - awesome weather-proof coats (used in the Becker College kennel)
 - <http://www.weatherbeeta.com/USA/2009/range/Dog/index.asp>
- Midwest Pet Products - reputable company, sturdy crates & free shipping!
 - <http://www.midwestpetproducts.com/>
- Pet Edge - lots of miscellaneous supplies for pets, including toys, treats & grooming products
 - <http://www.petedge.com/home.jsp>
- Miscellaneous Greyhound Supplies
 - <http://www.greyhoundgear.com/index.php>
 - <http://www.greyhoundsonly.com/onlinestore/doggear.html>
 - <http://www.unc.edu/~nbeach/supplies.htm>
- Belly Bands & Other Attire
 - www.doggieessentials.com - custom-made belly bands used at Becker College!
 - <http://www.bwdogcoats.com/no-pee-bands.html>
 - <http://www.heartoftexasgreyhounds.com/bellyband.htm>

Greyhounds and Kids

With proper care and supervision, the retired racing greyhound can be a wonderful companion for a family with children. However, many retired racers never see children until after they leave the track and so, maybe more than any other dog breed, the secret to a successful relationship between the two is vigilance in the supervising of their interactions. Keep in mind that from the time they are puppies greyhounds have always slept alone in crates. Many sleep very soundly and startle very easily if awakened suddenly. Occasionally they may sleep with their eyes open giving a false impression that they are really not asleep at all.

Greyhounds in racing kennels are always awakened by activity in the kennel and are never awakened by touch. It is **always** a good idea to call out your greyhound's name before touching them when they are asleep and to teach your children to do the same.

Some greyhounds need to have their "own space" more than others and children need to learn to be respectful of this. If you are using a crate with your greyhound, teach your child that this is the greyhound's spot and not a place to play. Most greyhounds will retreat to a quiet spot when overwhelmed by the activities around them rather than growl or snap at a child, and while children are too young to read the body language of a stressed dog, they are **NOT** too young to understand that a greyhound who walks away from interaction with them should not be chased or harassed. If the greyhound knows that he has his own space, where no one will bother him, he will retreat to this area rather than face conflict. A crate with the door left open often makes a good safe spot, but anytime a greyhound retreats from interaction or goes to his bed children should be taught to leave him alone. Even the gentle greyhound has its limits and it is up to us as caregivers to ensure that they are not subjected to continued harassment or pushed over these limits.

Small children and toddlers especially need plenty of supervision when interacting with retired racing greyhounds. **All** interactions between the two must be closely monitored. Small children and toddlers are not capable of understanding what the consequences may be if they fall on a sleeping dog and it is up to us as parents to ensure that this situation never occurs. Some greyhounds can be easily frightened by a toddler's raucous behavior and if you are looking for a dog that your child can "wrestle" with, then an ex-racing greyhound may not be for you. Again, keep in mind that your greyhound may have never encountered children before and a small child running around screaming can look very much like prey to a dog with a high prey drive. Dog bites in general are the second leading cause of emergency room visits for young children ranking only behind playground injuries. In children under the age of 4 statistics show that the family dog is often the perpetrator of these attacks, 90 % of the time they happen in the home, and 77% of the time the bite is to the face. Prevention is the key to fostering a successful relationship between your young child and his greyhound and diligence is the key to prevention.

Some tips to creating a wonderful relationship between your grey and your child:

- **NEVER** leave child and dog alone unsupervised
- Reprimand the dog firmly (but **NOT** physically) immediately if it should ever growl at your child. Usually a good stern **NO** is all that is needed to get your point across to the gentle greyhound. Always find out what actions precipitated the growling and reprimand the child as well.
- Let your child assist in the care of your greyhound. Even very young children can be taught to carry food bowls, give out treats, and take part in some of the grooming that your dog may require. If your dog knows any commands (sit, stay, etc.) teach your child to have the dog obey one of them before setting his dinner down or giving him a treat. In this way the greyhound will learn that children are above them in the pack structure and in the long run you will avoid conflict.

- **NEVER** let a child under the age of 14 walk your greyhound. Retired racing greyhounds are big strong dogs who for their whole lives have been taught to chase anything that moves. They are not mindful of traffic or obstacles when they are in “chase” mode and not only might a younger child lose a grip on the leash, but they may even be pulled into danger. For everyone’s safety – **DON’T** take that chance!
- Read to your children and talk to them prior to getting a greyhound. Many good books are available to teach children to be kind and respectful of animals and preparing a child and setting rules and limits prior to adoption can only have positive results.
- Read Brian Kilcommons book “Childproofing Your Dog.” While not written specifically for greyhound adoption, it features many great tips for creating a positive relationship between your child and his/her dog. It is a fantastic book that should be a **MUST READ** for anyone with children and dogs.



Never Say Never Greyhounds

Home to Our Agility, Obedience, Coursing, Swimming & Dock Jumping Greys

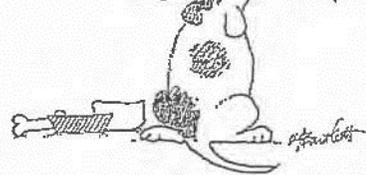
HOME MY AGILITY OBEDIENCE BEHAVIOR BARF ODDS & ENDS BLOG CONTACT US
GREYHOUNDS

House Breaking Issues...

The key to housetraining is *prevention*. The best possible situation is if your greyhound never has the opportunity to use the house as a potty. Here are some tips to make that possible.

1. When you arrive home take your new addition on a leash to the area where you want him to regularly do his "business". You probably will not want your greyhound in the habit of going potty right outside the door, so we suggest you keep him on a leash initially even if you have a fenced yard and take him to an area more appropriate. If your dog starts to pee or poop, softly say "Go potty" or something similar. You can condition your dog to potty on cue if you say your key words consistently. As he is finishing up, say "Goooooooooooo boy (girl)" and give lots of praise. If he does not "go" after a few minutes, go on inside, but keep your new greyhound leashed as you both walk around, investigating the house. Be aware of any signs that you greyhound may eliminate in the house. After a few minutes, go back outside and try again. Keep repeating this pattern until he potties outside. You want to start him off with the RIGHT idea. If your new greyhound is too shy to potty on leash and you have a securely fenced yard, take the leash off. Stay close by and offer verbal praise when he does finally go.
2. For the first week, supervise, supervise, and supervise! Use your crate when you cannot supervise. Keep your greyhound in the same room with you. You can keep your greyhound leashed and tie the lead around your waist. If you catch your greyhound going potty in the house, distract him with a firm "NO" and clap your hands to divert his attention. Take him out immediately. Keeping him on a leash for a couple of days while indoors makes it easy for you to take your greyhound out in a hurry. Your greyhound does not know the rules. It would not be fair to punish him. You simply want to distract him from going potty and take him straight outside.
3. If there is an accident, clean using a good, "enzymatic" cleaner intended for pet accidents. Otherwise, pets will keep returning to the same spot. We recommend Nature's Miracle (from PETsMart), Folex, Oxy Clean (from Home Depot), or Simple Solution. AVOID Woolite or Resolve.
4. Once you think your greyhound is becoming housetrained (several days later), drop the leash. Allow your greyhound to wander around the house dragging the leash and you close behind. Watch for ANY signs that he may eliminate. Signs may include suddenly getting up from a nap, circling, sniffing, pacing, panting, crying, or staring at you. If all goes well, gradually trust your greyhound more and more. You will never regret taking your time in housetraining, but you may regret allowing your greyhound too much freedom too soon.
5. Most greyhounds will not alert you if they need to go outside. They are used to being on a predictable routine, so we suggest you set a schedule as soon as possible. If your greyhound has been in foster care, be sure to ask the foster person what schedule the greyhound has been on. It may be necessary to adjust the greyhound's previous schedule to be convenient for you, but understand that you have to allow some time for this adjustment.
6. If you do not have a fenced yard, you will want to take your greyhound to the SAME spot of the yard every time to do their "business". Often owners make the mistake of taking their dog for a potty walk and turning around to go home as soon as the dog potties. This will teach your greyhound to "hold it" as long as possible, so that the walk is as long as possible. You want your greyhound to learn the difference in a potty walk and an exercise walk. I suggest that longer, fun walks come after your greyhound has eliminated in the designated area. This will teach your greyhound to go ASAP, so that the fun walk can begin.
7. Remember that you should not hit, yell at, or rub your greyhound's nose in any messes that he makes. You are teaching your greyhound how to behave appropriately. Housetraining takes patience, timing, prevention, consistency and most of all...supervision.

SCHEDULE	
WAKE UP	5:30 AM
DRINK	6:00 - 7:00
EAT BREAK	7:00 - 7:30
GO OUT	7:45 - 1:45
SLEEP	3:00 - 12:00
GO OUT	12:00 - 12:15
EAT BREAK	12:15 - 12:30
GO OUT	12:30 - 12:45
SLEEP	12:45 - 4:00
PESTER THE CAT	4:00 - 4:15
GO OUT	4:15 - 5:00
GO HOME	5:30 - 6:00
CHASE CAT	6:00 - 6:15



Watch Your Greyhound Race!

Do you ever watch your retired greyhound sleeping and think about them once racing at 40mph for a living? Would you like to see a video of their “past employment?” Well, for some of these Florida pups, you can! For most dogs that have raced at the Sanford Orlando track in the past couple of years (and for some that have raced at the Palm Beach racetrack), you can watch recorded videos of their races through the track websites on Windows Media Player. Here’s how!

1. First, go to www.trackinfo.com. Scroll over the “Greyhound Racing” drop down menu on the top left and click on “Dog Lookup.” Enter your dogs racing name and it will bring up a list of the races they have participated in during their career.
2. Look at the list – the first grey, two-letter abbreviation after each date is the track at which they have raced. If the letters say SN, that is Sanford, if they say PB, it’s Palm Beach.
3. Look at the 5th bold number on each race listing – this is the place they came in during the race. Scan each one looking for a 1 or 2 as the camera follows the race leaders more closely. Once you have found one, look at the date on the left (in orange). If they have never placed, that’s ok, you can still watch them – just pick the highest placing race. The date is read year-month-day.
4. Open a new tab with the track website. For SN races go to www.sanfordorlandokc.com. For PB races go to www.pbkennelclub.com.
5. For Sanford races:
 - a. Go to the Sanford site and click on the Red Square that says “Video” (1/3 of the way down the page on the right). This should bring you to a page with a calendar with a green bar title that says “Daily Video Replays”. Use the “Prev” and “Next” arrows to scroll to the month you want – then click on the day. This will bring up another number box attached to the right of the calendar – these are the race heats. You need to get this number next.
 - b. Look back at the Track Info site at the date you’ve picked. After the date, there should be an orange letter with number (example 2010-2-20 A3) The number after the letter is the heat-your dog is in. Before going back to the Sanford calendar and choosing that race number, look at the first bold number for that race – this should be the box your greyhound is starting in.
 - c. Click on the race heat number on the calendar - this should pop up a tiny window asking you if it’s ok to allow this site – click yes. Once allowed, Window’s Media Player should open and play the race! Make sure your speakers are up, as they’ll often say the name of the lead dog on the Sanford videos!
6. For Palm Beach races:
 - a. Go to the Palm Beach site and scroll over the “Racing” drop-down menu and click on “Replays.” This will bring you to a page where you can search by Dog Name. Type in your dogs racing name and then click on the name when the search brings it up. This will list all of your dogs races at PB. The races on this site are easier to read as they list the Box # and Finishing Place of your dog in the race.
 - b. When you find one you want to watch, click on the orange date on the left – this opens a new page and you click on the orange “Low” or “High” links under “Video” at the top right to watch

the video. This will also pop open a Window's Media Player to view the race! Sometimes, if choosing "low" doesn't work, try "high."

Also, there are sometimes races listed on www.greyhound-data.com for your dog that are not listed on Track Info (and some greyhounds only have a listing on one of the two sites). On Greyhound Data, click on "Dog Search" on the top left to find your dog's pedigree and race listing/stats. I like to check both sites to make sure I found all of them. Sanford Orlando and Palm Beach are the only two kennel clubs in Florida we know of that have the videos online, so if you find any others, please let us know! Also a hint: if you have trouble finding your dog in the dog search, use an apostrophe in their name. For example, Caddy may not show up as Glos Caddyshack, but does show up as Glo's Caddyshack.

Enjoy watching your hound and give an extra cookie to our furry friend from the Becker College Kennel!

Managing Object Guarding and Food Aggression

By Sherry Woodard

Please use caution at all times when working on managing object guarding and food aggression. If you are at all uncomfortable with doing the techniques described below, ask a reward-based trainer for help in teaching your dog not to guard food or objects.



Guarding (possessiveness) is a natural, normal behavior for dogs. Some dogs will guard any valued item or space – their food, food bowls, toys, treats, chewies, bones, beds, couches. But, object guarding can be dangerous if a dog sees a person as someone he needs to guard against. You can easily get bitten trying to take something away from a dog who is a serious guarder.

Dogs who have shown guarding behaviors can be taught new associations to help keep them and their families safe. First, if guarding is a new behavior, visit a veterinarian for a health check. As with any sudden behavior change, the dog may have a medical issue that needs to be addressed.

To manage guarding behavior, you'll do two things: hand-feeding and practicing trades. Start hand-feeding and practicing trades at the same time. To hand-feed, stop using a food bowl and start hand-feeding all meals to the dog, giving him a few pieces of kibble at a time. By doing this, you'll change the association of hands near the dog's food from negative to positive. When you practice trades with the dog, you'll teach him to always expect something better, making it worth trading.

When doing the hand-feeding and trading exercises, work with only one dog at a time. No other dogs should be within sight of your guarder. To stay safe and for the best chance of success, work at the dog's pace. Do not move on to the next step if the dog is not improving.

If the dog becomes threatening (growling, stiffening up, etc.) toward you at any point, back up to the step where she was relaxed and work forward from that step again. If the dog is a serious guarder already when you start training, you must be very careful and pay close attention to the dog's body language to detect any signs of guarding. Again, if you become uncomfortable while doing the exercises, stop and get help from a reward-based trainer.

Here are the steps for teaching trades:

1. Start by giving the dog something she has never cared enough about to guard (a "low-value item"). Tell the dog to give it up (say "give it" or "give"). Take the item and hand the dog a small yummy treat that you have tucked in your hand out of sight. Give the low-value item back and walk away. Wait two minutes. Then, approach again and repeat the exercise six times.



2. Practice for three days – doing six approaches daily. Each day, change the low-value item to a different low-value item.
3. After three days of practice, approach the dog and hold out an object that she has guarded in the past (a high-value item), but don't allow her to take it. Say "give" as if you are asking for the item and take the item away while handing her a small yummy treat.
4. Again, practice six approaches each day for three days. Change the item each day to a different high-value item that the dog has guarded before.
5. After three days of practice, approach and hand her one of the high-value items that you have used before. Walk away (at least six feet) and wait two minutes. Then, take a deep breath, relax, smile and approach the dog. Say "give," take the item, and hand her a small yummy treat.
6. Again, practice six approaches each day for three days. Remember to change the high-value item daily to other previously guarded items.
7. After three days of practice, lay all the high-value items on the floor and wait for the dog to settle on one. Then, approach with a small treat tucked in your hand. Practice six approaches, exchanging the high-value item for the small treat. Between approaches, remember to walk away and wait two minutes before approaching again.
8. If the dog is still doing well, leave the high-value items on the floor and practice the exercise at least three times each day for at least a week.

To reinforce the lesson, it's a good idea to have other adults work with the dog. Start them off with the low-value items and have them work their way through the exercises. Supervise their interactions so you can see how the dog is doing. It also helps to practice in a variety of locations by taking high-value items and treats on outings.

If you have a dog who guards food or objects, you should practice the above routine often to prevent any future problems.

Sherry Woodard is the animal behavior consultant at Best Friends. She develops resources and provides consulting services nationally to help achieve Best Friends' No More Homeless Pets mission.

"Sleep Aggression" in Retired Racing Greyhounds - What You Need to Know -

The term "sleep aggression" in retired racers refers to a dramatic, defensive and sometimes "loud and scary" response by any dog startled or abruptly woken while sleeping. "Sleep aggression" could include growling, barking, snapping or potentially biting upon waking. The behavior is usually seen when a dog is touched or petted while they are in a "deep sleep" but can also occur when humans (or other animals) enter the greyhound's personal space when they are uncomfortable or unprepared. Generally, the dog does not intend to cause harm but rather to increase the distance between themselves and the "intruder." Most of the time, "sleep aggression" is just an instinctual display behavior meant to communicate the dog's need for space and security! While this behavior may not be seen in most adopted greyhounds, it is important to remember that it does occur, especially when a greyhound is adjusting to a brand new environment, and can be prevented and/or managed. It is not indicative of a dog's general temperament. Please read the article below for more information and continue on for suggestions on how to prevent and work with this behavior when your greyhound comes home!



Sleep Aggression

By: Judy Kody Paulsen

This disturbing phenomenon is fairly common in dogs of all breeds, but it is perhaps more pronounced in retired racing greyhounds due to the environment in which they have been kept during their racing careers. The saying, "Let sleeping dogs lie", must have originated from a source with personal experience in this area!

A dog that growls or bites upon being disturbed while sleeping is not generally considered to be an aggressive or vicious dog. These dogs are usually well adjusted, sociable, affectionate dogs in all other aspects of their ability to relate to people and other pets. Reacting negatively to sleep disturbance is not uncommon, even in human beings.

Understanding a typical day for a greyhound at the track or training kennel is paramount in learning to cope with this problem. Once a greyhound begins training for their adult racing life, a very strict daily regimen is adhered to. The dogs are kept individually in crates in a large room filled with crates and other dogs. The dogs are turned out to relieve themselves early each morning and about three more times during the day. They are exercised or "schooled" about twice a day if they are active racers. Dogs that are retired or rehabilitating from injuries do not go out for these exercise sessions as a general rule. The main focus is on preparing the active racers for their performance on the track. **Each day is structured to provide exercise and uninterrupted rest for the racers.** The key word here is *uninterrupted*.

Think of this as you scratch your head in bewilderment after your adopted greyhound has just snapped at you or your child when its sleep was interrupted. Combine this regimented lifestyle with the possessiveness of a dog that has had few personal items, *none of which it was required to share*, and you have a dog that is totally unfamiliar with the life of a household pet. These dogs must be recognized for what they are and what they have endured as part of the conditioning process for racers. **They are athletes that have been in training for months or years to produce a dog that focuses on one thing — chasing a lure.**

Deprogramming or desensitizing a greyhound to these acquired behaviors takes patience and understanding and, above all, time. Some dogs will never overcome the tendency to be startled upon awakening, and some will never be willing to share their sleeping quarters. Desensitizing a greyhound to touching during sleep can sometimes be accomplished by exposure to frequent petting, touching, or verbal communications while the dog is resting, but not asleep. The problem with this technique is that greyhounds can

sleep with their eyes open, thereby making it almost impossible to tell if they are visually aware of your approach as you attempt this "desensitizing" method. Another risk of this technique is that the dog may become accustomed to being handled during sleep by family members, but not by infrequent visitors whose approach and touch may signal the sudden compulsion for the greyhound to protect itself from this intruder. *The best rule to enforce with friends and family is that the dog is to be left alone while resting and/or sleeping.*

If your greyhound is known to be sensitive while sleeping or resting, it is best not to allow the dog to use your furniture as its bed. A specific place for the greyhound should be designated with a soft bed or blanket on the floor or in a crate with the door left open, and everyone should understand that this place is off limits for all but the dog. Teaching children this rule should be no different from teaching them anything else that is necessary for you to protect them from things that may injure them. I think it is important to stress at this point that all types of aggression that may be encountered in greyhounds are also encountered in other breeds. The object of this article is to focus on why the greyhound becomes aggressive in certain situations, not to imply that greyhounds have an innate tendency to be aggressive.



The retired racing greyhounds from Becker College have spent an entire semester after their racing career in a kennel very similar to their racetrack situation. They had a structured walking and sleeping routine and are not required to share their bed, food or toys with other dogs. All of our greyhounds have been very social and easily handled by our many students throughout the semester and have not seemed to mind gentle attention/petting in their bed space while they are fully awake. However, this may change in the transition to a new place where they are nervous or unfamiliar. Although it's a very happy event, moving into a home can be a stressful for your newly adopted pup. They may feel more defensive about their personal space, especially in the first couple of weeks/months. To make sure your greyhound feels secure in their new surroundings, we recommend the following steps to help them adjust to their new home:

- Utilize a crate. It is not only an excellent tool in the housebreaking department, but a crate can provide your dog with a place to feel safe. Please refer to the "Greyhound Manual for Adoption" for more information.
- If you have a bed for your greyhound, put it in an area of the home where they can feel included in daily activities, but somewhat "out of the way" so they do not have to be moved or stepped over in order to pass by.
- Do not encourage your dog to sleep in your bed or on your furniture. Setting up this guideline early will help your dog understand which areas of the house are truly theirs.
- Make passing by a positive experience. If you notice your newly adopted dog is fast asleep, give them a "heads up" that you're going to walk past. This could be by speaking to them (or saying their name) to wake them enough to let them know you're coming.
- Let your dog come to you for attention. Allowing your dog the choice to come to you for attention is a clear sign that both parties wish to interact and is a good way to start a respectful relationship when they come home! Do not approach the dog while it is sleeping (in its bed or crate) to pet it, hug it, etc. Also, it is never a good idea to surprise your dog with a "quick hug" or kiss on the head - always let your dog know you're coming and what your intentions are. Start petting in a comfortable area such as the neck, shoulders or chest before touching their head, feet, tummy or tail.
- Supervise children during any interactions with your greyhound! Even the most social greyhounds have had little to no experience with children, let alone practice living with them. The same goes for houseguests, who your dog should be allowed to meet and interact with respectfully. To keep everyone safe, crate your dog if the two cannot be supervised while together.
- Establish yourself (and family members) as safe and predictable people. It's important for your dog to know what to expect from their new family and to know they won't be disturbed while sleeping. The

quicker your dog knows that they aren't going to be bothered in their personal space, the quicker your greyhound will learn you can be trusted and the less defensive your dog will feel!

- If you already notice that your dog may seem a little uncomfortable as you pass by their sleeping space, announce your presence and toss a cookie as you walk by – this can help create a positive association for a suspicious hound.

If you see signs of "sleep aggression" at home, it's important to take steps to ensure everyone's safety and to speak with your shelter representative or shelter trainer for assistance if you are concerned. Remember, above all, that this behavior is usually an *adjustment* behavior and that there are things that can be done to ease any stresses that arise.

Lastly keep in mind, that some hounds are more prone to this behavior *after* they've adjusted to home life. These dogs may finally feel comfortable and confident enough in their environment to truly sleep well or to defend their personal space. Remember to always respect your greyhound's limits and boundaries and to maintain a trusting relationship between you and your new best friend.

Sleep Startle from a greyhound's perspective

I confess, I have sleep startle! I'm Sunspot. Today I'm here to teach you about "sleep startle", a not-so-unusual thing that some greyhounds (or other canines) can experience. In the yellow Retired Racing Greyhounds for Dummies book they call it "sleep aggression" (page 53, last paragraph). But I am not aggressive at all, even though I have this characteristic, so I prefer the word "startle". I don't mean to hurt anyone. I have to take you way back to our days in the racing kennels to explain. A racing greyhound is given his own space: a kernel, cage, crate, whatever you prefer to call it. It is our safe spot. And it is totally ours. We sleep and eat in it. The thing we like best is that we can close our eyes and sleep, sleep, sleep. Undisturbed! Greyhounds love to run, but we also love to sleep! A lot! In our kennels, we can totally let our guard down. We don't have to watch to see what or who is coming. So greyhounds at the racing compound are safe, secure, and happy to rest in our crates. By the time the kennel workers arrive early in the morning to turn us out and feed everyone breakfast, we are wide awake. Mister "I'm A Loud Mouth" hears the truck pull up and he will be the one that starts us barking to greet the kennel people. (We figure a loud hello deserves a good breakfast!) So no one ever gets anywhere near our kennels when we are asleep. We've already been woken up. Even during the day, if we doze off, our kennel workers are very savvy to wake us up (without the use of their hands) before reaching into our crates. We never wake up with a human hovering over us while we lay on our dog beds. So a retired racing greyhound that is fresh off the racetrack is not used to being touched when asleep. Some will outgrow it. But that is one reason why some adopted greyhounds prefer to have a crate, or a designated "safe bed" that they can retreat to. The crate door can be left open, so that we come and go as we please. But the rule is that NO ONE touches us when we are in that spot. This is a "must teach" for children, and also for adults, especially the smothering kind. . . You see, I bit my Captain on his finger. I hurt him. I had no idea, it was a reaction. The handlers have signs everywhere warning "NO FINGERS OR HANDS INSIDE THE CRATE". But he was so excited to see, and new to the dorm. Captain is a big dog lover and wanted to meet the greyhounds. I was sound asleep and he lovingly scratched my whiskers. It STARTLED me! So I growled and bit the finger of the man in blue, one of the guys who makes sure the greyhounds are doing well in the prison. I'm sorry. That's not me. It is just my instinct. . . So let me warn all adopters, especially when your greyhound first goes home. Give us dogs TIME and SPACE to adjust. (Even if we were fostered in a prison or a home.) Don't be so quick to try to show us how much you love it. In time we will learn we can trust you. This does not mean we had a rough life at the race track. We didn't. It just means that life is different, and I am sharing my house with people now. And please, no hands or fingers reaching into our crates. Oh, yeah - If we are asleep outside the crates, wake us up first with a loud clap, or foot stomp, or rattle the crate. Call our name. (We can sleep with eyes part way open too.) Don't be afraid that you might scare us. The most startling thing is to be touched when asleep! . . . I'm going to make amends with the Captain today. - Sunspot (Mohican Sunspot)



DOGGIE LANGUAGE

starring Boogie the Boston Terrier



ALERT



SUSPICIOUS



ANXIOUS



THREATENED



ANGRY



"PEACE!"
look away/head turn



STRESSED
yawn



STRESSED
nose lick



"PEACE!"
sniff ground



"RESPECT!"
turn & walk away



"NEED SPACE"
wide eye



STALKING



STRESSED
scratching



STRESS RELEASE
shake off



RELAXED
soft ears, blinky eyes



"RESPECT!"
offer his back



FRIENDLY & POLITE
curved body



FRIENDLY



"PRETTY PLEASE"
round puppy face



"I'M YOUR LOVEBUG"
belly-rub pose



"HELLO I LOVE YOU!"
greeting stretch



"I'M FRIENDLY!"
play bow



"READY!"
ready bow



"YOU WILL FEED ME"



CURIOUS
head tilt



HAPPY
(or hot)



OVERJOYED
wiggly



"MMMM..."



"I LOVE YOU,
DON'T STOP"