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# GREYHOUND ADOPTION MANUAL



**GREYHOUND**

ADOPTION PROGRAM QLD

[www.qric.qld.gov.au](http://www.qric.qld.gov.au)



# The Greyhound Adoption Program of Queensland Adoption Manual

## ABOUT THIS MANUAL

This manual has been produced to guide you through the adoption of your greyhound.

The information contained in this booklet is provided to assist you with your adopted GAP greyhound, but it does not replace professional advice.

If you have any queries about your greyhound or greyhound care please consult your local veterinarian.

For more information contact the GAP QLD on 1300 087 021 or email [gap@qric.qld.gov.au](mailto:gap@qric.qld.gov.au)

Visit the website [gapqld.com.au](http://gapqld.com.au)



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## ABOUT GAP

The Greyhound Adoption Program (GAP) of Queensland is operated by the Queensland Racing Integrity Commission (QRIC) and is dedicated to finding homes for greyhounds that have retired from racing.

## OUR MISSION

- Finding suitable, loving homes for retired racing greyhounds.
  - Encouraging a more positive image of the greyhound and stimulating the public's desire to own a greyhound as a family pet.
  - Assess greyhounds and prepare them for life as family pets.
- 3.

- Providing ongoing advice and support to new GAP greyhound owners.

We at the GAP QLD know that greyhounds can make fantastic pets. As with any breed of dog, they are individuals.

Some are high energy and rough and tumble, others are lazy and laid back. However, in general they are best described as quiet and gentle dogs that thrive in a family home environment.

## GREEN COLLAR ASSESSMENT

All Greyhound Adoption Program (GAP) greyhounds offered for adoption have successfully passed our Green Collar

assessment program. This provides an exemption under the *Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act 2008* from muzzling of the greyhound in local council areas, where it would otherwise be required by local laws.

As part of the Green Collar assessment, greyhounds are evaluated with a range of ‘coaching dogs’ to evaluate their behavioural responses, including prey drive.

The Green Collar accreditation does not guarantee that GAP greyhounds are going to be compatible with every other dog that they will meet. Your greyhound may not like some dogs or may be anxious around them. This is something that you will need be aware of and manage, so that you keep your greyhound safe.

The GAP staff will always carefully assess each greyhound to determine its level of compatibility for families with children. However, as with all animals, the greyhound’s behaviour will be greatly influenced by its environment and

circumstances.

Like any other breed of dog, greyhounds are individuals and their behaviour may change over time.

All greyhounds adopted through the GAP QLD are desexed, vaccinated and microchipped.

The GAP QLD also provides green collar assessments for pet greyhounds that have not been adopted through the GAP program.

## WHO IS MY GREYHOUND?

Greyhounds are sighthounds, originally bred for the chasing of game. Other sighthounds include Afghan Hounds, Irish Wolfhounds, Whippets, Salukis, Scottish deerhounds.

- The modern greyhound is a powerful athlete that is the product of centuries of breeding for speed.
- Greyhounds have a combination of long powerful legs, a deep chest, flexible spine and slim build which allows them to reach speeds of up to 60 kph.
- A greyhound runs in “a double-hung



suspension gait". There are two phases of their gallop during which all four feet are off the ground. In full flight, the greyhound is in the air 75 per cent of the time.

- Greyhounds can be lovely pets, they are generally quiet and calm and while they enjoy a burst of speed and a daily walk they adjust well to life in the slow lane.
- Greyhounds, as with any breed of dog, are individuals that come in many have different personalities.

## **KEEP YOUR GREYHOUND ON LEASH IN PUBLIC**

Reaching speeds of up to 60 km/h, Greyhounds are very fast. Even a greyhound with great recall may see an object in the distance and run off to reach it.

A greyhound in 'chase mode' can easily run onto a busy road or through a fence without realising the danger. So, for the safety of your greyhound, please keep the leash on at all times.

**Greyhounds are not suitable to take to off leash areas such as public dog parks or off leash dog beaches.**



## **LEARNING TO BE A PET**

With a little assistance from you, most greyhounds easily make the transition into a home environment.

When you first bring your greyhound home, it may show signs of stress such as pacing, heavy panting, listlessness or hypervigilance, lack of interest in food, or licking/chewing of its paws. These signs of anxiety should settle in a few days.

In many respects, adopting a retired greyhound is like bringing a new puppy home. Life in your home is a new experience for your greyhound, and you will need to be patient, allowing them time to settle in.

## **BRINGING A GREYHOUND HOME**

1. Retired racers may not have had experience with fans, washing machines or other appliances. While your greyhound is getting used to their new home, be conscious of the noises that household appliances make and understand that this may frighten, confuse or upset some greyhounds. With a bit of reassurance your greyhound will soon understand that these appliances are neither threatening nor frightening.
2. Most retired greyhounds also have limited exposure to glass doors and windows, so make a point of showing them to your greyhound so they know they can't run through them. Until your greyhound is familiar with windows and doors,

no indoor zoomies and chasing games.

3. While in a kennel environment your greyhound may not have had to learn food manners, this means they are likely to steal food from tables or benches. Be patient and consistent with your greyhound as you teach them what is and isn't acceptable. Ensure that tasty treats are kept up high and in a greyhound proof container.
4. Decide on the house rules including where your greyhound is allowed and enforce them; what the greyhound's walking/feeding routine will be and who in the family is responsible for what - include the children by giving them 'doggy responsibilities'.
5. Set up your greyhound's sleeping area before they arrive. This should be in a quiet area, away from drafts and the main thoroughfare of the house, but should also be in an area where they are part of the family – greyhounds like to see what is going on around them. A dog's bed is their safe space, a place to retreat and take time out. Restrict children and other pets in the sleeping area.
6. Don't forget to puppy proof your house.
7. Remember your greyhound may have spent its life in a kennel situation. This means that they may not feel comfortable with having the run of the house when they first come home. Once your greyhound is feeling more settled and is house-trained, you can give them more access to other areas of the house. Initially it is advisable to put barriers at doors to confine your greyhound to certain areas of the house. Perhaps they are permitted in the kitchen, laundry, and family areas but restricted from the lounge, office or bedrooms. By confining your greyhound in the initial stages you will make them feel more secure and, it will also make house-training easier.
8. Put your greyhound on a lead and take them out for a toilet break several times a day. Remember to lavish praise on your greyhound when they go to the toilet in the correct place. Over successive days the time between toilet breaks can be increased and by following these steps, confining, attending to and praising your greyhound. Your dog will become house trained in no time. If your dog has an accident in the house, be patient and persevere, this is as new to them as it is to you.
9. Dogs flourish on routine, so try and keep things consistent. If possible feed and walk your dog at roughly the same time every day. Establish a feeding routine, remember to encourage a rest period 45 – 60 minutes before and after feeding to avoid Gastric Dilatation-Volvulus (GDV also referred to as bloat). If your greyhound does experience GDV, seek urgent medical attention.
10. Every dog, family and situation is different. What works for one may

not work for another. Try not to set your expectations too high. Although some greyhounds will fit in straight away, others may take a little more time. Be patient and allow your greyhound to settle in at their own pace - they will learn your house rules as they settle in.

11. Although your greyhound is used to being handled, it usually will not like being hugged and cuddled like you might expect from other pet dogs. Be aware of your greyhound's reaction to being touched and if they back off or appear uncomfortable, stop what you are doing and give them some space.
12. *For more information on feeding, travelling with your greyhound, grooming, basic obedience, and veterinary care or other behavioural issues please contact the GAP.*

## **ADOPTION MILESTONE EXPECTATIONS**

Every greyhound is unique and will adjust to retired life at its own pace.

The milestones outlined here are a general guide to settling your GAP greyhound and what to expect from them in their new home at three days, three weeks, and three months.

If you have any concerns, please call the GAP team on 1300 087 021. We are here to support you and your GAP greyhound.

## **FIRST THREE DAYS**

Allow the first three days for your new family member to settle into their home and surroundings. This time will allow the greyhound to decompress. Your greyhound may display the following behaviours:

- Overwhelmed and anxious
- Scared and unsure of their surroundings
- Withdrawn
- Hides under furniture
- Puppy like behaviour

These behaviours are normal in these early days, and to help with the transition to their new surroundings we recommend:

- No visitors allowing for maximum interaction and bonding with your family
- Short walks in quiet areas
- Simple routines
- Allow your greyhound to discover their own space at their own pace
- Give your greyhound a bed in a quiet area, just for them
- Reward calm behaviour
- Provide Kongs and chewable toys



## FIRST THREE WEEKS

In the next three weeks, your greyhound will start to settle in, learn a new routine and the household boundaries. Greyhounds love routine and at this milestone they will become open to your routine.

Start how you mean to continue.

Your entire family should to enforce the same rules.

Your greyhound may display the following behaviours:

- Feeling more comfortable with you
  - Inquisitive
  - Start to show their personality
  - Adjusting to separation – unsettled when alone.
- These behaviours are normal and to help with their transition to their new surroundings we recommend:
- Continuing to build independence
  - Practice ‘alone time’
  - Lessening the time people are home
  - Incorporating solo activities
  - Leaving the radio/TV on
  - Increasing walking and exercise
  - Recognising and rewarding calm behaviour

## FIRST THREE MONTHS

During the next three months your greyhound will start to feel right at home and show their true personality.

Your greyhound is becoming more settled with the household routine and lifestyle.

Twelve weeks is a relatively short time in their new family compared to their previous athletic life.

Your greyhound may display the following behaviours:

- Keenness to walk longer or more frequently
- Increasing confidence
- Relaxed when you are moving about the house
- Not continually watching you or jumping up and following you when you move around the house.

These behaviours are normal and to continue to help with their transition to their new surroundings we recommend:

- Increasing time or frequency of exercise
- A basic obedience class
- Positive reinforcement training class
- Supervised – introduction of visitors and their pets
- Outings with more stimulation

## CHECKLIST FOR A HAPPY AND WELL BEHAVED GREYHOUND

All dogs have behavioural needs, and if these needs are not met, they can suffer through fear, lack of mental stimulation, anxiety, or confusion which can lead to undesirable behaviour. To ensure your dog leads a well-balanced life and continues to be a good pet, check off the following points:

- ✓ My dog will receive appropriate interactions with other dogs and people.
- ✓ My dog has received basic training and will receive ongoing training for the rest of its life. This will enable my dog to understand my commands and allow me to control my dog in difficult situations and exercise my dog easily.
- ✓ My dog receives regular exercise, play and human contact. This will provide my dog with adequate mental stimulation.
- ✓ My dog has been encouraged to develop some independence and has been gradually become accustomed to being left alone. This will help to prevent anxiety and behaviours associated with separation.
- ✓ My dog receives clear, gentle and consistent guidelines for its behaviour. This prevents confusion, anxiety and aggression and makes my dog more manageable and responsive to my commands.
- ✓ My dog has a safe and comfortable place to retreat to and to rest where it will not be disturbed.

## RESPONSIBLE DOG OWNERSHIP

Owning a dog can bring a lot of joy and happiness, as well as providing benefits to human health. Responsible pet ownership is all about ensuring your dog is a well-adjusted member of your family as well as the broader community, and avoiding any potential problems that may arise.

A great way to ensure you are a responsible pet owner is to be aware of your dog's comfort levels and be aware of social situations that your dog may not be comfortable in.

## TRAINING

- Continue to work with your greyhound to establish a bond with him/her and teach at least basic obedience and manners.
- Keep your greyhound on a leash at all times when in public.
- **The GAP QLD does not recommend taking greyhounds to off leash parks or beaches.**
- Join a dog obedience or dog sports club.
- Join a sighthound club.

## A SMOOTH TRANSITION FOR YOU AND YOUR GREYHOUND

### Destructive behavior

Behaviour such as digging or chewing is actually normal dog behaviour. However, when this occurs in an inappropriate manner it becomes a problem for owners.

Destructive behaviour occurs in the absence of other activities such as play and physical exercise or because of separation anxiety.

By providing toys that the greyhound can safely chew, and even a sandpit in which they can dig can reduce destructive behaviour.

Do not put your dog in a space and where they have free access to your possessions.

### Marking behaviour

Dogs, particularly male dogs may 'mark' their possessions and territory by urinating on things. While this may be unpleasant, it is normal dog behaviour. Reduce the chances of this behaviour by restricting free access to your house until your dog is house-trained and ensure that the dog is encouraged to 'empty' in an appropriate place. You should never reprimand a dog after the event. Dogs do not understand the reason behind your anger and will be frightened if you hit them or yell.

Find out the cause of the behaviour and treat it appropriately or consult a professional.

## GREYHOUNDS AND OTHER PETS

When introducing new pets, supervision is paramount. Constant vigilance during the early months of co-living is recommended.

We recommend leaving the muzzle on for such interactions.

Greyhounds have been bred for centuries to chase. If you own other pets, you must spend time introducing your greyhound to them, and teaching the greyhound that they are not for chasing.

You must constantly reinforce to your greyhound that it must not chase other animals.

When introducing your greyhound to new animals, do not to leave them alone together until you are certain they are comfortable with each other. animals.

## **GREYHOUNDS AND OTHER DOGS**

Your greyhound will need time to become familiar with other dog breeds. Even though your dog has been issued a green collar, while you are still getting to know your new greyhound, we recommend walking them with their muzzle on, especially if you are expecting to meet or interact with other dogs.

Remember the first few weeks of home life is full of new experiences for your greyhound and they can often feel overwhelmed.

Wearing a muzzle in the short term can give you piece of mind.

## **GREYHOUNDS AND CHILDREN**

Greyhounds can be subtle when expressing discomfort or distress.

As with any breed of dog, it is essential that young children and babies are never left unsupervised when around your dog.

Children must be taught to be calm and gentle with the dog and to have respect for its space, particularly in its bed. A dog's bed provides the dog with a 'timeout' area so that when it has had enough interaction, it has somewhere to retreat to for a rest.

It is very important that you provide your greyhound with a safe place that he/she can escape to, if feeling anxious or uncomfortable. Children must be taught not to approach a sleeping or resting dog. Instead, ask the children to call out the dog's name and have the dog come to them. Remember the adage "let sleeping dogs lie".

Children should never disturb the greyhound when they are in their 'safe place'. Dogs that are startled while sleeping or woken from sleep may be frightened, or even react aggressively.

Unlike adults, children tend to move rapidly, not always in a coordinated manner, and may shriek out in high-pitched tones. To a greyhound, this may be an exciting incentive to play. Such a desire may be exacerbated when rollerblades, skateboards or bicycles are involved. Children must be taught to be calm and gentle around all dogs.

Children should always be involved in obedience training with their dog, under adult supervision.

Children should be taught to always ask permission before touching any dog, and they should never approach from behind, as this could result in a dog biting, if it is surprised.



Children should not pat a dog on the top of the head, stare into its face, grab at the dog, kiss, or hug the dog. These can be threatening to the greyhound, especially when you are just getting to know each other. While for humans these are a show of affection, they can be frightening for many dogs.

Ideally the dog should be given time to allow it to move towards the child, not the child moving towards the dog.

Children should never follow a dog that is trying to move away from them, as the dog may feel threatened and bite in self-defense.

If a child is feeling uncomfortable or threatened around a dog, they should stand still, with their arms by their side and turn sideways to the dog. Squealing or running away will most likely excite

the dog and exacerbate the situation. A growl is a warning from your dog that he/she is uncomfortable. Growling should not be punished. This is how your dog communicates and is telling you that it is uncomfortable.

## **PREVENTING SEPARATION ANXIETY**

### **What is separation anxiety?**

Separation anxiety is when a dog has formed a strong attachment to somebody or something and the dog becomes anxious when that thing is taken away.

Most domestic dogs suffer from some form of separation anxiety.

There are three main types of separation anxiety:

1. Anxiety when owner is absent.
2. Anxiety when separated from owner by a barrier.
3. Anxiety when the dog doesn't get owners' attention. This can include having to share the owners' attention with another person, dog or other pet. This is the most common type of separation anxiety.

### **The signs of separation anxiety**

There are multiple behaviours that can be associated with separation anxiety including:

- chewing
- digging
- lip licking
- yawning
- barking
- escaping
- over-excitability when interacting with people
- stealing or hoarding
- chasing tail
- not eating
- not toileting
- vying for attention, and
- aggression.

Many of these behaviours can be caused by conditions other than separation anxiety so the condition can sometimes be difficult to diagnose.

Separation anxiety can also make other existing behavioural problems worse. For example a dog with a fear of thunder will be worse if it also has separation anxiety.

The main thing to remember with separation anxiety treatment is to avoid causing the dog additional anxiety.

First, you must manage the condition, then gradually increase the dog's independence, and then increase control and treat the condition.

Always seek the help of a professional dog trainer, animal behaviour specialist or your veterinarian, if you are unsure.

Alternatively, contact the staff at the GAP, who will provide you with tips to help prevent separation anxiety.

## **GREYHOUND HEALTH AND WELLBEING**

It is important that your dog:

- Has an annual C5 vaccination.
- Has an annual health check.
- Receives regular flea, tick, and heartworm prevention.
- Receives regular intestinal worm control.
- Is registered via its microchip to your name and current details.

You must update your dog's details with the microchip registry when you adopt the dog and ensure that your dog is registered with your local council.

**Eye disease Pannus** – is a disorder that affects the eyes of the greyhound. It can eventually lead to blindness if not managed. If you notice any changes to your dog's eyes, seek immediate veterinary attention.

**Corns** – are a common cause of lameness in greyhounds. Found on the foot pads they are a circular or a "dot" on the base of the pad. Corns are normally hard and very painful when pressure is applied.



Seek medical attention if your greyhound becomes lame.

**Bone Cancer (Osteosarcoma)** – Bone cancer is mostly seen in larger breeds of dogs with greyhounds being the breed diagnosed most with this disease. Most common sites for bone cancer is in the front leg or the shoulder and above the wrist. In the hind leg, the cancer tends to develop in the knee/stifle area. The area can become swollen and painful to touch. If your greyhound shows symptoms seek medical advice.

**Dental care** – Proactive preventative and remedial dental care throughout a greyhound’s life will prevent serious teeth issues. Symptoms of dental disease are bad breath, red, swollen or bleeding gums,

refusal of hard food and loss of appetite or weight which can be treated by:

- Limiting soft kibble
- Offering larger kibble that requires more chewing
- Offering dental sticks
- Offering large raw bones – chicken frames, beef or lamb bones

**Heat stress and heat stroke** –greyhounds are susceptible to heat. Avoid exercising in the heat of the day, provide adequate shade and plenty of cool fresh water. Symptoms of heat stress include panting, salivating and increased heart rate. Rapid treatment and prevention are key:

- Moving the greyhound into the shade.
- Gently cool the greyhound – lay on wet towels, wipe down or hose with cool water.

- If symptoms persist, seek urgent veterinary treatment.
- **Do not ever leave your dog in a hot car.**

**Keep your greyhound warm in cold weather.** Greyhounds have thin skin and very little body fat. This helps cool the body down after a run, however, also makes them susceptible to cold weather. Keeping a warm jacket on your greyhound helps maintain body condition and comfort.

## TOXIC FOOD FOR DOGS

If your dog has eaten or you suspect your dog of eating any of the following, seek urgent medical treatment.

**Chocolate, coffee or caffeine** – These foods contain a stimulant called methylxanthines. Methylxanthines affect the gut, heart, central nervous system and kidneys. Symptoms may include, vomiting, diarrhea, restlessness, hyperactive and seizures.

**Onions, garlic and chives** – consuming these vegetables and herbs can cause gut irritation with symptoms of vomiting, diarrhea, long term red blood cell damage and anemia.

**Alcohol** – is significantly more toxic to dogs than humans. Symptoms may include vomiting, diarrhea, decreased coordination, difficulty breathing, tremors, coma and possibly death.

**Grapes and raisins** – these are highly toxic and consumption of grapes and

raisins can cause rapid kidney failure.

**Macadamia nuts** – within 12 hours of ingestion, symptoms may include weakness, depression, tremors, vomiting and high body temperature.

## POISONS AROUND THE HOME

Having a dog in your home is like having a small child, you must ensure that the dog does not have access to poisons and toxins commonly kept in homes and sheds.

- Soaps, cleaning agents
- Cockroach baits
- Rat/snail pellets
- Human medications

## ENJOY YOUR GREYHOUND

Greyhound owners can be very social and local greyhound walking groups hold regular walks and get together that are advertised on social media.

Consider joining your local walk or create one in your area.

Create a hashtag for your greyhound – don't forget to tag #GAP\_QLD

GAP QLD love receiving adoption updates – send your adventure updates including photos to [gap@qric.qld.gov.au](mailto:gap@qric.qld.gov.au)

Sign up to the GAP newsletter to keep up to date on GAP events and news. Subscribe at [gapqld.com.au](http://gapqld.com.au)

Most importantly, enjoy your greyhound.

**Contact us**

Website: [gapqld.com.au](http://gapqld.com.au)  
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INTEGRITY COMMISSION



Help keep racing  
integrity on  
track

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Our goal is a sustainable, fair and safe  
racing industry, where everyone can  
compete on a level playing field.

\* This information is provided as a guide only and is not legal advice.  
It is your responsibility to refer and adhere to the current national and  
local Rules of Racing.



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