



FROM
RACING
TO
RETIREMENT

A GUIDE FOR GREYHOUND BREEDERS, TRAINERS AND OWNERS

The Queensland Racing Integrity Commission is an independent statutory body which oversees the integrity and welfare standards of racing animals and racing industry participants in Queensland.

The Commission is committed to promotion of practices that improve the welfare of all greyhounds from birth through training and racing to retirement.

This guide provides advice that will assist you in planning and providing a successful transition for your greyhounds from racing to retirement.

Index

The Rules of Racing	P. 1
Identifying a Forever Home	P. 2
The Greyhound Adoption Program (GAP)	P. 2
Winding-down After Racing	P. 2
What is GAP Temperament Testing	P. 2
GAP Pre-entry Assessment Testing	P. 3
Alternatives to GAP	P. 3
Greyhound Behaviour	P. 3
The GAP process:	P. 4
Socialising Greyhounds	P. 5
The Critical Socialisation Period	P. 5
Fear Impact Periods	P. 5
Prey Drive and Aggression	P. 5
Transitioning to Retirement	P. 7
Racing and Trialing	P. 7
Veterinary Check	P. 7
Feeding/Weight	P. 7
Housing	P. 7
Handling and basic pet skills	P. 7
Exercise and Socialisation	P. 8
Socialisation Activities	P. 8
Greyhound Development Skill Sets	P. 8
Skill Set Time Lines	P.9





About This Manual

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

The following Greyhound Adoption Programs have assisted us to provide the information in this booklet:

- Greyhound Adoption Program Victoria
- Greyhound Adoption Program of Tasmania
- Greyhounds As Pets New Zealand
- Greyhound Adoption Program South Australia
- Greyhounds As Pets New South Wales

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

For more information contact:
GAP QLD on (07) 5424 6092
or email gap@qric.qld.gov.au

The Rules of Racing

Breeders, owners and trainers of racing greyhounds owe a duty of care to their dogs under the *Animal Care and Protection Act 2001*.

Duty of care includes the appropriate provision of food and water, accommodation and veterinary treatment for the greyhounds.

There are also statutory animal welfare obligations within the *Racing Integrity Act 2016* through Sections 3(1)(c) and 10(i) of the Act. The Act safeguards the welfare of all animals involved in racing whether directly or indirectly and whether lawfully or unlawfully.

Currently in Queensland greyhound retirements are managed according to *Greyhounds Australasia Rule 106* Proper care (welfare) of greyhounds.

Greyhounds Australasia Rule 106(3) requires that whenever a greyhound is transferred, retired as a pet or a breeding greyhound, been transferred to an adoption program, exported or surrendered to another agency, or euthanased that the Queensland Racing Integrity Commission is correctly notified.

Participants must make every effort to re-home all fit and healthy greyhounds when they are retired.

Identifying a Forever Home

As the owner of a racing greyhound you are responsible for planning for the retirement of your greyhound regardless of whether you are retiring it prior to racing, or at the conclusion of its racing career.

You should identify early in the greyhound's career where it is going to live out the rest of its life, being aware that greyhounds generally live to about 10 - 12 years of age.

Greyhounds make great pets. Even when in full race training, they are generally placid, well-mannered and easy to handle dogs. They are friendly, affectionate, lazy, calm, clean, loving, trusting and good-natured which makes them very easy to live with.

The most common place for greyhounds to be re-homed is through friends and family of owners, trainers and contacts of other participants in the industry.

Local pet and specialist greyhound rehoming agencies can also assist you in identifying a forever home for your greyhound.

Participants must make every effort to re-home all fit and healthy greyhounds when they are retired.

The Greyhound Adoption Program (GAP)

The Queensland Racing Integrity Commission provides support for retired racing greyhounds by facilitating adoptions and by providing green collar assessments for retired greyhounds through the Greyhound Adoption Program (GAP) of Queensland.

You can place your greyhound on the waiting list for adoption through GAP by booking a pre-entry assessment temperament test by:

calling (07) 5424 6092
or by emailing gap@qric.qld.gov.au



Winding-down After Racing

GAP requires that greyhounds have been away from racing activities including training, for a minimum of 28 days before they are presented for pre-assessment.

This is to ensure that any retiring greyhound has time away from all racing related activities (including breaking, education, trialling, training or racing) to maximise its chances of being rehomed.

To maximise the opportunities for a greyhound to be suitable for adoption, you should proactively undertake activities that help to prepare the greyhound for transition to life as a pet.

What is GAP Temperament Testing?

GAP uses a standardised National Temperament Test (NTT) to assess the suitability of a greyhound for adoption as a pet.

Greyhounds that pass the full GAP assessment achieve a green collar, which indicates that they are permitted by Queensland state law to be un-muzzled in public.

Temperament testing occurs over a number of days or weeks during which time the GAP staff will observe the behaviour of your dog to see how well it is socialised with other greyhounds, smaller dogs and people.

Behaviour can never be predicted completely accurately as it is influenced by situation and environment. The NTT is therefore not a perfect test, but it is the best tool that we currently have to predict suitability as a pet and for Green Collar eligibility.

GAP Pre-entry Assessment Testing

The pre-entry assessment is a much simpler and shorter version of the full NTT, and like the NTT, it is not an exhaustive temperament assessment. It is done at a point in time and is only an assessment of the behaviour of the greyhound on that day.

Dogs that are timid, fearful, or aggressive with people and/or other animals and dogs with excessive prey drive with no self-control will not be accepted into GAP.

A greyhound that successfully passes the pre-entry assessment test is transferred immediately to GAP where it will undergo the full NTT. If it passes the full program, it is de-sexed and then prepared for adoption.

Greyhounds that are not suitable for adoption with a green GAP collar will be offered back to their owners.

Alternatives to GAP

Should your greyhound be unsuccessful at passing the pre-entry assessment test, the GAP staff will provide you with advice regarding additional training and socialisation activities you can undertake with your greyhound.

Not passing a pre-entry assessment test initially does not mean that the dog will not pass on another day, particularly if you take the time to work with the dog.

A period of additional socialisation and/or obedience training at home with you will assist some greyhounds in passing the GPA pre-entry assessment test on another day.

Not passing the NTT does not mean that the dog will not be a good pet, it just means that it may not be suitable to be un-muzzled in public.

Providing that your greyhound is not aggressive with people and/or animals and is healthy, you are expected to make every effort to find a suitable retirement home for it.

Greyhound Behaviour

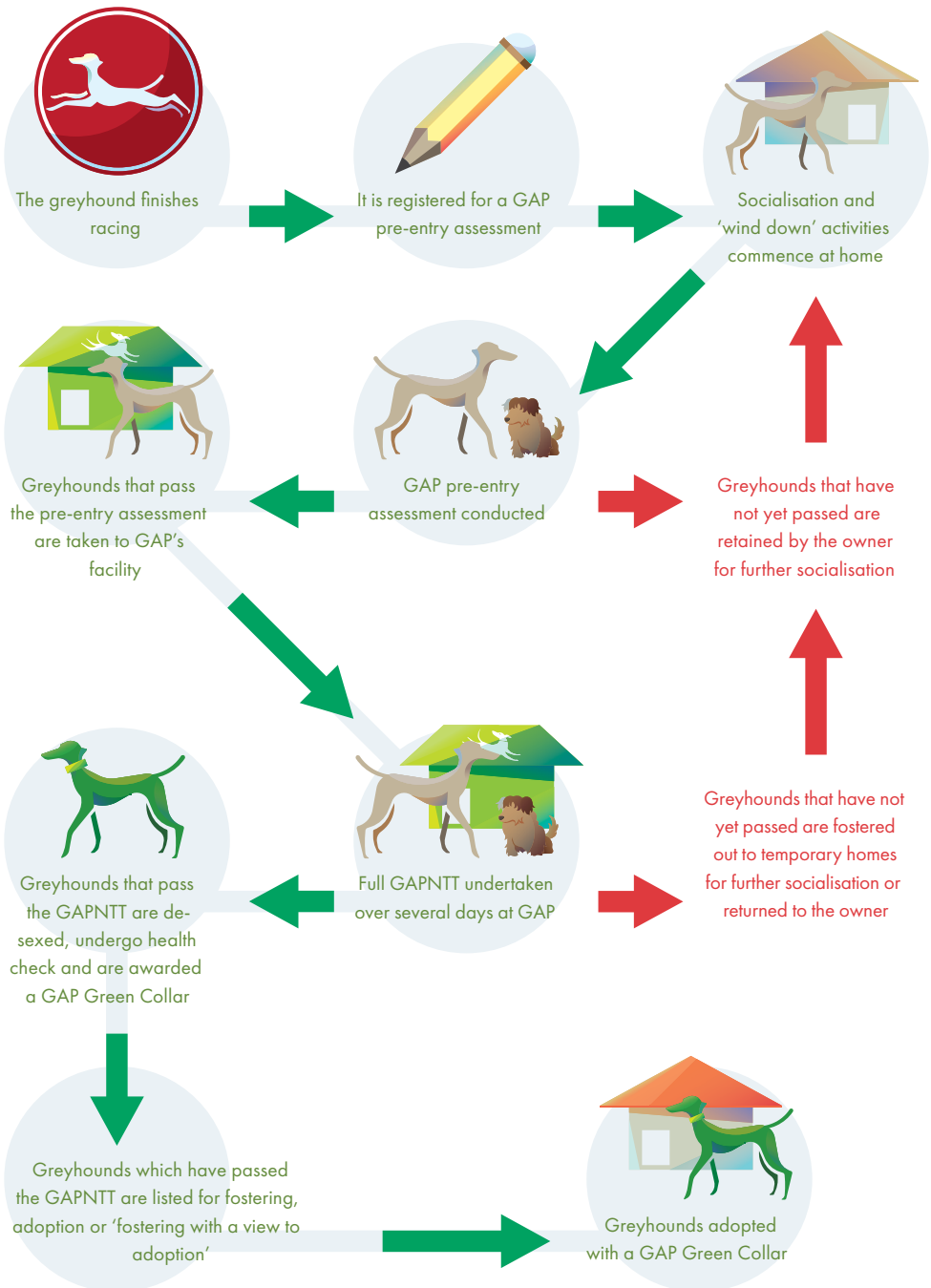
A racing greyhound has many attributes, including an inherent desire to chase ('prey drive'), athletic ability and an adaptable mental attitude. As with all dogs, natural attributes must be backed by appropriate socialisation, management, husbandry, rearing and training.

Adaptability has a genetic basis and greyhounds are generally considered to be a mentally adaptable breed. This means that greyhounds have the ability to fully adjust from a full racing career to a family environment as a pet.

The greyhounds that make ideal pets are the ones that are socialised early and throughout their lifetime with other dogs of various breeds, cats, people (including small children) and a range of situations.

These situations must expose the animal to a range of stimuli including different sights, smells, sounds and physical surfaces.

The greyhounds that make ideal pets are the ones that are socialised early and throughout their lifetime.



Socialising Greyhounds

At the conclusion of a greyhound's racing career socialisation is very important, however this should build on experiences undertaken throughout the greyhound's life and during a number of key periods.

The Critical Socialisation Period

The first part of the rearing that is critical to success is what is commonly called the 'socialisation' period, but probably better defined as the critical learning period, which occurs at approximately 3 - 17 weeks of age.

Learning continues beyond this but it happens more slowly. Greyhounds need to be exposed to as wide a range of stimuli as possible at this age, including dedicated periods of human and other animal contact and socialisation, i.e. not limited to feeding time.

Unfortunately, what is learnt can also be forgotten, so ongoing socialisation and exposure to various situations throughout their lifetime is vital.

Fear Impact Periods

Greyhounds are particularly sensitive to stimuli in two key periods commonly around 9 - 10 weeks of age and 9 - 10 months (although this is variable).

During these periods greyhounds are prone to developing excessive fear of a particular stimulus that they have a bad experience with. This can develop into generalised fear.

These dogs can become aggressive in some circumstances (commonly 'fear biting') and present serious challenges when it comes to re-homing.

It is important to identify fear periods with each puppy (if they occur) and take active steps to prevent negative experiences, and to provide appropriate, positive training to rectify these behaviours if they arise.

Your veterinarian or other qualified animal behaviour specialist can assist you with support in this area – it may take only one session to give you the tools you need to help a frightened dog stop its inappropriately aggressive behaviour.

Prey Drive and Aggression

Prey drive is the instinctive inclination of a predator to find, pursue and capture prey. Prey drive has a very strong genetic basis and has been shown to be a positive experience for the animal.

It is a clearly distinct behaviour to aggression, which also has a genetic basis.

Greyhound racing utilises the prey drive of the dogs in chasing the lure. In many dogs, prey drive is so strong that the chance to satisfy the drive is its own reward - the chance to chase is its own reward. This is why it is essential that greyhounds are socialized appropriately with other animals.

Appropriate exposure to other animals will allow the greyhound to learn that they are not prey items.

Prey drive cannot be eliminated from greyhounds but can potentially be modified or suppressed, and the dog can learn self-control.

Exposure to new animals and young children should always be in a controlled environment, and the greyhound should be on leash and muzzled. Introductions and interactions should cease immediately if the greyhound shows any signs of predatory or aggressive behaviour, including barking, growling, lunging and stalking.

It requires a caring and appropriately educated adult to assist a greyhound to learn and reinforce appropriate behaviour and new expectations.

Aggression is driven by emotional factors and is a negative experience for the animal and can be more difficult to suppress or modify. For example, aggression might be triggered by physical mistreatment.

Fortunately, greyhounds are a breed with inherently low aggressive tendencies.



Transitioning to Retirement

At the conclusion of a greyhound's racing career socialisation is very important, however this should build on experiences undertaken throughout the greyhound's life and during a number of key periods.

Racing and Trialing

It is important that once you have decided to transition your greyhound to retirement that you no longer train, race or trial them. This will assist the greyhound to adjust to its new life.

Veterinary Check

To assist you in transitioning your greyhound to retirement a veterinary check should be undertaken to identify if they are carrying any residual racing injuries or health conditions which require short or long-term treatment. Their teeth should be cleaned and nails trimmed.

Your greyhound also needs to have a current C5 vaccination, and be up to date with parasite treatment.

Feeding/Weight

Retired greyhounds should be allowed to gain some additional weight over and above their racing weight. The amount needed will vary, but should on average be at least two kilograms.

Ask your veterinarian for guidance on this if you have any questions or concerns.

Housing

When rehomed, many greyhounds will have the run of a suburban garden block so it is important to provide them with an opportunity to get used to being free in larger spaces.

Handling and basic pet skills

Greyhounds should already have or be should be taught basic life skills - walking on a leash without pulling or lunging, staying calm when handled, appropriate toileting and coming when called.



Exercise and Socialisation

Exercise remains an important part of your greyhound's life.

Following the conclusion of racing their exercise regime should be slowly decreased until the regime consists of two twenty minute walks on leash per day.

Socialisation Activities

Activities should include:

- Exposure to different flooring surfaces such as carpet, concrete, tiles, wood floors, bricks, stairs;
- Increasing exposure to people in a non-training/non-racing setting which should include play time and may include obedience training;
- Travelling inside a car - you should help your greyhound learn to jump up into the car without you lifting it;
- Get the greyhound used to short daily periods of isolation from other greyhounds and people, starting with 30 minutes and gradually increasing to three to four hours in duration;
- Exposure to a variety of noises: children and family sounds, televisions, radios, cars, trucks, motorbikes, lawn mowers, trains, household appliances, vacuum cleaners, lawn mowers;
- Exposure to small dogs and other larger dogs. The greyhound should be muzzled and on leash at all times and the interaction should be immediately ceased if the greyhound shows signs of predatory or aggressive behaviour.

Greyhound Development Skill Sets

In order for puppies of any breed to grow into mentally stable, happy and sociable adult dogs, they must be handled regularly, well socialised and positively exposed to the world.

Greyhound puppies should have daily exposure to people and be engaged with people through interactive play.

You can develop your pups' motor skills and coordination as they grow by providing them with a variety of toys and play environments and by engaging them in play.

The following skill development milestones provide a basic guide that can help you to ensure that your greyhounds grow into well-rounded adults with great potential for life as household pets on retirement from racing.

By putting time into your young dogs, you will make much life easier for yourself and the greyhounds when it is time for them to retire from racing.

Socialising your greyhound with other dogs, animals and people will not make him/her uncompetitive on the racetrack.

A well socialised greyhound will be calmer, less stressed and a more confident athlete.



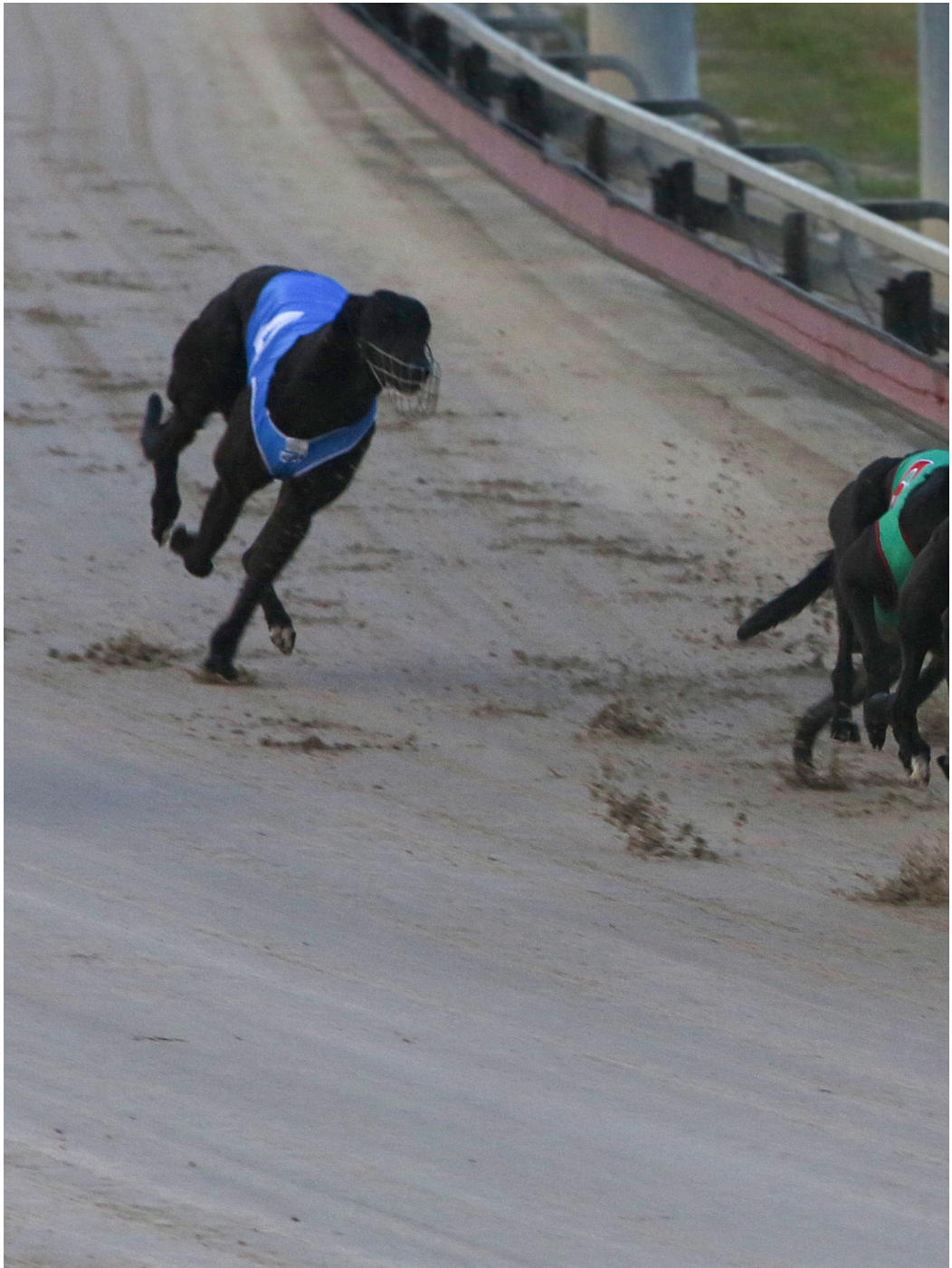
8 Weeks to 16 Weeks

Must include daily exposure to people and handling and interactive play. Should include exposure to a variety of other vaccinated dogs that are socially compatible where practical. Puppies must not be separated from their litter or their lactating mother until seven weeks of age to facilitate socialisation, except where there is risk to the puppies or the mother.

Age	Skill	Details of Mastered Skill
12 Weeks	Accepts handling and health checks.	Action : The pup is regularly and gently handled by people. Measures: 1. The pup is friendly and accepting of contact with people. 2. The pup accepts handling, including gentle restraint and being picked up . 3. The pup is able to stand in a relaxed manner for a health check – accepts examination of mouth, ears, legs, feet, and body.
16 Weeks	Accepts collar and leash.	Action : The pup is conditioned to wearing a collar and leash. Measures: 1. The pup accepts the wearing of a collar and can be gently restrained by the collar while remaining relaxed and calm. 2. The pup accepts being connected to handler by leash without resistance or concern. 3. The pup is able to walk on a leash with the handler for 50 metres in a relaxed manner.
	Eats in a relaxed manner without competition and in the presence of people.	Action : The pup is individually fed and eats well in the presence of people. Measures: 1. The pup is able to eat in a relaxed, non-competitive environment without competition from other dogs. 2. The pup eats in close proximity of people (i.e. standing immediately alongside) and does not become anxious or aggressive.
	Has well developed motor skills and coordination and interacts with people.	Action : The pup is provided with a wide variety of toys and equipment to develop its coordination and problem solving abilities and to provide mental stimulation skills. Measures: 1. The pup has well developed coordination and problem solving abilities. 2. The pup interacts in a friendly and playful manner with toys and people.

16 Weeks to 12 Months Must include exposure to humans through daily handling and interactions including play, training and on leash walking. Must include exposure to a variety of other vaccinated dogs that are socially compatible.		
Age	Skill	Details of Mastered Skill
6 Months	Relaxes during visits to veterinarians, clinic and new environments.	<p>Action : The pup is continuously socialised and exposed to a variety of places, strangers and other animals in a controlled environment from the age of 8 weeks.</p> <p>Measures: The pup is able to encounter new and unfamiliar people and animals without fear, anxiousness or aggression, and can be physically examined by a veterinarian without fear, anxiousness or aggression.</p>
	Travels well.	<p>Action : The pup travels regularly in a car and/or dog float.</p> <p>Measures: The pup travels in a relaxed manner without motion sickness or anxiety and is able to be lifted and/or can get in and out of a vehicle calmly.</p>
	Comfortable in new environments.	<p>Action : The pup travels regularly to tracks and unfamiliar venues with exposure to noise, activity, people and other dogs.</p> <p>Measures: The pup accepts new environments, noise, activity, people and other dogs without fear, anxiety or aggression.</p>
7 Months	Confidently negotiates steps.	<p>Action : The pup is introduced to steps and stairs in a controlled manner.</p> <p>Measures: The pup is able to negotiate steps and heights in a confident and relaxed manner.</p>
	Compliant on leash.	<p>Action : The pup is walked regularly on a leash in a variety of environments.</p> <p>Measures: The pup walks on leash in a relaxed and compliant manner next to the handler for 100 metres.</p>
	Relaxes during visits to veterinarians, clinic and new environments.	<p>Action : The pup is continuously socialised and exposed to a variety of places, strangers and other animals in a controlled environment.</p> <p>Measures: The pup is able to encounter new and unfamiliar people and animals without fear, anxiousness or aggression and will stand in a relaxed manner for a health check – mouth/dentition, ears, legs, feet, body, rectal temperature etc.</p>

12 to 18 Months	
Skill	Details of Mastered Skill
Compliant on leash.	<p>Action : The dog is walked regularly on a leash in a variety of environments</p> <p>Measures: The dog is able to walk on leash in a relaxed and compliant manner next to a handler</p>
Relaxes during visits to veterinarians, clinic and new environments.	<p>Action : The dog continues to be socialised and exposed to a variety of places, strangers and other animals</p> <p>Measures:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The dog has well developed coordination and problem solving abilities 2. The dog engages and interacts in a friendly and playful manner with toys and people
Maintains developed skills and coordination.	<p>Action : The dog continues to be provided with a wide variety of toys and equipment</p> <p>Measures:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The dog has well developed coordination and problem solving abilities 2. The dog engages and interacts in a friendly and playful manner with toys and people
18 Months to Retirement	
Skill	Details of Mastered Skill
Compliant on leash.	<p>Action : The dog is walked regularly on a leash in a variety of environments.</p> <p>Measures: The dog is able to walk on leash in a relaxed and compliant manner next to a handler.</p>
Relaxes during visits to veterinarians, clinic and new environments.	<p>Action : The dog continues to be socialised and exposed to a variety of places, strangers and other animals.</p> <p>Measures:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The dog is able to encounter new and unfamiliar people and animals without fear, anxiousness or aggression. 2. The dog can be physically examined by a veterinarian without fear, anxiousness or aggression. 3. The dog stands in a relaxed manner for a health check – mouth/dentition, ears, legs, feet, body, rectal temperature etc.
Maintains developed skills and coordination.	<p>Action : The dog continues to be provided with a wide variety of toys and equipment.</p> <p>Measures:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The dog has well developed coordination and problem solving abilities. 2. The dog engages and interacts in a friendly and playful manner with toys and people.
Develops home-based pet companion Skills.	<p>Action : The dog is exposed to a range of common household sights and sounds, including steps, slippery floors, people, pets, glass doors, TV, ceiling fans, vacuum cleaner, etc.</p> <p>Measures: The dog is relaxed in the presence of regular household noises and activities.</p>





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