

# SLEEP STARTLE IN GREYHOUNDS

## What is sleep startle?

Greyhounds have a great ability to decompress, and this involves a very deep sleep cycle. Most dogs don't like to be woken up and this is especially true for greyhounds.

Making simple changes can help ensure you or others in your household don't wake a sleeping greyhound but rather "let sleeping dogs lie".

Waking up suddenly will take a greyhound by surprise and may lead to a short burst of energy or aggression – it's an instinctive reaction. It's also likely that you've startled or surprised them. It doesn't mean that your greyhound is aggressive, just that they were caught off guard.

Greyhounds have a great trick of sleeping with their eyes open, so don't assume that if their eyes are open that they are awake.

Here's some tips to help your greyhound to start 'listening out' for your approach and manage sleep startle.



## How can I manage sleep startle?

- Give your greyhound a quiet zone, a crate is a great option for a greyhound for sleeping and down time. Always respect the greyhound's sleeping area.
- Encourage your greyhound to sleep in its own bed/sleeping area or crate. Don't allow your greyhound to sleep on couches or human beds.
- Ensure any guests visiting respects your greyhound's 'safe space' and don't disturb them while they are sleeping. If anybody wishes to pat your greyhound, make sure you call them from their bed first.
- Small children should always have adult supervision when around sleeping greyhounds.
- Call your greyhound's name before approaching them and when you are 1.5 metres from their bed to help wake them. Wait until your greyhound has acknowledged you before approaching their sleeping area.
- Once awake, let your greyhound come to you.

If you're struggling with keeping your greyhound off human beds/couches, teaching them a command/cue to get them up or off what they are sleeping on is a great idea.

- Reward your greyhound whenever they are on their own bed, not when they are resting elsewhere. Make sure to stay consistent and this will soon become their favourite place as treats just magically appear when they are there! You can then begin to use a command such as 'place' or 'on your bed', use a treat to lure them and as soon as they step on their bed, reward them with the treat. The same can be taught with a separate command for hopping off their bed.
- Consistency is key, your greyhound will be willing to learn whatever you want to teach them so, it's up to you to set those boundaries.

