



FOSTER CARER BOOKLET



**GREYHOUNDS
AS PETS**

Supporting Western Australian
Retired Greyhounds



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THE PROGRAM

Most greyhounds make the transition from kennels quickly. During the time they spend in the program your greyhound will adjust to their new life, however like all dogs, training should be ongoing.

In the first few days in a new environment some dogs may show signs of stress such as pacing, heavy panting, listlessness, lack of interest in food and licking of the paws – these can all be signs of anxiety, and should settle.

In many respects helping a greyhound transition to life outside of kennels is similar to bringing a new puppy home. Life in a domestic environment is a new experience for your greyhound, be patient in allowing your greyhound time to settle in.

TIPS FOR TRAINING YOUR GREYHOUND

1. YOUR GREYHOUND IS CONSTANTLY LEARNING

Every interaction you have with your greyhound is a learning opportunity, try to take advantage of this.

2. BUILD A STRONG RELATIONSHIP

Effective training relies on a strong relationship between handler and animal. Greyhounds are sensitive to your mood and actions, try to be mindful of both verbal and nonverbal communication.

3. SETTING YOUR GREYHOUND UP TO WIN

While your greyhound is learning what is expected of them, try to manage their world to minimise the chance for them to do the wrong thing.

4. REWARD GOOD BEHAVIOUR

We are all good at pointing out mistakes, but not as good at rewarding good behaviour when we see it. If you notice your greyhound being quiet or happily playing with a toy, be sure to reward the behaviour.

TIPS FOR TRAINING YOUR GREYHOUND

5. MAKE IT FUN

Training will be more effective if it is a fun experience for your greyhound. Try to draw on your greyhound's natural abilities and interests. For example, try to find ways to incorporate their love of running, be creative, act silly, make watching you more fun than anything else going on around them.

6. KEEP IT SIMPLE

Training will be more successful if you break tasks into small manageable bits. If your greyhound is not picking up a command, chances are you are moving too fast or trying to teach too much at once. Even the simplest behaviours have multiple parts and actions. The more complex the command, the more important it is to break into small pieces and teach each piece separately.

7. KEEP IT SWEET

Rewards, and plenty of them, are key to successfully training a dog. Make your rewards memorable, and keep your greyhound guessing what you will do next. Be creative, be unpredictable and always leave your greyhound wanting more.

8. FINALLY, REMEMBER THERE ARE NO MAGIC WANDS WHEN IT COMES TO TRAINING

Reliability, patience and consistency are all key to ensuring your greyhound picks up new skills through training. If your greyhound continues to do something "bad", it's most likely because the reward they are getting from the bad behaviour is more effective than what they get for good behaviour.





TRAINING WEEK BY WEEK

The new training program has been developed by our behavioural team in order to best set each greyhound up for success in their transition to a pet. The follow up weekly questionnaires allow monitoring of behaviours and a set guide for training. It is important that the follow up questionnaires are completed towards the end of the respective weeks and are sent in by the due date. This new program will help develop each dog's skills within foster care and provide the right information required for foster carers. Training sessions only need to be 5-10 minutes once or twice daily.

You will be provided with a digital copy of the training guide for each greyhound, which may be adapted depending on the needs of each greyhound.

WEEK ONE

TRAINING REQUIRED:

1. Toilet training
2. Mat training

WEEK TWO

TRAINING REQUIRED:

Continue:

1. Toilet training
2. Mat training

New:

3. Name recall
4. Leash walking

WEEK THREE

TRAINING REQUIRED:

Continue:

1. Toilet training
2. Mat training
3. Name recall
4. Leash walking

New:

5. Four Paws on the floor

WEEK FOUR

TRAINING REQUIRED:

Continue:

1. Toilet training
2. Mat training
3. Name recall
4. Leash walking

Each weekly progress update includes the following:

- Foster carer questionnaire – details about the greyhound's behaviour in different circumstances.
- Behavioural scale assessment – you will need to score the greyhound on each trait.



TRAINING GUIDELINES

- Remain calm and assertive at all times.
- Maintain positive body language, head up, looking forward and walk at a confident pace.
- Visualise your success, you need to believe that your greyhound will succeed.
- Ensure your greyhound has had a walk before training. This will help their concentration.
- During training, make sure your greyhound is wearing the training collar and make sure it is fitted correctly, high up on the neck.
- Consistently train your greyhound. Minimum two training sessions per day, 10-15 minutes in duration.
- Always give rewards for correct behaviour immediately. A reward should always be praise and at times it may also include treats, toys or play.
- Any corrections for incorrect behaviour should be short, sharp and given at the right time. A correction is not a punishment, it is a way for you to communicate with your greyhound.

Once you commit to training your greyhound, remember that they will be learning from you 24/7.

Always be ready to teach.



WEEK 1: TRAINING

During the first few days your main role is to help your greyhound settle into their new life.

Bonding consists of:

- Getting them used to their name.
- Building trust between you and the greyhound.
- Providing them with a safe and secure "rest" area in the units and settling them into their kennels.
- Lots of positive attention and pats.
- Establishing a daily routine.

TOILET TRAINING

Greyhounds are generally quite clean dogs but as they are unfamiliar with indoor living, you will need to spend some time teaching them where the appropriate places are to toilet at their new home. In order to avoid toilet training accidents from occurring, it is essential that greyhounds are given lots of help and information to teach them where they are to toilet. You also need to ensure that your greyhound is given sufficient opportunity to toilet in that area. After all, humans don't automatically know where the bathroom is in a strange house until they've been shown. Greyhounds are the same but may need to be shown many times before they'll get it right all the time.

Once a greyhound learns to toilet in the wrong place, it quickly becomes a habit that can be difficult to break. Conversely, each opportunity your greyhound gets to toilet in the right place is an opportunity for them to learn the right thing and form a good habit.



PREVENTING MISTAKES

- As soon as you get your greyhound home, take them straight out to where you want them to toilet. They may have had a long car journey and you can't be sure when they last toileted.
- Watch your greyhound – if you see the greyhound circling, sniffing or if they become restless, take them to their toileting place immediately.
- Use common sense – if you know your greyhound hasn't toileted for several hours (e.g. during the evening or whilst you've been out), don't delay in taking them outside. This ideally would be your first task in the morning, or upon your return.

Greyhounds usually need to toilet:

1. After mealtime.
2. When they first wake up.
3. After exercise.
4. Before bed.

WEEK 1

- When you take them out to the designated toilet area it is best to put them on a lead and bring treats. If they toilet, praise them by giving them a treat and taking them off lead for a play or pat.
- If your greyhound doesn't toilet, you can try walking in circles, starting at about a 3-metre diameter and gradually making the circles smaller and tighter (replicating your greyhounds sniffing and toileting behaviour).
- If they do not toilet after 5-10 minutes allow them to go free for a few moments, watching them closely for warning behaviours (such as sniffing, circling or unsettled behaviour) or take them back outside for another attempt after a few minutes.
- Prevent your greyhound from going into rooms where you cannot watch them. You can keep doors closed or restrict areas with the use of baby gates. You may also like to employ the use of a crate to confine your greyhound when they are asleep or when you can't supervise them (e.g. for half an hour whilst you're attending to something else).
- Keeping your back door closed will allow your greyhound to indicate to you that they need to go outside. A common mistake made by many new owners and foster carers, is thinking that your greyhound understands that whilst the door is open they know to go outside to toilet. Opening up the door and signaling that it's time to toilet is an easy concept for greyhounds to grasp as they are always taken out of the kennel to toilet rather than just going on their own accord.
- **NOTE:** whenever your greyhound toiles in the right place, reward them with pats, praise and treats as soon as they have toileted. There is no point giving your dog a treat when they come back inside. If you do that, you are rewarding your greyhound for coming back inside, not toileting.



- Do not punish your greyhound for toileting in the wrong place! This is crucial. If you yell, smack, or chastise your greyhound they will believe they are being punished for what they are doing (i.e. toileting), not where they are doing it. This will make your greyhound reluctant to toilet in front of you for fear of punishment.
- Soak up whatever you can with paper towel and then clean up using an enzyme based cleaner from your vet or pet shop. Alternatively, laundry powder (e.g. Biozet) can be diluted and used in a similar manner. Do not use common household ammonia-based cleaners as it attracts the greyhound back to that area to toilet again. Remember, when a greyhound urinates, there is often a large volume that soaks in and under the carpet, so you will need need to use a considerable amount of product to cover the area completely.
- Change your greyhound's meal times – by changing the time of day when your greyhound eats, you will also change the time of day when they need to toilet. If your greyhound is unable to make it through the night without toileting, try moving dinner forward or backwards to change the pattern. Alternatively, you can try feeding a larger proportion of your greyhound's meal in the morning and less at night, or feeding a portion at lunchtime.
- If you have had your greyhound for some time and accidents begin to happen out of the blue, the first point of call would be a vet check up to rule out any underlying causes, such as urinary tract infections or incontinence.

TRAINING

TEACHING YOUR GREYHOUND TO STAY ON THEIR MAT

By providing a mat for your greyhound, you give them an easily recognisable area where they can go if they feel uncomfortable or wants a rest. It also gives you a place to send the greyhound if you want them out from under your feet or away while you enjoy a meal. You can take the mat wherever you go, which makes it easier for the greyhound to behave appropriately outside the home.

Getting started

Start in an environment where the greyhound is calm and there are minimal distractions. Put the mat on the ground and have treats ready.

Lure your greyhound with a treat in your hand towards the mat. As the greyhound puts at least one paw on the mat, mark the behaviour with a “yes”, and give a treat. Continue to lure your greyhound until all four paws are on the mat, mark “yes” and treat.

- If your greyhound keeps their feet on the mat, mark the behaviour again and give them another treat. Lure your greyhound off the mat with an “off” and start the process again.
- Repeat this step until your greyhound is quite comfortable with all four feet on the mat.

Settling down

- You want to get your greyhound to settle in a comfortable position, so that it will be able to maintain this for extended periods – usually a ‘down’ position.
- Lure your greyhound into a down position and mark the behaviour with “yes”, followed with a treat.

- Continue to give your greyhound treats for maintaining the drop position.
- If they get up, lure them back to the drop position and give them treats for staying on the mat.
- You are trying to teach your greyhound that good things will happen if they stay on the mat.
- It is best to repeat these steps in several short sessions.

Staying on the mat

When your greyhound is in a comfortable position, offer them a treat as you move around the mat.

- Move away and then come back and reward your greyhound.
- Gradually increase the distance and duration. Mixing up duration and distance.
- If your greyhound gets up and moves off the mat whilst you are practicing distance or duration, ask them back to the mat and go back to the previous position you know they can be successful at.
- You will need to make sure your greyhound is quite comfortable on the mat before you leave the room.
- Encourage your greyhound to enjoy their mat by offering enrichment items, such as Kong's, pig ears or longer lasting treats.
- Each time your greyhound receives a treat inside, ask them to first settle on their mat.
- If your greyhound moves off the mat, calmly ask them to get back on and reward them for doing so.
- You will be able to go about your daily business while your greyhound is busy enjoying their treat but remember to verbally praise your greyhound and try to return before they finish the treat.

TRAINING

Adding a cue

When you are confident that your greyhound understands how to use the mat, it is time to add a cue to the behaviour.

Have some treats ready and cue the behaviour of getting on the mat with a word such as "mat". If your greyhound gets on the mat, mark the behaviour "yes" and immediately reward them.

Let your greyhound off the mat and try again. Initially, you should do this close to the mat so your greyhound understands what you are asking of them.

Getting off the mat

It is important that you let your greyhound know when they can move off the mat, otherwise they will become confused.

Saying words such as "OK" or "off" will let the greyhound know when they can move off the mat.





WEEK 2: TRAINING

In week two you will know your greyhound's personality a bit better and will be starting to develop trust and communication.

LOOSE LEASH

We would like our greyhounds to learn to walk beside you calmly and without pulling on the lead. This allows them to walk freely and happily beside you with the ability to control the walk so there is no zig-zagging across the path, pulling on the lead or tension on the leash.

- Loose leash walking should be practiced often and a great place to start this is in your backyard or in an area that is limited in distraction or stimuli.
- Once you have your greyhound on the lead, before you start on your walk or loose leash training, you want to make sure that your greyhound has calmed down from any excitement that putting on the lead has created, and is relaxed and ready to go.

TRAINING

- Begin each walk, and every subsequent time you start off, with a clear cue consisting of “your greyhound’s name” followed by “let’s go”.
- When you are ready to stop give the clear cue of “wait”, stop walking and gain your greyhound’s attention, if there is tension on the lead to allow the leash to become loose. Once the greyhound is back to you with a loose leash, lure them back to your side if they are not already there and continue with the walk.
- Whilst your greyhound is walking calmly and relaxed beside you, praise and reward at random intervals. This will keep your greyhound interested in you and the activity at hand.
- If your greyhound seems very excited and is pulling and putting tension on the lead, make sure you stop walking and wait until your dog releases the tension or relaxes and then start your walk again. Say “let’s go” and move off. Continue this until your greyhound is no longer putting tension on the lead or pulling on the lead. Praise your greyhound when walking nicely on a loose leash.

NAME RECALL

For this exercise, you will need a training pouch (or small bag with easy access) and some training treats. Try for something that your greyhound will be able to see once they are laying on the ground.

You will also need to set yourself up in a large clear area. Outside on the lawn or a large clear area inside the home.



- Call your greyhound's name in a bright and cheerful manner, when they come towards you reward them with "yes" and throw a treat about half a metre out to the front of you (left or right side, depending on what side your greyhound has come into you from).
- When your greyhound runs off to get the treat, allow them to eat it and call them back "come (your greyhound's name)" as they return to you say "yes" and throw another treat out to the opposite side.
- Repeat the process of sending your greyhound out to receive their reward (treat), calling them back and marking "yes" when they return.
- When you have repeated this exercise 5-10 times, finish with a release word "finished" or "free" and allow your greyhound to move off on their own accord.

WEEK 3 & 4: TRAINING

In week three and four you will know your greyhound's personality better and will be developing greater trust and communication.

FOUR PAWS TRAINING

The aim of 'Four Paws' training is pretty straight forward, four paws on the floor wins the game. No jumping up or unwanted hugs.

Conditioning your greyhound to the word "yes" makes learning 'Four Paws' on the ground easy.

This can be done by having a bunch of treats in a little container and having your greyhound's attention say "yes" and give a treat.

Remember "YES" = Treat.

"Yes" becomes the marker word used when all four paws are firmly on the ground. This allows the greyhound to quickly understand that by not jumping up and staying on the ground is how they get the treat.

Keeping a little container of treats in areas of the house where you find your greyhound becoming most excited and tends to forget behaviour.





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