

After Adoption: When I Get My New Home

Here are some thoughts from a greyhound's perspective.

I've probably not been in a house long and things will be strange. I may be tense, possibly withdrawn. Be sure I have a chance to empty my bladder before entering. I may be afraid though you may not notice. This is normal. At some point I'll pick a spot and lie down. Let me remain quiet unless I come to you. Be patient, gentle; speak soft soothing one-word assurances such as "good," "easy." Speak "no" more strongly for unacceptable behavior.

If you do not want me in a certain room use your hand as a traffic cop and say firmly but gently "no" and stay that way until I get the message. Repetition and softness are the keys to my learning.

I like comfort so start now to block me from the sofa and your bed if you do not want me on them, and show me where to lie.

Mirrors, fireplace glass, sliding glass doors reflect my image. This may perplex me – "who is the other dog?" Let me explore but put a piece of tape or something on the glass so I don't run into it.

Schedule my feeding close to the Foster Home's schedule and remember the hand that trains is the hand that feeds. I will also start bonding at feeding time, even though others may want to share in this at first, it is best for one person to eventually do the feeding. Schedule my potty trips close to mealtime (usually within one hour).

Feed me twice a day. I may startle easily at first – don't sneak up, come from the front. I am not used to sharing my food so be sure to feed me separate from any other animals and keep the kids away.

Speak softly. I'll always hear you unless I am asleep.

I may be afraid the first few nights. The sounds, smells, shadows are all new to me. I may fuss. Reassure me with words and your closeness.

If you let me into your bedroom, I'll quickly settle down. Your closeness, scent are my security in this bewildering environment. Remember, once you allow this you have committed. Like all learned behavior, this is how I'll respond and what I will expect to be allowed to do.

If not allowed in your bedroom, please keep me nearby and develop my confidence with soft words of assurance.

At first I may stare ahead and seem unresponsive. Remember, I'm undergoing stress adjustment. Quiet and calm is the way to go. A light and gentle massage all over with soothing words is great for both of us (try not to pat).

When it is potty time, let me loose if this is a safe enclosed area. Otherwise, take me out on my lead. After I have done my "duty," praise me. I am beginning to learn to please you and stay with you and know that you will reward me for acceptable behavior.