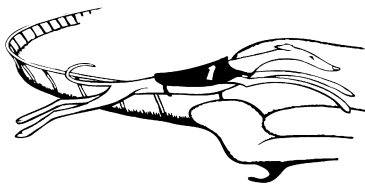


Your New Greyhound: A Quick Start Guide

Can we talk?

I'm trying to learn all I can about you and this new world I now live in, but nothing about your world is like the world I know. Everything here is new to me. The stairs. The sliding glass doors. The shiny kitchen floor. All of those things are foreign to me and are sometimes a bit overwhelming.

There are some things about me you need to know, so we can have the best possible friendship. I spent my life so far as a working dog—a racer. I'm not like the other dogs you have known or lived with. I was bred to run and run fast. It's what I do best. It's what I love.



My life was very different before I arrived here today to become part of your family. I want to become your new best friend, but I need your help. I'll try hard to learn all I can about you and what you expect from me.

Let me share some things that will help you understand me.

First—this is really important—in many ways I'm a puppy in an adult body. Things about living in a house that other dogs learn when they are puppies, I need to learn now. If I understand what you expect of me, I'll do all I can to please you. You are the one, in these first few days and weeks, who has to help me learn good habits and good manners. You need to be patient and teach me and I won't always get it right—at least not right away.

When I lived at the track or on the farm, everything was very structured. Everything. Everything happened at the same time each day. We ate at the same time, we slept at the same time, we were turned out to potty at the same time.

We were never expected to do any of the things you expect me to do now. I didn't need to sit or down or come when I was called. I didn't need to wait politely for my dinner bowl. Maybe my racing trainer liked it when I jumped to greet him or when we played rough. Maybe no one cared if I pulled on the leash. So my manners may not be the best right now.

I may know my name if you use the name I had at the track, but maybe I don't. You have to teach me that my name means good things if you want me to pay attention to you.

I like routine. Routine is comforting. Dogs like to know where we are supposed to eat and where we are supposed to sleep. We need consistency and clarity.

I'm NOT house trained. I didn't have to be “house trained” at the track. I instinctively kept my crate clean because that is where I ate and slept. I was turned out to potty on schedule four times a day. But your house isn't my crate. I've never been in a house. I have to learn that your house and the turnout area are *not* the same thing. I'm not yet ready to have the run of the house. While you are teaching me about where it is appropriate for me to “potty,” be patient and use my crate or baby gates when you can't actively supervise me. *Actively supervise* means you are watching me not cooking dinner or watching TV.

Here's the short course on how to house train me. First, what goes in on schedule comes out on schedule (unless my innards are acting up for some reason). Feed me on a regular schedule and take me out on a regular schedule—just like they did at the track.

Next, get some tasty treats—not that dry dog food stuff. Take me outside. Yes. You have to go out with me even if you have a fenced yard. The **instant** I finish peeing or pooping, quietly tell me what a wonderful, great, super dog I am and give me that treat. If you want me to learn that the yard and not the carpet is where I'm to “potty,” you need to make sure I know you're really happy when I “potty” outside.

If I didn't “go,” take me inside, crate me or keep me with you on my leash. Fifteen to 30 minutes later, take me out again. Keep doing this until I do what I'm supposed to do outside. Throw a party. Give me several of those tasty, treats one at a time. Now, take me inside and let me have some supervised freedom for awhile.

Show me my bed. Let me know where you want me to sleep. I'm really much happier if I'm with you so please let me sleep in your room. I've always had the company of lots of other Greyhounds. The first night or so will be scary for me. I'm in a new place with new people I don't know.

And sometimes being alone is so overwhelming I may panic and do inappropriate things when I'm alone. I may cry and bark and howl. I may destroy things—especially near doors and windows. Or I may try to break out of my crate and hurt myself trying to escape. I might urinate or defecate because I am so panicked. Please don't blame me. Get help for me. Talk to your adoption group. Don't wait for it to get worse.

The only thing I love more than running is chasing things that are running. An open door or gate is an invitation to adventure (and disaster). Teach me to wait at doors or gates. Teach me a special word that tells me when I'm allowed to go through a door or gate. Everyone in the house and everyone who comes to visit has to be super careful about closing gates and doors.

I don't want to get lost, so keep me safe. I **always** need to be on a leash if I'm not in a securely fenced area. If I'm especially shy keep me on a leash whenever I'm outside until we know each other a lot better. Practice using my special Martingale —just the way the adoption group showed you—so I can't back out of it. Check the fit of my collar every time you take me out for a walk. If something really excites me like a squirrel or a rabbit or when something frightens me like a loud noise, I can back out of my collar in no time if you aren't paying attention. Oh, and don't let me walk behind you since that makes it easier for me to get out of my collar. And never, ever, ever use a retractable leash.

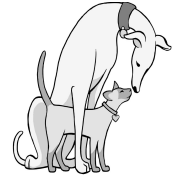
I may like to go for walks but that doesn't mean I'm ready to walk for miles. Being out and about in strange places experiencing things I've never seen can be overwhelming and being overwhelmed is tiring. So help me learn to love walking with you. If I balk on a walk, I'm stressed and overwhelmed by all the new sights and sounds I'm experiencing or I'm tired. I was bred for very intense, but very short bursts of speed—not for long walks. Take it slow. Give me time to learn about this new world and time to learn to love long walks as much as you do.

Oh, you have a fenced yard so you don't need to bother with walks? Wrong. I need to learn about the world around me. I need new sights and experiences to help me grow and to be comfortable in all kinds of new places and situations. I can't learn to walk nicely on a leash if you don't take me walking on a leash so we can practice.

While you're at it, get me comfortable riding in your car. I just left a world that I knew and understood and rode a long way to come to you. That can be scary. I need to learn that car rides with you mean good things are going to happen. Take me for lots of very short rides while I learn how many exciting things happen at the end of car rides.

I may need some help learning how to get into and out of your vehicle. At the track kennel, someone always picked me up and put me into a special truck that took me wherever I needed to be. I didn't need to learn how to get into and out of a vehicle. And, whatever you do, be sure I'm securely leashed before you allow me to get out of the car. Teach me to wait for permission to get out of the car so I don't get loose or bolt into traffic.

Let's talk about cats and small animals. Just because someone at the kennel or adoption group said I was "cat safe" doesn't mean your cat is safe. "Cat safe" usually means someone watched my reaction to one cat on one occasion, and I behaved appropriately in that situation on that day. But that isn't the same as living with a cat who scurries around and makes interesting noises. You have to take the time to teach me to behave properly with your cat and teach us how to live together as a family. Until that happens, I need to be muzzled or confined when the cat is about. I need to learn that the cat is part of our family—just like me and the other dogs in the family.



Speaking of other dogs—I've probably never seen any dog that isn't a Greyhound. I may not even realize that toy breed dogs are, in fact, dogs. For all I know, they're just some weird breed of rabbit. And that means lunch.

If you have other dogs, you need to let us get to know each other and help us figure out who fits where in this new family. When I come to live with you, I may "test" the other dogs or they may test me while we figure out where everyone fits in this new pack. You need to supervise our interactions and let us know when we are not behaving appropriately.

Muzzles? Yes. Muzzles. Use it. Use them on me and the other Greyhounds while we learn how to interact. Use it to keep the cat or other small animals safe, while I learn that they are not squeaky toys or a snack. Use it to keep me from chewing inappropriate items, while I learn which things are my toys and which things are the doll collection that used to belong to your grandmother. Why not just "dog proof" the house. It will keep your things protected and keep me away from things that could harm me, while I learn about my new home and my new family.

Crates. I'm used to being crated—doesn't mean I like it, but I am used to it. A crate is a valuable training tool. It will help me be a good dog when you can't watch me carefully. It will keep me from peeing on the oriental carpet in the hall until I learn that I'm only to pee outside. But my crate should never be used as a substitute for training. If you want me to be part of the family, you have to spend the time and energy to make that happen. Where should my crate be? The best place is in the area where you spend most of your time.

And, while we're talking about my crate, here are some other things you should know. When I was in the crate at the kennel, no one ever touched me while I was sleeping. No one tried to share my crate or take my food before I finished it. If I had valuable "chewies" or "stuffies," I never had to share them. I may growl or snap if someone intrudes—even you. This is one more thing I need to be taught.



People are surprised to learn that dogs really don't like having a person hug them or get eye to eye with them. While I was at the kennel or on the farm, that probably never happened to me. Even if someone did those things, I probably didn't like it. So, please stay out of my face and save the hugs until we have had time to get to know one another. It's possible I'm one of those dogs that will never like being hugged or like having someone get in my face. If that is the way I am, please respect my space and teach others to do the same.

I can't use words to tell you what I'm feeling. If I'm feeling scared or trapped or challenged, snapping or growling is the only way I have to communicate that I need more space between us right now. I'm not trying to hurt anyone I just don't have any other way to let you know that something is freaking me out. If I do growl or snap, please tell your adoption group immediately. They can help you understand what I'm thinking and feeling and offer suggestions on how to help me. If they can't offer the help you need, they can refer you to someone who can.

Training. Just like children need to be taught to be patient and polite and how to behave properly, so do I. Everything you need to know about training me can be summed up in just two sentences.

- ◆ If you like what I'm doing, reward me with treats, praise, play, walks, car rides or other things that you have learned I love.
- ◆ If you don't like what I'm doing ignore it unless it's dangerous to me, to a person or to another animal.

While I'm learning about my new life, help me stay out of trouble by managing my world. Use crates, gates, leashes, muzzles, no-pull harnesses, and other tools to keep me from practicing things you don't like, such as jumping, leash pulling, chewing, or peeing on the oriental carpet.

But please don't punish me because I don't yet know or understand all your rules. Punishment doesn't teach me what you want. And most folks are so bad at using punishment that it usually doesn't even teach me what I'm doing wrong. Punishment often backfires. It can teach me to be afraid of you. It can change my personality. If I'm doing something wrong and you don't know what to do, ask for help. Your adoption group can't help if they don't know anything is wrong.

Give me time to grow and learn. Help me be the best dog I can be. With your help, we'll have a friendship that will last a lifetime.

Now, where's the couch?

