



**Looking After Your Greyhound**

# Getting started

**Thank you for homing a greyhound. This booklet will guide you and help you settle them into their new home.**

The Greyhound Trust is a national charity formed in 1975.

We annually home around 4000 retired greyhounds into loving homes, through a network of over 50 branches and more than 1000 volunteers across the country. These volunteers give a lot of time and energy to help us find the perfect home for these fantastic dogs.

As a greyhound owner there are a few things you should remember:

1. Your greyhound should wear an ID tag at all times when out in public (this is something you can buy from our own Greyhound Trust Store)
2. Never use an extendible lead. They are dangerous as greyhounds can go from 0 to 40mph in a few seconds
3. When in public your greyhound should be on a lead and fishtail collar and wearing a muzzle
4. Always clean up after your greyhound
5. You should be in control of your greyhound at all times

## Collars

It is important that the greyhound's collar is positioned correctly. It should go behind the ears, at the thinnest part of the neck and should be tight enough to get two fingers between the collar and the neck. If any looser the greyhound might slip out of the collar.



## Muzzles

When you take your greyhound home you will receive a muzzle.

We strongly recommend that all greyhounds are muzzled all times when in public until well socialised with other breeds of dog.

# Bringing your greyhound home

**When picking up your new dog, bear in mind that your greyhound may not have been in a house before.**

Your greyhound will settle at its own pace, so don't rush it. Common household items such as vacuum cleaners, washing machines and TV's will be new and might initially confuse them.

Upon arriving home, take the greyhound straight into the garden or designated toilet spot. Wait until they relieve themselves and then praise them. Use their name, say 'good boy/girl', and reward them with a small piece of cheese or a biscuit.

Repeat this process every hour or so for their first day and then get into a routine of letting them out before and straight after meals.



Take your greyhound around the house on the lead first so they can calmly see everything. After 10 minutes take the lead off and sit down, letting them roam around on their own. By now the initial excitement should have worn off and they can explore around calmly.

The first few days can be daunting for them and they may become anxious. Signs of anxiety are pacing, panting, diarrhoea, not eating or drinking and destructiveness. Please be patient while your dog adjusts.

Night lights and low volume radio can be left on if needed and may help your greyhound not feel completely alone in the dark.



# House training your greyhound

**Most greyhounds are clean in their kennels and are happy to stick with a toilet routine at home once they know it.**



House training should begin as soon as your greyhound arrives home; take them straight into the garden and wait until they relieve themselves and then reward them with praise and a small piece of cheese or a dog biscuit.

Repeat this step and take your new pet out at regular periods throughout the day. During this time it's unlikely that they will have had a chance to have an accident and they will become familiar with the idea that 'toilets' are to be done outside.

If your greyhound has an accident indoors bear in mind that punishment does not work and can make the greyhound worse. Anticipate when your greyhound needs to go, take them outside and praise and reward them when they relieve themselves.

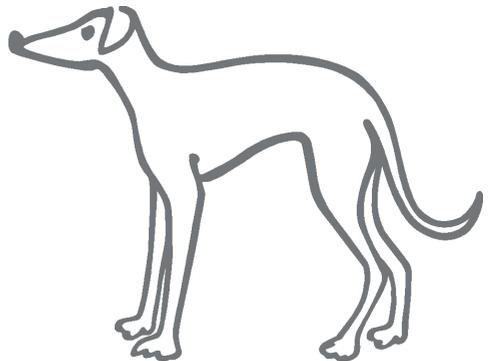
Any accidents in the home should be washed thoroughly with a solution of biological washing liquid; this will take away the smell and will prevent your dog from constantly going back to the same spot.

Take your greyhound to the toilet immediately after feeding, when they get up in the morning, before bedtime, and of course in-between.

Some signs to look for when your greyhound needs to go to the toilet are restlessness, pacing up and down, circling, whining, or scratching at the door. At first there may be no signs that your greyhound needs the toilet as they will have been used to living in a kennel, but greyhounds are generally clean animals and they learn very quickly.

Remember, you have a legal responsibility to pick up any mess your greyhound leaves on public ground.

If you are struggling with house training your greyhound please contact your local Greyhound Trust branch.



# Feeding your greyhound

It may seem like common sense, but your greyhound's diet is very important to ensure they are happy, healthy and maintain an ideal body weight. Always supervise greyhounds when they have food or treats.

## Water

Fresh water should be available at all times and should be changed daily. Never leave your greyhound without water.

## Complete foods

Complete foods are the most effective and efficient way of feeding your greyhound the proteins, vitamins and minerals they need. Look for a complete food with approximately 20% protein. There are many complete foods on the market, but we recommend 'Pet Greyhound' which is produced by Dodson and Horrell for Greyhound Trust specifically for the needs of pet greyhounds and larger dog breeds.



If you choose to soak your greyhound's food, do not use hot water or the vitamins will be destroyed. Whatever you decide to feed your greyhound, always make sure you follow the feeding instructions on the packaging; ask the kennel you adopted your greyhound from for details of what your greyhound had been fed and introduce any change gradually.

Keep an eye on your greyhound's stools. Should they become loose, you may need to change the brand, or introduce it at a slower pace. Generally complete foods come in the form of biscuit or cereal; tinned food is not necessary but can make the meal more appetising.

## Additional items

All greyhounds will enjoy the treat of fresh meat and vegetables and will be appreciative of any leftovers. However this is not needed everyday and should form part of the main meal.

Cooked eggs in any form can be enjoyed once a week or so.

Oily fish (but not in brine) such as sardines or pilchards are a healthy treat.

You may wish to feed your greyhound from a raised bowl on a stand as it can be awkward for them to eat from a bowl placed on the floor.

Do not feed your greyhound before long journeys, or within one hour of exercise.

**Please be aware that chocolate, raisins and raw onions are poisonous to greyhounds and should never be fed to them. Don't allow your greyhound to scavenge or pick food from outside the home, or get into household waste bins.**

# General greyhound care

## Neutering

All greyhounds that leave our kennels will have been neutered. However if you adopt a greyhound from another source and they have not been neutered, we strongly recommend that you arrange to have them castrated or spayed as soon as possible.

## Teeth

### **The importance of good dental hygiene cannot be overstated.**

Gingivitis is the primary cause of bad breath in canines. Dogs, like people can get gingivitis (inflammation of the gums caused by bacteria) and can suffer from decay and even lose teeth without proper care.

When the greyhound goes to be neutered, the vet will clean their teeth thoroughly if needed. Once this has been done, maintenance is down to you. We recommend at least an annual dental check up at the same time vaccinations are done.

Regular chews, uncooked bones and dental treats will help combat some of the plaque build up (always supervise your dog when having any food or treats)

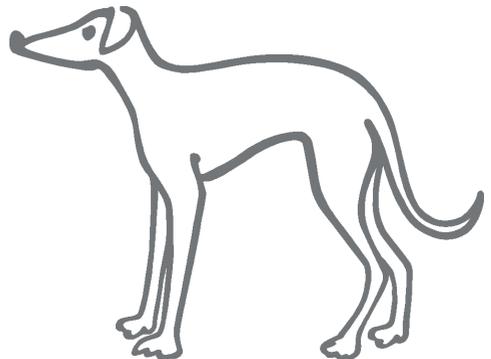
Brushing teeth is the most effective form of dental care. Some dogs will let you brush their teeth straight away, but others will need to have their confidence built up.

### **You can build up your dog's confidence in 3 simple steps:**

1. For the first few days gently stroke the greyhound's muzzle
2. Once your greyhound accepts this happily, you can progress to lifting the lips and praising them for their co-operation
3. Once your greyhound has gained confidence in you, they will allow you to gently brush their teeth. Use a soft toothbrush with a canine toothpaste. Never use human toothpaste - it has to be specific for dogs. We sell toothpaste in our online store [www.greyhoundtruststore.com](http://www.greyhoundtruststore.com)

Regular attention to your greyhound's mouth will save money for you and prevent pain for them in the future.

Check your greyhound's teeth and gums regularly and if in doubt seek veterinary advice.



# Eyes and ears

**Your greyhound's ears and eyes should be looked at regularly to spot any infection.**

If required gentle cleaning of the outer ear with cotton balls lightly dampened with warm salt water or special wipes will keep the ear free of wax that can trap germs and lead to infection. If you notice your greyhound shaking their head or rubbing their ears and the problem persists speak to your vet. A greyhound's ears can be sensitive- take care when handling them.

# Parasite control

**It is important to regularly treat your greyhound for parasites (e.g. fleas and worms)**

Speak to your vet to find the best treatments and advice; different parasites may be more common in certain parts of the country, so it may be worth talking to your local vet for specific advice and a routine of preventative medication.

# Feet and nails

**Your greyhound's nails will need regular trimming.** Your local vet or Greyhound Trust branch will be happy to help with this. Once you have been shown how to do it correctly you may wish to do this yourself. However, incorrect nail cutting, or cutting the nail too deeply can cause pain and bleeding so it is best done by a professional.

After your greyhound has been exercising outside, check their pads, feet and legs for cuts or embedded items; wash their feet in cooled boiled water if you find anything and seek veterinary advice if necessary.

# Skin and coat

**In order to keep your greyhound's coat healthy, groom them regularly with a grooming mitt or firm bristled brush.**

If you give your greyhound a bath, make sure that they are dried quickly and can lie down somewhere warm.

Always use a dog shampoo- we sell shampoo in our online store [www.greyhoundtruststore.com](http://www.greyhoundtruststore.com). Many greyhounds have bald patches, especially on their rumps and thighs. This is common and generally nothing to worry about unless you notice sore, flaky or red skin, in which case you should speak to your vet. A teaspoon of sunflower, vegetable or fish oil can be added to the main meal to help maintain a glossy coat.



# General greyhound care (cont.)

## Hot and cold temperatures

**Greyhounds are particularly susceptible to extreme temperatures, as they only carry a small portion of fat on their bodies and have a single coat of fur.**

Generally, if you feel the need to wear a coat, your greyhound should be wearing one too. Coats should be big enough to cover from the neck to over the tail. There are lots of different coats available, from walking-out coats for outdoor wear to fleece indoor jackets which are designed to keep your greyhound warm in the home on cold nights if your temperature drops excessively low indoors.

Greyhound Trust has a wide selection of coats for sale with all the profits going to help the greyhounds in our care. Please visit [www.greyhoundtruststore.com](http://www.greyhoundtruststore.com).

Like all dogs, greyhounds will get hot on warm days. They will pant and possibly be agitated. Ensure your greyhound is in the cool and you can offer a cool mat and make sure to limit their exposure to the sun. If there is a breeze in the garden, it might seem the coolest place, however greyhounds do not know about UV rays and can get badly burned if the proper precautions are not taken. Always have a supply of fresh water available to ensure that your greyhound does not get dehydrated.

Take care to only walk your greyhound before it heats up in the morning or at night when it has cooled down. If they are reluctant to go for a walk just give them the opportunity to go to the toilet in the garden. In extreme hot weather it may not be best to walk at all.



Symptoms that your greyhound may be overheating include distress, severe panting and collapse.

If you think your greyhound is showing signs of this, cool your greyhound as quickly as possible with cool drinking water and seek veterinary help immediately.

**Never leave a greyhound in a warm or hot room or car - they can die in minutes**

[www.greyhoundtrust.org.uk](http://www.greyhoundtrust.org.uk)

# Older greyhounds

Ageing occurs gradually and may not be obvious to you as you see your greyhound every day. You may see changes in coat colour, sleep pattern, appetite and thirst, body shape and behaviour as well as a greying of the muzzle and a reluctance to exercise. Please have your greyhound checked regularly by your vet. Routine healthcare such as annual vaccinations, worming and flea control should not be overlooked and should be continued throughout your greyhound's life.

## Diet

There are some notable differences in the nutritional requirements of older dogs. Senior life-stage diets take into account altered lifestyles, reduced levels of activity and declining organ function. Your vet will be able to give you advice when changing to a senior diet.

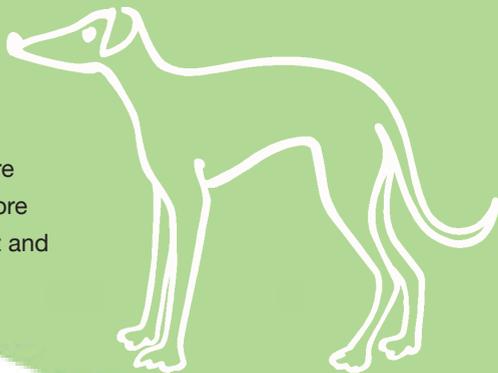
Some older greyhounds require up to 20% fewer calories as they become less active, so you should weigh your dog every 3 months. Many veterinary surgeries have scales as well as breed weight guidelines. Adjust your greyhound's food intake to maintain optimum weight; obesity is likely to put more strain on the heart, lungs, muscles and joints, and may result in a shorter life expectancy. If your dog is overweight speak to your vet about a calorie controlled diet.



As activity levels fall, older dogs may start to demonstrate muscle wastage. Supplements such as cod liver capsules and glucosamine will help prevent joint deterioration. Normal, healthy senior greyhounds should receive the same levels of protein as younger greyhounds, but it must be of high quality. Your greyhound's appetite may reduce as the sense of smell and taste diminishes

Older greyhounds require extra attention from you. Be kind and considerate and recognise this need for greater input into your greyhound's life.

Older dogs also tend to need to go to the toilet more often as result of muscular weakness; give them more opportunities to go out during the day, later at night and earlier in the morning.



# Training your greyhound



Everyone likes a well behaved and socialised greyhound, and providing some basic training will help equip your greyhound to adjust to their life after racing and know what is expected of them in their new home.

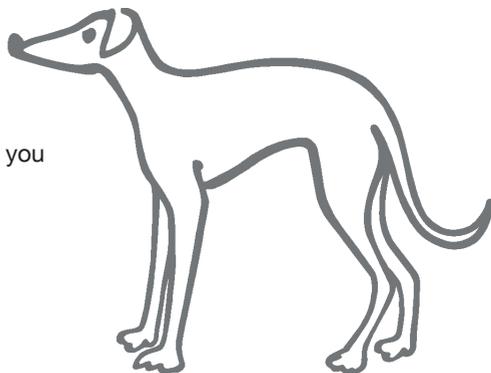
Reward based training works by rewarding our greyhounds for the behaviours we want and by ignoring or preventing the behaviours we don't want. By rewarding our dogs as soon as they perform the required behaviour (such as 'Down'), we are letting them know that they have performed the correct action and giving them a reason to repeat the behaviour next time.

Greyhounds are a sensitive breed and do not respond well to punishment. Using aversive training techniques such as shouting, physical punishment, or rattle cans will not teach your greyhound what you want them to do. It is more likely to make your dog fearful and cause other behavioural problems as it does not address the dogs underlying emotional state.

When you start teaching your greyhound, you need to reward them as soon as they have performed the required action. The type of rewards you use need to be something your greyhound really wants. This will vary from dog to dog, and rewards can include food, praise, gentle petting and games with toys.

For most greyhounds, food rewards work well. Very small pieces of food that are moist, soft and smelly, such as cooked chicken, cheese, meaty strips, frankfurter and sausage are ideal. The rewards need to be easy to handle and about the size of a small pea so that they can be delivered and eaten quickly.

Remember, in the initial stages of training you will reward your greyhound every time they perform the desired behaviour. Once you are sure that your greyhound knows and understands what you are asking them to do you can start rewarding intermittently, for example 3 times out of 10.



# Babies, children and greyhounds

It is essential that special care is taken when introducing any greyhound into a home where babies and small children are present. **Young children and babies should never be left unattended with a greyhound**, and children must be educated to be calm and gentle around them and to have respect for their needs and their bed. An escape route for your greyhound is an excellent idea, so that when they have had enough they can retreat to their own space.

Greyhounds are generally people oriented, gentle and docile, but all dogs have a breaking point when interactions by children are not wanted or the interactions are too rough. Please teach children respect for your greyhound and soon they will be the best of friends. **Never let your child disturb a greyhound when it is asleep.**

# Cats, small animals and greyhounds



Many greyhounds have a chase instinct and may want to chase cats or other small animals. Due to a greyhound's speed, they are capable of actually catching them. During their upbringing, most greyhounds will have been trained to chase a fast moving lure, which means their instinct to chase a cat may be strong. With careful positive training many greyhounds can live with cats and other small domestic pets.

Greyhound Trust volunteers will have been made aware that you have other pets at home and will have endeavoured to provide you with a greyhound which has been assessed as potentially 'cat trainable' i.e; shown little/no interest in a cat or a small dog when meeting them at the kennel. However it is not always a guarantee that when a fast moving small animal appears in front of a newly homed greyhound, that it will not instinctively chase.

It is possible to work with your greyhound to put them at ease if you have cats or are moving the greyhound to a location with cats. This process is similar to other methods of training your greyhound, with repetition and rewards.



# Anxiety in greyhounds

## Separation related issues

Some greyhounds may suffer from separation related issues when left alone and find it hard to cope. Separation related issues can be distressing for both the greyhound and the owner, however with careful training and management they can be prevented or treated.

There are a number of reasons why some greyhounds find it hard to cope when by themselves and these include:

- Frustration and/or boredom
- Phobias and fears- such as fear of thunderstorms or fireworks
- Over-attachment to the owner (or family member), resulting in separation anxiety

In the UK racing greyhounds are usually kennelled in pairs and have spent their lives surrounded by other greyhounds. Their lives follow a set schedule and a daily kennel routine. This means that some greyhounds may find it difficult to cope with changes in their routine and adjusting to periods when their owner is absent. Most greyhounds however, do adjust successfully to their new lives and homes after racing.

The signs of separation-related distress can vary, and depend on the individual dog. Some of the more common signs that your dog is experiencing separation issues include:

- Destructive chewing, digging, ripping or shredding of objects when you are absent
- Barking or howling after you have left
- Soiling or urinating in the home when left alone
- Pacing, whining, panting, trembling as you prepare to leave home

## Attention seeking behaviour

Often greyhounds that suffer from separation related issues become 'Velcro' greyhounds that never leave your side and follow you from room to room, even to the bathroom. They may pester you for attention by pawing, barking, nudging and leaning on you, or they may always want to be in close physical contact such as lying at your feet.

This attention may appear like affection and it is nice for us, however it does not help your greyhound become more independent or feel secure and less anxious when left alone. To help prepare your dog for the times when they will be left alone, you need to increase their independence and decrease attention seeking behaviours.

# Increasing a greyhound's independence

To help build your greyhound's independence and ability to cope when left alone, it is essential that you ignore all of your dog's attention seeking behaviour. This does not mean that you should ignore your greyhound completely and never give them any attention; it means that you initiate attention with your greyhound only when they are relaxed.

It can also help if you teach your greyhound to lie on a mat or a bed which is not next to you, rather than lying at your feet or next to you. If your dog follows you from room to room, a baby gate across a door can prevent this, whilst ensuring that your greyhound can see you.



For some greyhounds, confinement to a crate, also known as an indoor kennel, can help with the separation issues but only in cases where the greyhound has been trained to enjoy time alone in the crate. Many greyhounds will injure themselves trying to escape from a crate if they have not been trained to accept their crate as a safe place to relax.

Greyhound Trust Store stock a variety of items which may help reduce the anxiety of your greyhound. To find out more go to [www.greyhoundtruststore.com](http://www.greyhoundtruststore.com) and search for fireworks/anxiety.

## Calm departures and greetings

Keeping your departures and returns home calm can help prevent separation related issues for your greyhound. If you make a big fuss of your greyhound when you leave the house and again when you come home you are creating big contrast to your presence in the house and to being absent. This contrast makes it harder for your greyhound to cope when you are not there and can lead to the greyhound anticipating your return and becoming over-excited.

In the 10-15 minutes before you leave, it is best to keep your departure low key and ignore the greyhound. This means no eye contact, petting or talking to your greyhound and not saying 'goodbye'. When you come home, it is also essential that your return is kept calm and that you ignore the greyhound for around 10-15 minutes until they are fully relaxed. These departures and returns will help your greyhound to cope better with your absence.



# Destructive behaviour

If your greyhound has destructive behaviour such as chewing door frames, digging up flooring, or ripping and shredding objects while you are away, it may be that your greyhound is frustrated or bored by your absence. To help avoid this destructive behaviour it can be useful to provide your greyhound with something to do in your absence.

If your greyhound is destructive or barks in your absence, providing a chew toy such as a stuffed Kong or feeding your dog using an activity feeder can help occupy them. You will need to find out what food your greyhound likes best and which will keep your greyhound busy trying to get it out of the stuffed chew toy.

We sell a wide range of toys at [www.greyhoundtruststore.com](http://www.greyhoundtruststore.com)

For most greyhounds the smellier the food the better! Foods like meat paste, dog friendly peanut butter (ensure it doesn't contain xylitol) cheese spread or pieces of liver sausage tend to work well. Once your greyhound has the hang of how to get the food out of a chew toy, you can always stuff it then freeze it, which will mean that your greyhound will have to work harder and for longer to get the food out.

If your greyhound destroys items, you can provide a number of items which they can safely destroy such as cardboard boxes (with any staples removed), the cardboard inside of a kitchen/toilet roll or old material.



## House soiling

If your greyhound soils or urinates in the home when you are absent, it may be that your dog is not fully house trained or that you have left them alone for too long with a full bladder.

To avoid house soiling, make sure that you take your greyhound outside on a lead before you leave and encourage them to toilet outside. Once they have toileted praise them and give them a food treat. If accidents continue to happen, you will need to go back to house training your greyhound.

# Fears and phobias

Some greyhounds can develop fears and phobias, such as fear of thunderstorms and loud noises, which can trigger anxiety in your greyhound when you are absent. If your greyhound has a known fear or phobia you will need to help them overcome this.

It is advisable that you contact a suitably qualified dog trainer or clinical behaviourist who will help you with a training plan to overcome your greyhound's fears.



## Separation anxiety

In cases of full-blown separation anxiety, it is likely that your greyhound will become increasingly anxious as you prepare to leave the house.

Greyhounds are very good at picking up the signs that indicate you are about to leave the house. These are called departure cues and can be as simple as picking up your keys or bag or putting on your coat. These cues are what trigger your greyhounds anxiety and tell them you are about to leave.

Speak to your vet if you need additional help- they can put you in touch with a suitably qualified clinical behaviourist.

## Punishment- why you should not punish

Upon your return home, if you find that your greyhound has been destructive, soiled or urinated in the house, it is imperative that you do not punish them by shouting or physical means; your greyhound will not know what he has done wrong. Contrary to popular belief, rubbing your greyhound's nose in his faeces or urine will not teach them that they have done wrong; it will only serve to make them afraid of you.

Greyhounds cannot make the association between events that are separated by a few minutes, so they are unable to make a connection between unwanted behaviour in your absence and your anger upon return. Your return home is very significant to your greyhound and it only takes a few occasions of physical or verbal punishment to make your greyhound more anxious about your return. This can lead to a fearful greyhound and the development of other behaviour problems.

# Greyhound Trust Store

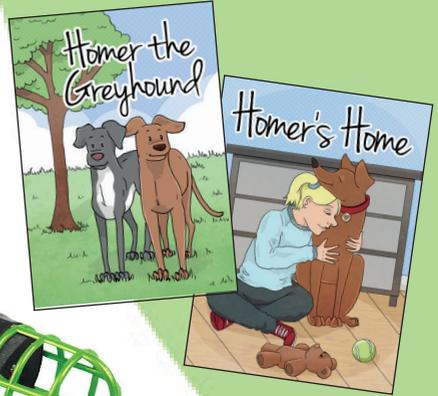


## Greyhound goods

Get everything for your greyhound in one convenient location and help support the Greyhound Trust.

Our online shop [www.greyhoundtruststore.com](http://www.greyhoundtruststore.com) has:

- greyhound fleeces, rain macs, coats in many colours
- gifts such as key-rings, pens, badges and mugs
- greetings cards, calendars and seasonal cards
- branded human clothing changing with the seasons
- collars, leads, muzzles and harnesses
- greyhound care books
- grooming equipment
- ID tags
- children's colouring books
- anxiety related products
- ID tags and house collars
- pet greyhound food
- bowls



# What to do if your greyhound's anxiety is not improving

If your greyhound is showing signs of separation related issues which are not improving, it is advisable to seek help from your local Greyhound Trust branch, your vet or a suitably qualified dog behaviourist or dog trainer.

Your vet may recommend medication to help your greyhound cope and a consultation with a clinical behaviourist.

A clinical behaviourist works on veterinary referral and will help you with a practical treatment plan that suits both you and your greyhound's circumstances.

For further information and guidance please contact your vet or:

## **Local Greyhound Trust Branches-**

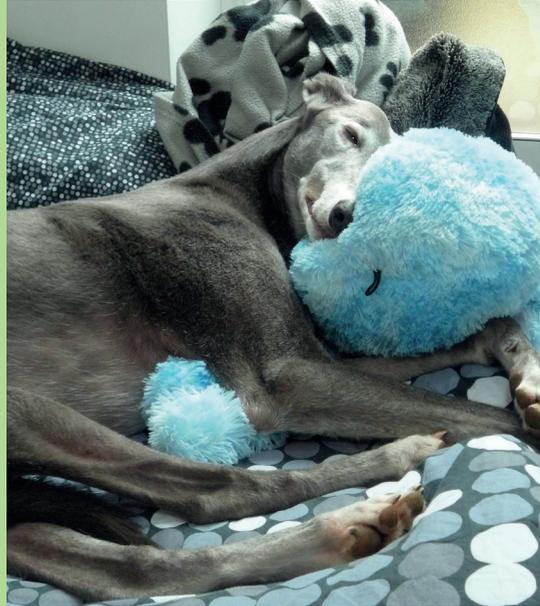
[www.greyhoundtrust.org.uk/regional-branches](http://www.greyhoundtrust.org.uk/regional-branches)

## **Association of Pet Behaviour Counsellors-**

[www.apbc.or.uk](http://www.apbc.or.uk)

## **The Association of Pet Dog Trainers-**

[www.apdt.co.uk](http://www.apdt.co.uk)



# Crating your greyhound

**An indoor kennel, sometimes referred to as a crate, is a safe place for your greyhound to rest and sleep.**

It takes the place of your greyhound's bed and must be introduced carefully to your greyhound so that they create good associations with the crate, and does not feel anxious going into it.

Indoor kennels come in different shapes and size; the most common type is a collapsible metal cage with a plastic base and one or two doors on the side and/or end.

Whatever type of indoor kennel you choose, it should be big enough to accommodate food, a water bowl, and chews as well as some comfortable bedding for your greyhound to sleep on.

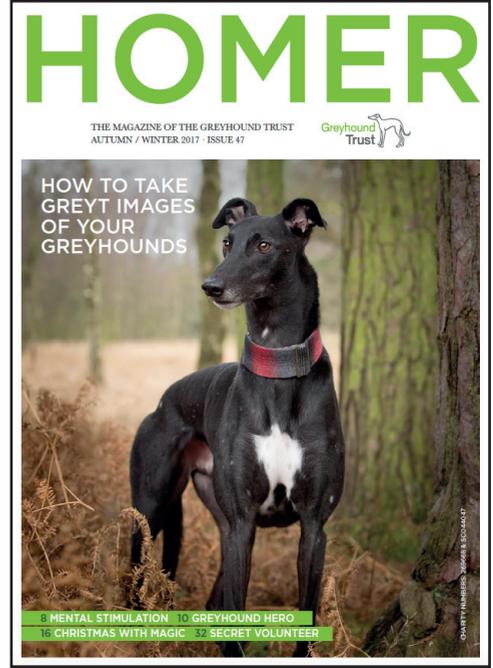
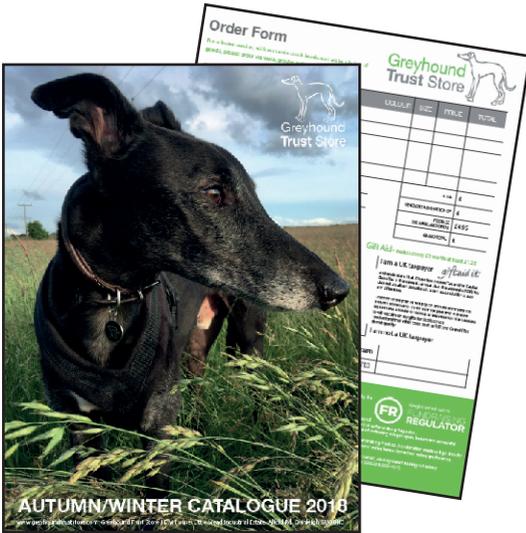
It should also be big enough for your greyhound to stand up, sit, turn around in and lay flat on their side with legs stretched out, without being cramped.

[www.greyhoundtrust.org.uk](http://www.greyhoundtrust.org.uk)

# Homer magazine and catalogue

If you have recently homed your first greyhound from us, you will receive the next 2 editions of our Homer Magazine, our dedicated publication for greyhound lovers.

The magazine is printed twice a year and features exciting articles for greyhound owners old and new and our supporters. It also contains an insert of our store catalogue and order form.



If you wish to continue to get Homer after your free issues then you can by signing up to our friendship scheme at:

[www.greyhoundtruststore.com](http://www.greyhoundtruststore.com) or  
[www.greyhoundtrust.org.uk/friendship](http://www.greyhoundtrust.org.uk/friendship)

## Friend scheme

There are several different levels of friend schemes all with different gifts and benefits. Please see online for further details.



[www.greyhoundtrust.org.uk](http://www.greyhoundtrust.org.uk)

# Notes

*The information and detail set out within this leaflet has been prepared solely as general guidance on the matters which are dealt with and is not intended to replace the need for you to take advice on these matters.*

*Although within that context every effort has been made by the Greyhound Trust to ensure that the detail set out in this booklet is accurate, the Trust does not accept any liability for the contents of this leaflet or for the consequences of any action taken on the basis of the information provided. Any person taking on the responsibilities of ownership of a greyhound is strongly advised to seek formal advice on their behaviour and behavioural tendencies.*

*This booklet has been prepared by the Greyhound Trust. Some context is taken from behavioural leaflets written by Susan McKeon, MAPDT UK (01157)*

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