



RE-HOMING GUIDE
INFORMATION FOR
PARTICIPANTS

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A GUIDE TO RE-HOMING YOUR GREYHOUND

Wind-down period and preparation for re-homing



Greyhound Racing Victoria (GRV) recommends that greyhounds undertake at least a 28-day wind-down period from all race related activities to give the greyhound the best chance to successfully transition into a pet life. While this is the minimum wind-down period required for a greyhound to be accepted into GRV's Greyhound Adoption Program (GAP), preparation for re-homing will ideally take at least eight weeks.

The Victorian Local Racing Rule 42.6 also requires greyhounds undertake a 28-day wind-down period before an owner can consider euthanasia (unless the greyhound is suffering from a serious medical condition). Please note that a greyhound can be re-homed at any time during the wind-down period if a suitable home is found. It is however recommended that the new owner be informed that the greyhound has not undertaken a full wind-down period (see "Re-homing Guide - Information for New Owners" booklet).

It is important to strive for a successful adoption from the beginning and the key to success is offering as much information as possible. This allows the adopter to clearly understand what their new greyhound might be like and what they will need during the transition to pet life.

HOUSING

During a wind-down period, greyhounds should be provided with at least 15 square metres of housing area (preferably some of it grassed) to allow for self-exercise and play during the day. This will provide the greyhound with the opportunity to get used to larger spaces that are similar to those they will experience in a new home as a pet.

FEEDING AND WEIGHT



During the wind-down period the greyhound's diet should be adjusted to allow some weight gain over and above its optimal racing weight. The amount of weight gain will vary depending on the individual greyhound; but will be on average at least two kilograms. You should speak to your veterinarian for guidance or if you have any concerns.

VETERINARY CHECK AND DE-SEXING



To prepare your greyhound for re-homing, a veterinary check should be undertaken to identify any racing injuries or health conditions that require short or long-term treatment. Their teeth should be cleaned and nails trimmed. The greyhound should also have a current C5 vaccination, and up-to-date parasite treatment.

It is highly recommended that your greyhound is de-sexed as soon as possible after the decision to retire has been made, and prior to re-homing. De-sexed dogs living in the community cost significantly less to register with local council and some local councils have mandatory de-sexing orders in place which means the greyhound could not be registered until it is de-sexed. In addition, evidence shows de-sexing can reduce a greyhound's tendency to show undesirable behaviours; such as, being overly boisterous and

low-level aggression towards other dogs. De-sexing also has important health benefits including a reduced chance of developing reproductive cancers and other diseases, and in male dogs, prostate issues.

Developing pet life skills in your greyhound

Pet life skill training is about teaching your greyhound how to relax and positively engage with the environments, people, animals and sounds that they will encounter as a pet. These encounters are often new and can be a little overwhelming for your greyhound at first. It is important that all experiences are provided in as positive a manner as possible and at a pace that your greyhound is comfortable with. This pace will depend on the individual greyhound. Repeated exposure to situations which may cause stress, fear or aggression may make your greyhound's behaviour worse.

EXERCISE AND SOCIALISATION



Exercise remains an important part of a greyhound's life during the wind-down period and preparation for re-homing. During the wind-down period, exercise should be slowly decreased.

Socialisation is about getting your greyhound used to life in a family. Life in a family involves interactions with a small or large numbers of people, dogs of all sizes, cats and other animals, loud noises and multiple noise sources. Pet dogs also often spend time on their own, without humans or other dogs for company, while most greyhounds will have been in the company of other greyhounds during their racing life.

Your greyhound should have a minimum of 60 minutes exercise and socialisation daily. This could

consist of combinations of the following activities:

-  gentle exercise daily in an area containing natural daylight;
-  walking on a leash;
-  exposure to people through handling and play;
-  exposure to different environmental stimuli, such as rope toys, squeaky toys, rubber toys, chew/food toys, bones etc.

Other great socialisation activities include:

-  exposure to different flooring surfaces, such as carpet, concrete, tiles, wood floors, bricks and stairs;
-  exposure to people in a non-training/racing setting, such as play time or professional obedience training;
-  travelling inside a car (properly secured) as opposed to in a dog trailer;
-  exposure to small dogs and other larger dogs (the greyhound should be muzzled, on leash and under the control of a responsible adult at all times; with the interaction immediately ceased if the greyhound shows signs of predatory or aggressive behaviour including barking, lunging, growling, snapping and stalking).

Remember, if you are exposing a greyhound to other dogs, animals and young children, this should be in a controlled environment and in as positive a way as possible, and the greyhound should be muzzled.

NOISES

Initially, exposure to noises should be done in an environment where your greyhound feels safe and secure. It may be useful to play noise exposure CDs to greyhounds in a kennel environment, or to expose your greyhound to sounds and noises from the safety of a crate. However, if your greyhound has never been crated, you will need to spend some time training them to feel comfortable and safe in the crate. If your greyhound shows signs of distress when exposed to unfamiliar noises, please contact a pet dog trainer for advice.

ISOLATION

Most pet dogs experience periods of isolation from humans or other animals. To determine how well your greyhound copes with isolation, you should slowly introduce them to short, positive periods of isolation increasing to longer times (2-3 hours) if they are coping well. If at any time your greyhound

becomes distressed or appears to be putting itself in danger, you should stop the isolation exercises and seek help to develop a training plan for this behaviour.

Begin with 10-20 minutes' isolation from humans and other animals daily with toys or food rewards. If the greyhound appears to be coping well, increase to 40-60 minutes every second day with toys or food rewards, gradually increasing to 2-3 hours.

HANDLING AND BASIC PET SKILLS



Handling is about providing your greyhound with positive interactions with humans and other animals in a controlled environment. Only allow your leashed and muzzled greyhound to meet new animals or people when they are calm and relaxed and can approach on a loose leash. If your greyhound shows signs of predatory or aggressive behaviour including barking, lunging, growling, snapping, stalking, or signs of distress such as withdrawal or avoidance, you should immediately remove them from the area and seek help from an expert (animal/veterinary behaviourist or qualified dog trainer).

Most greyhounds will have learned basic handling and pet skills well before retirement; such as appropriate toilet training. If your greyhound has not been toilet trained, this training should occur during the wind-down period. Further pet skills include:

-  staying calm when washed;
-  not jumping up on people;
-  not to push through doors;
-  learning to come when called.

If you require any advice on how to best teach your greyhound pet skills, you are welcome to contact GAP on 03 5799 0166 for information.

GRV Microchip Registry

In Victoria, GRV is a Microchip Registry licenced under the *Domestic Animals Act 1994*. All GRV-registered greyhounds are microchipped and registered on the GRV Microchip Registry. This includes both greyhounds that are in the care of GRV registered participants and retired greyhounds that have been re-homed into the community.

The GRV Microchip Registry keeps a record of the current ownership details of the greyhound, which enables local council, shelters, and pounds to make swift contact with the current owner should the greyhound become lost. As such, it is very important that the contact details recorded on the GRV Microchip Registry are kept up to date.

If the greyhound is re-homed to another person, you must notify GRV so the new owner details can be recorded on the GRV Microchip Registry.

In addition to updating the new owner details via FastTrack, the new owner must complete and sign the 'Change of Ownership (Retired Greyhound)' form found at <https://greyhoundcare.grv.org.au/grv-microchip-registry/>. This form can be returned to GRV, 46-50 Chetwynd Street, West Melbourne VIC 3003 or by email at retirements@grv.org.au.

Please note that all retired greyhounds living in the community (including with participants) are required by law to be registered with local council. Council registration and microchip registration are different types of registration.

Re-homing greyhounds with prey drive - maintaining the reputation of the breed as a great pet



Prey drive refers to an animal's natural desire to chase and kill prey animals for food. This exists in many animals and all breeds of dogs, but in dogs is more evident in sighthounds (including greyhounds). Prey drive is also referred to as 'predatory behaviour' or 'predation', and mostly occurs when the dog is relaxed and in a positive mental state.

If a greyhound does not recognise a small dog as being a dog (sometimes due to inadequate early socialisation), it may see the other dog as a prey animal and exhibit predatory behaviour towards it (called 'dog-on-dog predation').

The GAP pre-entry assessment is designed primarily to detect predatory behaviour towards small dogs. Only those greyhounds showing minimal or manageable predatory behaviour towards small dogs will pass the GAP pre-entry assessment.

Similarly, greyhounds (like many dogs) may display predatory behaviour towards other small animals, such as cats or chickens. Greyhounds can be taught to recognise these animals as fellow pets and not prey, but this may take some time and require careful introductions using a muzzle. While a greyhound may be well behaved with pets they know well, they can show predatory behaviour towards other unfamiliar small animals in different environments, such as at the park.

Prey drive is a very different behaviour to aggression which is usually anxiety or fear-based; where the dog is in a negative mental state. Aggression is a protective mechanism.



Prey drive is not related to **chase motivation**, which is the desire to chase an object that is not an animal. Some greyhounds with strong chase motivation can be very safe with small dogs (i.e. low levels of predatory behaviour towards small dogs), while some quiet greyhounds, who do not chase the lure well, can show high levels of predatory behaviour towards small dogs. Many GAP greyhounds have had high career winnings, which proves they are good chasers,

but understand that a small dog is one of their own species and that they should not exhibit predatory behaviour towards it.

If you wish to undertake your own re-homing efforts, it is important to have a good understanding of your greyhound's level of prey drive. This will be particularly important once the legal requirement for greyhounds to wear muzzles in public is removed on 1 January 2019. Dog-on-dog predation is difficult to predict without testing your greyhound in a relaxed environment with an unfamiliar small dog.

ASSESSING FOR PREY-DRIVE



In addition to being wound down for at least 28 days (mandatory for greyhounds being assessed for GAP), GRV recommends that all greyhounds being re-homed have a proper small dog assessment before they move to their new pet home. While the GAP pre-entry assessment is usually for greyhounds being entered into GAP, if you would like a temperament assessment for a greyhound going to a private home, please contact GAP and an assessment (called a PetCheck) may be arranged. If your greyhound shows moderate or high levels of predatory behaviour, an experienced GAP Assessor will be able to provide you with information about further training and how to best manage this behaviour.

For further information about the GAP assessments, please phone **(03) 5799 0166**.

If you decide to make an assessment of your greyhound's prey drive yourself, you need to introduce your greyhound to an unfamiliar small dog and observe the greyhound's behaviour. This must be done safely by ensuring that your greyhound is muzzled and held on a leash at all times during the meeting. If the greyhound displays any of the behaviours below, you should cease the assessment immediately.

Please contact GAP if you would like any information or advice because GAP staff are very experienced with predatory behaviour in greyhounds.

SIGNS OF PREDATORY BEHAVIOUR INCLUDE:

-  an upright stiff tail that is wagging quickly;
-  intensely staring at the small dog with a stiff body position;
-  stalking;
-  teeth chattering or drooling;
-  hovering above or over the shoulder/neck of the small dog;
-  jumping at, or pouncing on, the small dog;
-  lunging;
-  nose bunting or pawing at the small dog;
-  barking at the small dog;
-  chasing the small dog;
-  attempting to grab (bite) the small dog.

GREYHOUNDS THAT ARE SAFE WITH SMALL DOGS:

-  will appear calm with their tail relaxed or wagging loosely;
-  will show friendly interest in the small dog (like a normal greeting of two dogs in the park);
-  will be easily distracted by the handler; and
-  will be polite and calm towards the small dog.



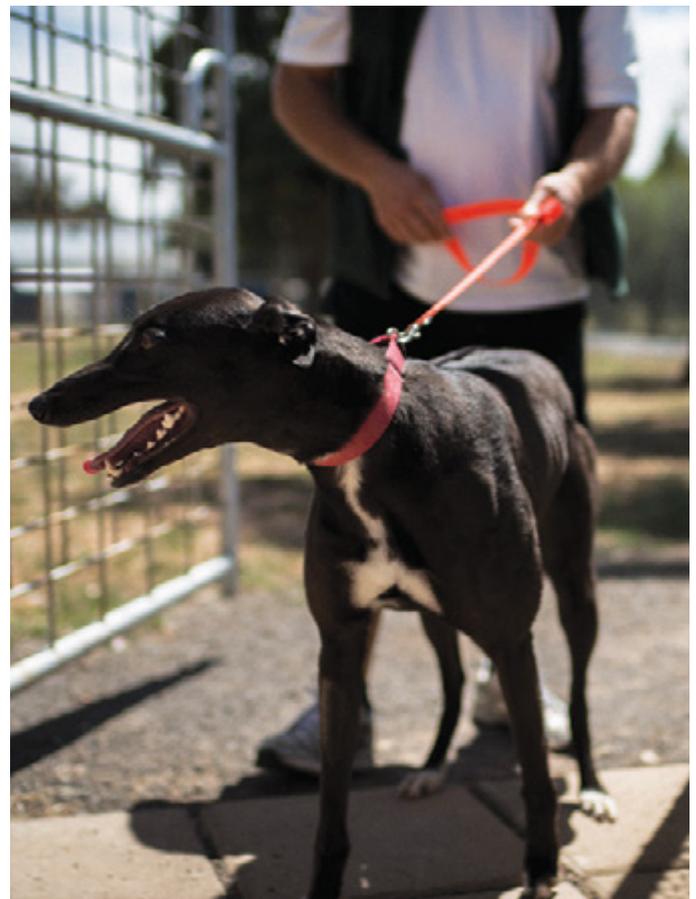
Even if your greyhound shows moderate or high levels of predatory behaviour, this does not mean that they will be unsuitable for re-homing. They can still make a great pet in the right home, but there are a few things to remember:

1. You **must** inform the person adopting your greyhound that the greyhound has a level of prey drive that will need to be managed in public and around small dogs and/or other small animals. This discussion should occur before the adoption takes place to enable the potential new owner to decide whether the greyhound is right for their circumstances (for example, they may have a cat); and

2. You **must** remind **all adopters** that they are legally required to muzzle the greyhound while in public and **keep the greyhound on a leash**. While the muzzling requirement for pet greyhounds will be removed by the Victorian Government from 1 January 2019, the leashing law for greyhounds will remain in place. Adopters of greyhounds that have prey drive should be strongly encouraged to fit the greyhound with a muzzle while in public and/or if in the presence of small dogs or other small animals, despite there being no legal requirement.

There are forms included in the Information for New Owner's Guide that are to be completed and provided to the new owner. The New Owner's Guide provides them with information about the greyhound's health and temperament and how to safely manage the greyhound in the community. See "Re-homing Guide - Information for New Owners".

It is important to the sustainability of the sport that pet greyhounds with prey drive are carefully managed through appropriate muzzling and leashing.



RE-HOMING CHECKLIST

- 28-day wind-down completed
- Vaccinations (C5 minimum), worming and flea treatments up to date
- Greyhound veterinary check completed
- Prey drive assessment completed
- Greyhound de-sexed or new owner to de-sex
- Information for new owner form completed
(see Re-homing Guide - Information for New Owners booklet)
- Transfer of Ownership (microchip) form completed
- Transfer of Ownership (microchip) form signed by new owner
- New owner provided with information on greyhound care and registration, including a copy of the most recent PetCheck outcome where applicable
- Transfer of ownership form (microchip) submitted to GRV
- GRV FastTrack updated to record new owner

CONTACT GAP TO ENQUIRE ABOUT A PETCHECK FOR YOUR GREYHOUND

Should you have any questions or you experience
any behavioural issues, you are welcome to
contact GAP on
(03) 5799 0166 for information.

