



RESPONSIBLE
PET GREYHOUND
OWNERSHIP

EDUCATION RESOURCE

CONTENTS

Enjoying life with your new greyhound	2
Responsibilities	2
Life stages of a racing greyhound	3
Bringing your greyhound home	3
Greyhounds and children	4
Introducing greyhounds to other pets	4
Exercise and enrichment	5
Muzzling	6
What if my greyhound is involved in a dog attack while off-leash?	6
Understanding your dog's behaviour	7
Body language	7
Prey drive	7
Vocalisation	7
Reading your greyhound's body language	8
Where to find more information	9

Published by Animal Welfare Victoria
Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions
1 Spring Street Melbourne, Victoria 3000
January 2019

© Copyright State Government of Victoria 2018.
This publication is copyright. No part may be reproduced by any process except in accordance with provisions of the *Copyright Act 1968*.

Authorised by the Victorian Government, Melbourne.

Print Managed by Finsbury Green

ISBN 978-1-76090-047-2 (Print)
ISBN 978-1-76090-048-9 (pdf/online/MS word)

Accessibility

If you would like to receive this publication in an alternative format, please telephone DJPR Customer Service Centre on 136 186.

Disclaimer

This publication may be of assistance to you but the State of Victoria and its employees do not guarantee that the publication is without flaw of any kind or is wholly appropriate for your particular purposes and therefore disclaims all liability for any error, loss or other consequence which may arise from you relying on any information in this publication.



ENJOYING LIFE WITH YOUR NEW GREYHOUND

Greyhounds make great pets. They can be friendly, quiet and well mannered, while some can be boisterous and love to play. Just like people, all greyhounds are individual and will behave and react differently to a range of situations. For the most part, greyhounds are social animals and will be happiest being part of your family.

Often greyhounds have had a different start to life than other pet dogs, which can mean that they require extra support settling into their new homes.

Recognising your greyhound's behaviour and responses to various situations and triggers will help you effectively provide for the needs of your new pet.

It is important that before you bring your new greyhound home, you inform yourself of its specific needs. Responsible ownership begins with understanding health, exercise and training requirements for your greyhound.

You and your greyhound will have a lot to learn about each other, but with the right knowledge it will be a rewarding time for you both.

Responsibilities

Responsible pet ownership involves caring for the welfare of your pet, understanding your legal responsibilities and complying with relevant laws, including the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* and council laws on de-sexing, microchipping, registration and housing.

To be a responsible dog owner, it is important to educate yourself in understanding dog behaviours and temperaments. You should be aware of signs to recognise when your dog is happy, sad, scared, excited, anxious and nervous. This booklet is a guide to help greyhound owners in understanding these signs in greyhounds.

From 1 January 2019, pet greyhounds in Victoria will no longer be legally required to wear a muzzle in public. **Greyhounds must still be leashed at all times in public, including council off-leash areas.**

Cola



Vicki



Bringing your greyhound home

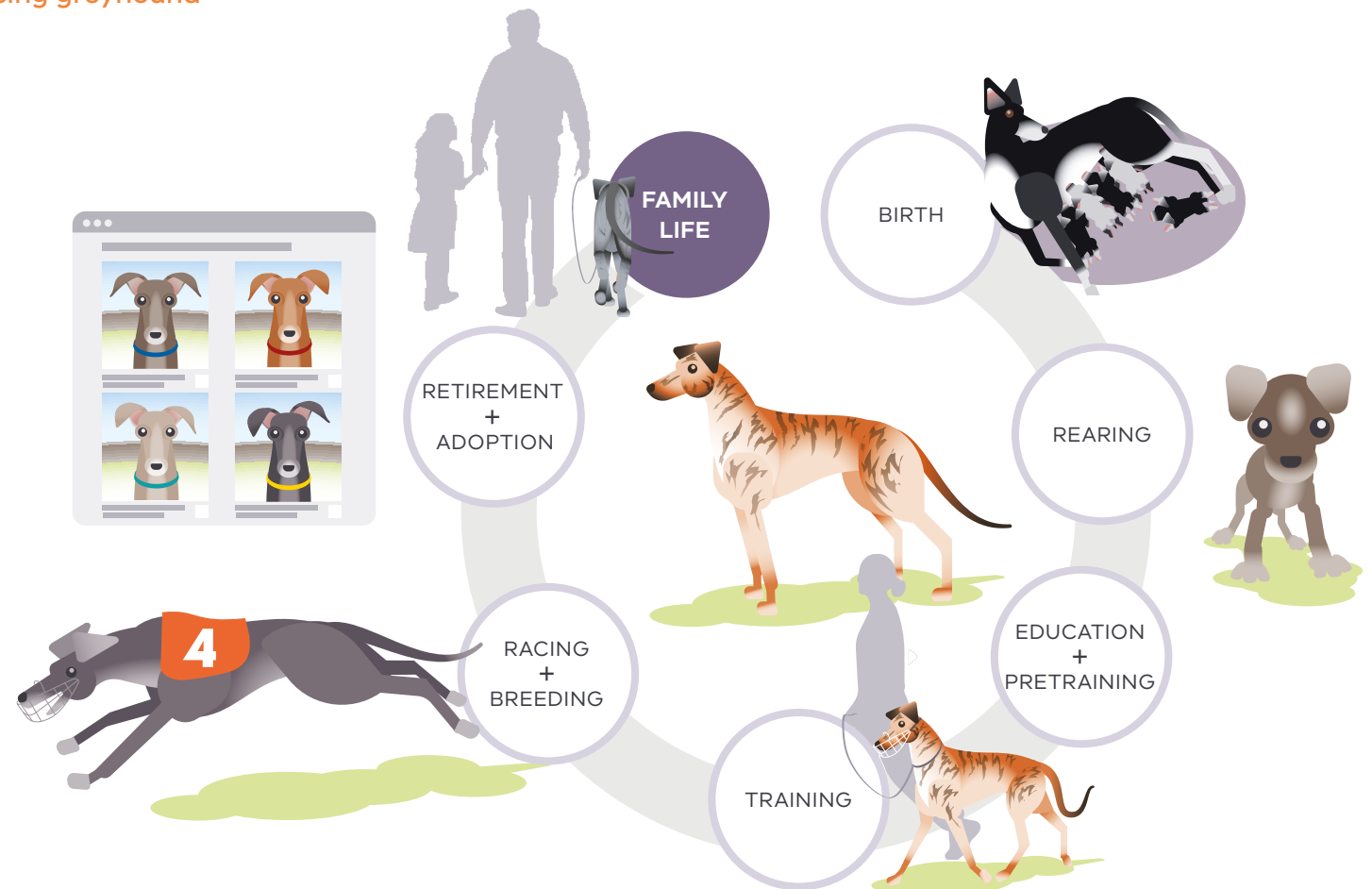
Adopting a retired greyhound requires patience and understanding during the transition period from racing dog to pet.

Racing greyhounds have a unique life cycle, including highly tailored race education and training. This means that some greyhounds entering the pet community haven't been as exposed to people and other animals as other breeds of dogs their age.

Like other dogs, greyhounds need time to learn new routines and become familiar with a new environment, so it is important that you introduce them to their new home gradually.

Some greyhounds may not have lived inside a house before, so common household items like stairs, glass doors and appliances may be new. Allow your greyhound time to become familiar with their new home. Keep their world small and slowly expose them to new experiences, environments and people.

Life stages of a racing greyhound





Billy and Matty



Lyndsey

Every greyhound is different, some may adjust easily to life as a pet, while others may require more encouragement and understanding. During this settling in period it is advised to build a predictable environment for your greyhound. They will need consistency from you as they learn to understand your body gestures, actions, words and commands.

A way to create a predictable and consistent environment is to introduce, and stick to, a routine. Retired racing greyhounds are used to following a strict routine, as they are often fed, toileted and walked at a similar time every day. They can generally settle into their new home more easily if a predictable routine is established quickly.

Establishing a defined sleeping area is important in helping your greyhound settle into its new home. Before you bring your greyhound home, you need to identify a private space within the household that will belong to your greyhound. This is where their bed should be placed, and rules set to establish that the area is for your new greyhound only. By establishing this early on, you provide your greyhound with a retreat should they become overwhelmed.

When your greyhound is on its bed or sleeping, it should not be disturbed. Be sure to reinforce this message with any children in your house.

Always take note of your pet's behaviour as you introduce it to your family, home and other environments, so you know when you might need to slow down exposure to new things.

Greyhounds and children

If your household includes children, it is important that you carefully manage your dog's introduction and ensure your children know how to behave safely around dogs. By modelling appropriate behaviours and actively supervising interactions, your greyhound and children can form a close and rewarding bond.

It is important to actively supervise all interactions between your child and pet. If you cannot actively supervise, then you must securely separate them.

Introducing greyhounds to other pets

Greyhounds will be naturally curious meeting other pets, so it is important you approach the initial introductions slowly and sensibly.

Ensure you do not force your greyhound to meet other pets when they appear uncomfortable, even when in the home.

Some greyhounds may never have met a cat or a different breed of dog before. It is important to be mindful that a greyhound who is friendly towards people may not always be friendly towards other pets. If you own other pets, ensure their first introduction to your new greyhound is carefully supervised.

A good way to ensure interactions between your greyhound and other animals are safe, is to keep your greyhound on a leash and muzzled under effective control for the first few meetings. You should also seek advice on first introductions from your veterinary practitioner or the group that you adopted your greyhound from.

EXERCISE AND ENRICHMENT

Your greyhound can be off-leash at any time on your property. When in public however, your greyhound must be leashed at all times, including in council off-leash areas. You may contact your local council, or speak to your adoption group, to find out if there is an area near you that is permitted for off-leash greyhound exercise, like a slipping track.

Each greyhound is different and will have different exercise needs. A short walk in the morning and evening, around 30 minutes per day, is recommended as part of a greyhound's routine.

Greyhounds have often not had recall training so ensure you walk your greyhound with a good quality lead under effective control.

Due to your greyhound's speed, retractable leads are not recommended as they can cause injury to you, your dog, other people and animals.

Greyhounds, like other dogs, can become bored easily if they are not mentally stimulated. Soft toys, puzzle toys with food treats, daily exercise and training are essential in creating a mentally enriching environment for your greyhound.

You could try giving your greyhound different toys to play with on different days, or puzzle toys filled with healthy doggie treats to keep them entertained while you are away. Taking your greyhound for a walk before you leave the home could also help to tire them out before being left alone. Remember to avoid feeding immediately before or after exercise.



MUZZLING

From 1 January 2019, owners may choose to continue to muzzle their greyhound in public.

If your greyhound is showing signs of excess excitability or agitation around other dogs, consider keeping a muzzle on it when walking in public.

A muzzle should fit your greyhound comfortably and not restrict normal behaviour such as panting and drinking. Plastic yard muzzles or basket muzzles (plastic or wire) are recommended.



What if my greyhound is involved in a dog attack while off-leash?

Greyhounds should **never** be off-leash outside of your property, unless you are exercising them on a parcel of land that is specifically approved to be used for greyhound exercise, such as a slipping track.

If you choose to let your greyhound off-leash in public, you are breaching legislative requirements and your local council officer/s could fine you.

Additionally, if your greyhound rushes at or chases a person, council may declare it to be a menacing dog. If your greyhound is involved in an unfortunate attack against a person or animal causing death or serious injury, council will declare it to be a dangerous dog.

Owners of dangerous and menacing dogs have requirements imposed on them to ensure members of the public are not at risk.

Further information about owning a dangerous or menacing dog is available at animalwelfare.vic.gov.au

UNDERSTANDING YOUR DOG'S BEHAVIOUR

Understanding your greyhound's behaviour can help you judge how they are feeling in any situation. Just like other dogs, greyhounds communicate with us using their body positions, facial characteristics and vocal sounds.

Body language

Dogs exhibit a range of body language cues that are indicators of emotions, including happiness, curiosity, excitement, fear, stress and anxiety.

Common signals of stress you should look out for include: a tense body, yawning, frequent blinking, lip licking, panting, turning their head away, tail tuck and showing the white part of their eye and body shaking.

It is important to look at these behaviours as a whole, not in isolation, to ensure you properly understand how your greyhound is feeling and can cater for its needs.

Dogs can display undesirable behaviours when settling into a new home. These include toileting inside, on the couch or your bed, chewing inappropriate items and displaying frightened or wary behaviour.

Active supervision is vital to managing a dog's behaviour.

If your dog regularly exhibits these signals, seek veterinary advice.

Prey drive and aggression

All dogs have certain traits inherent to their breed, including prey drive, and can exhibit signs of prey drive in response to previous learning, genetics and environment. Unlike other dogs, greyhounds have been bred and trained to chase and can reach fast speeds very quickly.

Signs of prey drive include: stalking, tensing of the body, freezing, lip licking, salivating, jaw trembling, lunging, focused eyes and pricked ears.

Prey drive can be shown towards other animals such as cats, birds, rabbits or smaller dogs. When a greyhound is engaging in prey drive it is generally very quiet and won't growl or bark.

Always take the necessary steps to ensure interactions between your greyhound and other animals are safe. Dogs can exhibit signs of aggression in situations where they feel anxiety or fear.

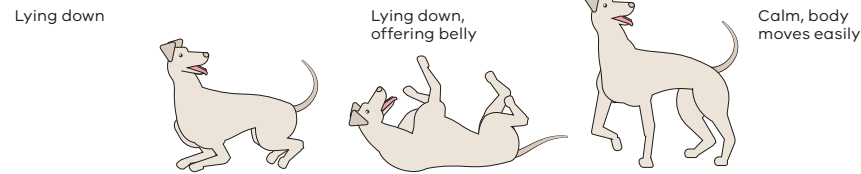
Signs of aggression include growling, snarling, erect ears and their tail held high. If your greyhound is showing signs of prey drive or aggression, it is recommended that you ensure it wears a muzzle in public places and when meeting new animals.

Vocalisation

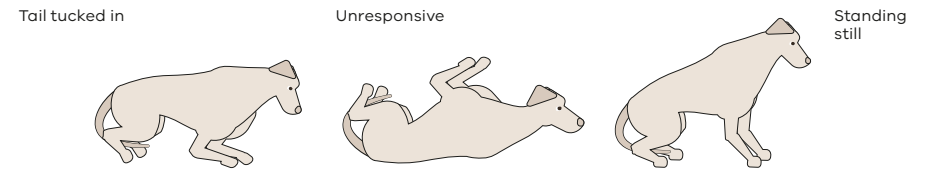
Just like body language signals, dogs can let us know how they are feeling through vocal sounds, often in response to certain situations or emotional triggers. When a dog is feeling uncomfortable or frightened, it can often communicate this through a low growl. If your greyhound growls, ensure you give it space to be alone. Punishing vocal sounds, such as a growl, can lead to escalating the behaviour in future, which may result in a bite.

Reading your greyhound's body language

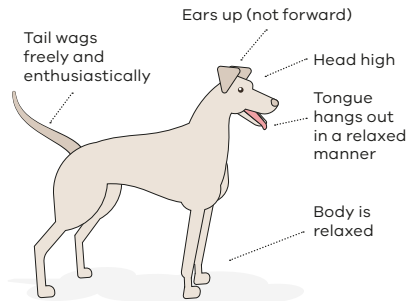
Relaxed



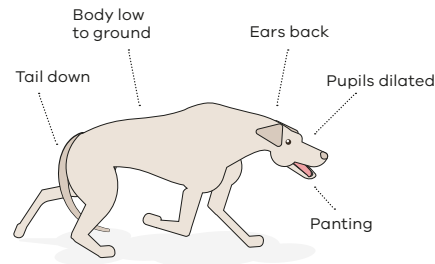
Shut down



Happy

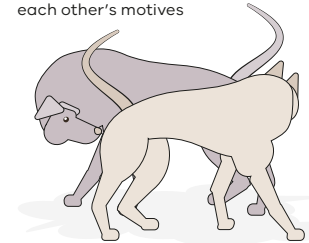


Stressed



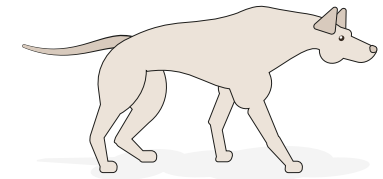
Friendly

- Friendly dog greeting is arc-like
- Sniffing to understand each other's motives

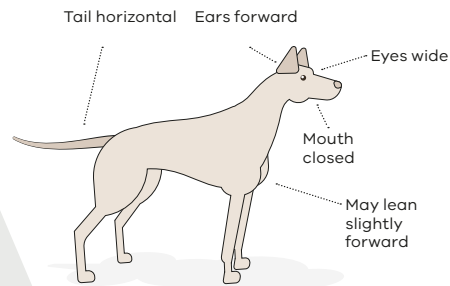


Prey-drive

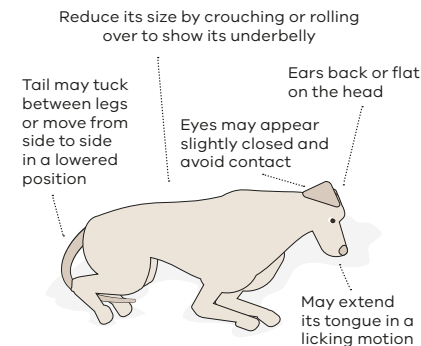
- Stalking
- Freezing
- Closed mouth
- Lip licking
- Hard stare



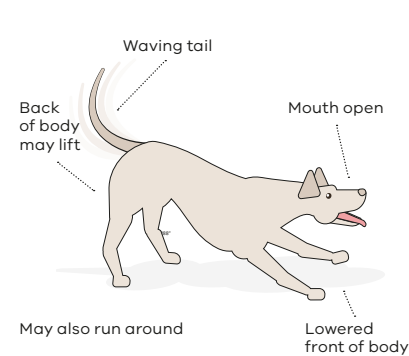
Alert



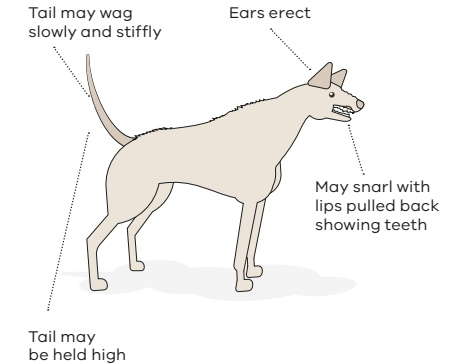
Frightened



Playful



Aggressive



WHERE TO FIND MORE INFORMATION

Your local veterinarian or the rescue group you adopted from are great sources of information and can provide support to help you cater for your greyhound's needs.

Greyhound-specific advice is available at:

Greyhound Racing Victoria
greyhoundcare.grv.org.au

RSPCA Victoria
rspcavic.org

Kate

