

Greyhound Haven Tasmania

Greyhound care guide

Greyhound Haven is a privately run (non-industry funded) sanctuary for greyhounds, operating in northern Tasmania. Greyhound Haven aims to rehome where possible as well as provide information on the care of greyhounds as pets.



Contents

1. [Feeding](#)
2. [Dangerous foods](#)
3. [Basic health care](#)
4. [Nails and grooming](#)
5. [Greyhound anatomy](#)
6. [Coat](#)
7. [Breed standard](#)
8. [Other pets](#)
9. [Greyhounds and children](#)
10. [Frequently Asked Questions](#)
11. [About greyhounds](#)
12. [Training and behaviour](#)

1. Feeding

Almost all commercially produced dog foods are advertised as being nutritionally complete (ie, the dog needs no other food or supplements) and initially, it can be a bit daunting to pick a food when faced with differing recommendations for quantity of proteins, fats, carbohydrates, vitamins and minerals and the huge variations between brands. When buying food for your greyhound, we recommend that you read the nutritional information very carefully and educate yourself as to what the terms and wording on the labels mean. Below is a rough guide to things you should be looking for.

Meat content- When buying food, the first ingredient should *always* be meat. Many companies get around the issue of price by using very low quality by-products of the meat industry and listing it on packaging as "meat and/or meat by-products". Another trick is to simply not specify the source. "Meat" or "poultry" can be almost anything so it's important to look for products that list the source of the meat, for example, "beef" or "chicken".

Grains- A lot of dog foods have a very heavy grain content and generally speaking (from our experience), greyhounds do not digest this very well (meaning loose stools and a lot of it). Some grains are better than others and can have quite an effect on the overall quality of the food.

Although some dogs do well on supermarket brands of dog food (for example, Pedigree Pal, Beneful, Supercoat, etc), we would not feed it to our dogs (or our foster hounds) and would never recommend supermarket brands to adopters. We feel the quality is far too low and that it is not sufficient nutritionally for greyhounds to live on.

Although it may be tempting to fatten up your greyhound (as most people are used to dogs with far more body fat), it is very important that you do not overfeed your greyhound. Greyhounds are not built to carry excessive weight and being overweight increases their chances of suffering from arthritis, an illness that can be crippling in greyhounds.

A good way to check your greyhound's body fat is to count the easily visible ribs. If you can see the last two ribs only, the dog is probably at the right weight. It's also a good idea (where possible) to find your greyhound's racing weight. Ideally, your greyhound's retired weight should not be more than five kilograms heavier than their racing weight.

Raw vs Commercial

There has been a great deal of debate over the Raw vs Commercial issue (the Dogz Online forums have many topics that cover the various advantages/disadvantages of both sides) and although we feed our dogs raw food and recommend that adopters give it a try (we've had great success with it), we understand that every dog is an individual and there is no correct answer to the raw vs commercial debate. Some dogs may do better on commercial food or have medical issues that make raw feeding impossible. Raw feeding does also require a bit of learning and some adjustments to help work out what is best for the individual dog.

Greyhound Haven Tasmania

Greyhound care guide

Where needed, we are always willing to help new owners learn to raw feed but if owners chose to feed commercially prepared dog food, our advice and help are still always available, without any judgement or pushing of opinions. "The best food for your dog is the food your dog does best on" is something we firmly believe in.

2. Dangerous foods list (listed in alphabetical order)

It should be noted that some of these foods are safe for dogs if prepared correctly or eaten in moderation. Please read entire entries to ensure you fully understand the risks and how to avoid them. The products that are safe in moderation or safe with correct preparation are marked with an asterisk.

If you suspect your greyhound has eaten something poisonous, call your veterinarian *immediately* for advice. The correct first aid may be the difference in whether or not the dog survives.

Alcohol- Alcohol causes similar physical effects in dogs as it does in humans- it is a diuretic and a central nervous system depressant, causing coordination problems and dehydration, amongst other things. *Never* allow your dog access to alcoholic beverages.

Apple*- The seed/pit contains cyanogenic glycosides which can cause poisoning if consumed in larger amounts. The flesh of this fruit is generally safe to feed to your greyhound in moderation.

Apricot*- The seed/pit contains cyanogenic glycosides which can cause poisoning if consumed in larger amounts. The flesh of this fruit is generally safe to feed to your greyhound in moderation.

Avocado- Avocado contains persin which can cause organ damage in some animals. The seed also presents a choking or obstruction hazard if swallowed. Additionally, avocado flesh is also quite high in fat, making them a somewhat unhealthy food for most greyhounds, regardless of the toxicity risk.

Baby Food- Many savoury baby foods contain onion powder as a flavouring, making them unsafe due to the risk of anemia caused by the compound sodium thiosulphate. Additionally, baby foods are formulated to meet the nutrition needs of human babies, not dogs- and as such, feeding of baby food to dogs can result in malnutrition.

Bones*- Raw bones (fed in moderation- excessive feeding of bones may lead to constipation in the dog) can provide your greyhound not only with a source of calcium but also help keep their teeth clean and prevent conditions caused by tartar build-up in the mouth. *However*, cooked bones (of any sort) should *never* be fed to dogs. Cooking changes the structure of the bone, making it almost impossible to digest and making the bones brittle (which facilitates breakage, leading to splintering when the dog eats them).

Bread Dough- Due to the processes that occur as bread rises, allowing your dog to eat dough places the dog at risk of [bloat](#) (a condition in which the stomach becomes overstretched and then twists, trapping gas and often leading to death). Additionally, many bread doughs consist mainly of wheat flour, a grain which has few nutrients of any benefit to your greyhound.

Caffeine- Caffeine is a stimulant and a diuretic and consumption can lead to dehydration, irregular heart beat, disorientation, rhabdomyolysis and insomnia. Caffeine is present in many carbonated beverages so care should be taken not to allow dogs access.

Cat Food- Cat food is formulated for cats and nutritionally, the very high protein content makes it unsuitable as a food for dogs. Your dog will likely not become ill if it occasionally steals some cat food but actively feeding cat food to your greyhound is not recommended.

Cherries*- The seed/pit contains cyanogenic glycosides which can cause poisoning if consumed in larger amounts. The flesh of this fruit is generally safe to feed to your greyhound in moderation.

Chocolate- Chocolate contains the compound theobromine (also known as xantheose), a substance

that is both a stimulant and a diuretic. While very small amount are unlikely to permanently harm your dog, all chocolates and chocolate products (cocoa powder, etc) should be stored securely and well out of reach of your dog as there is a substantial risk of death at higher doses (a greyhound of about 30kg would likely die after 900grams of milk chocolate, for example- this quantity decreases considerably for types of chocolate with higher theobromine levels).

Corn Cobs- Corn kernels are fine in moderation but the cobs should never be given to dogs as they present a choking/obstruction risk.

Dairy Products*- Lactose is generally poorly digested by dogs and larger quantities of dairy products in the diet can result in gastrointestinal upset, leading to severe diarrhoea. Small amount of cheese (lower fat varieties if possible) and natural yoghurt (again, fat reduced where possible) can be fed in moderation.

Eggs (Raw)*- Raw egg whites contain the protein avidin (about 1.8 mg per egg), a biotin-binding protein (biotin is a B vitamin) that can cause a deficiency, leading to growth and health problems. Cooking destroys avidin so cooked eggs are of no risk. Additionally, raw eggs are a risk for bacteria such as salmonella, a bacteria which often leads to severe food poisoning. Feeding your greyhound the occasional egg *yolk* (or a small amount of shell) is reasonably safe but should be done in moderation.

Garlic*- Garlic, like onion, contains the sulphur compound sodium thiosulphate- although the concentration appears to be far less, making garlic safe to feed in moderation (no more than a teaspoon per day).

Grapes or Raisins- Although the exact chemical remains unknown, grapes contain something which causes renal damage in dogs- presumed to be more concentrated in raisins, owing the removal of water. Toxicity seems to occur in similar levels to those of chocolate consumption (although the amounts needed to cause toxicity are far lower in dried grape products, owing to the concentrated levels) so while your greyhound stealing a grape or two is unlikely to be a risk, grapes and raisins should not be actively fed to your dog.

Liver*- In small quantities, liver is great for your greyhound's health, providing a source of vitamin A that many greyhounds really seem to enjoy. However, in larger amounts, liver can create a risk of hypervitaminosis A- essentially an overdose of vitamin A, a condition that can cause osteoporosis, bone growths, hair loss and liver dysfunction.

Macadamia Nuts- Although the actual chemical that causes this toxicity remain unknown , macadamia nuts have been proven to cause muscle weakness and severe distress in dogs. No fatalities have been recorded and dogs affected seem to recover however it remains a high risk food, owing to the severity of symptoms.

Mouldy or Spoiled Foods- Just as in humans, the consumption of mouldy or spoiled foods can lead to food poisoning and even death in dogs. A good rule of thumb is.. if you wouldn't eat it yourself, don't feed it to your dog. It's also important to ensure your garbage bins are secured to prevent your greyhound from dumpster diving for its own snacks.

Mushrooms*- Mushrooms that are safe for human consumption are generally considered safe for dogs (feed in moderation). The risk comes from eating wild mushrooms or mushrooms that have not been identified as being safe for human consumption. More detailed information on mushroom poisoning is available [here](#).

Nutmeg- Nutmeg is considered to be a hallucinogenic when consumed in large amounts- although given the small amounts used in most foods and its fairly unpalatable texture and taste, the risk it presents is generally fairly minimal. Ensuring nutmeg is stored properly and not allowing your dog to consume foods with large amounts of nutmeg eliminates virtually all risk- it is not a food that many dogs will seek out.

Onions- Onions contain sodium thiosulphate, a compound that while harmless to humans, causes severe hemolytic anemia in dogs, resulting in death at higher concentrations. The preparation of the onion does not seem to effect toxicity so all forms of onion should be avoided. Small amounts fed accidentally are unlikely to cause permanent harm however care should be taken to ensure consumption does not continue.

Peaches*- The seed/pit contains cyanogenic glycosides which can cause poisoning if consumed in larger amounts. The flesh of this fruit is generally safe to feed to your greyhound in moderation.

Pears*- The seed/pit contains cyanogenic glycosides which can cause poisoning if consumed in larger amounts. The flesh of this fruit is generally safe to feed to your greyhound in moderation.

Plums*- The seed/pit contains cyanogenic glycosides which can cause poisoning if consumed in larger amounts. The flesh of this fruit is generally safe to feed to your greyhound in moderation.

Play-Doh- Dogs may be attracted to this owing to the salty flavour but ingestion may lead to severe electrolyte imbalances or even death. Care should be taken to remove all Play-Doh after children have finished playing with it (and be sure to store it somewhere out of the dog's reach).

Potatoes*- While things like mashed potato are fine for your greyhound in moderation, sprouted stems and green patches on potatoes contain solanine, a glycoalkaloid poison. Poisoning usually causes gastrointestinal and neurological symptoms, including dizziness, diarrhoea, vomiting and paralysis. Solanine poisoning is very unusual however care should still be taken when feeding dogs potatoes that have green patches or shoots.

Salt*- There are two risks with salt, one being iodine poisoning (obviously only in iodised salt), the other is electrolyte imbalance (which can lead to death, if severe enough). Iodised salt should never be used in your dog's food and when salting its meals, use less than you'd use for yourself. Many dog treats and prepared foods already contain a very high level of sodium so there is not real need to supplement your dog's salt intake.

Sugarfree lollies or gum- Sweets containing xylitol can cause liver damage and poisoning in dogs and should never be given. Additionally, chewing gum presents a choking hazard to dogs.

Table Scraps*- Greyhounds cannot survive on table scraps alone and generally speaking, table scraps are insufficient nutritionally to be fed as anything other than way of supplementing the amount your dog eats daily. A *small* amount of table scraps is great to add variety and keep your dog interested in its regular food but to be safe and ensure your dog's health, no more than 15% of the dog's diet should consist of table scraps.

Tinned food- Many other breeds of dog can cope well with tinned food but generally speaking, greyhounds do not. Tinned food has a very high water content which can lead to stomach upsets and weight loss. We do not feed tinned food to our foster hounds and we do not recommend our adopters feed it to *their* dogs.

Tomatoes* and Tomato Plants- While red, ripe tomatoes are safe if fed in moderation, green parts of tomatoes (like in potatoes) can cause health risks. Many dogs will not seek these out to eat

anyway however dogs should be watched around tomato plants, regardless.

Water*- Although not a high risk food in itself (except in the case of excessive consumption where it can lead to [water intoxication](#)), water that is dirty or contains certain chemicals can be very harmful to your dog. Dirty or stagnant water can contain harmful bacteria or algae so it is important not to allow your dog to drink from puddles, still water (such as fish ponds, rain water that has been caught in old tyres, etc) or running water unless you are entirely sure that the water is safe for at least human consumption. When walking your dog, a bottle of water and a folding water bowl (these are quite small and most can easily fit in a pocket) are always a good idea- especially in summer when your dog may be tempted by thirst to drink water it would normally steer clear of.

3. Basic health care and information

Temperature: 37.9 - 39.9 (rectal)

Resting Respiration Rate: 18-25 (sleeping), 20-34 (standing, rest)

Heart Rate: 70-120 beats/min

Capillary Refill Time: less than or equal to 2 seconds

These parameters may vary slightly between individuals so it is always a good idea to check these while your dog is healthy to establish your dog's baseline for your records- something very useful to have in the event of illness or injury.

Never give ibuprofen (found in products such as Nurofen and Advil), paracetamol (found in products such as Panadol), aspirin (found in products such as Aspro Clear), or codeine (found in preparations such as Panadeine Forte) to your greyhound. If your greyhound appears to be in pain, contact your vet for an appointment, often they will be able to advise you over the phone regarding which pain medications can be given safely in the interim.

Treatment of minor allergic reactions-

If you believe your dog is suffering from an allergic reaction, it's always a good idea to take the dog to a vet to confirm this before attempting to treat the problem yourself. However, if you have confirmation that it is an allergy, the following antihistamines can be used to treat.

Polaramine (dexchlorhenrinamine) - Greyhounds up to 30kg give 4mg, greyhounds over 30kg give 6mg.

Phenergan (promethazine) - Give 1mg per 10kg of bodyweight.

Telfast (fexofenadine) - Give 2mg per kg bodyweight.

Clarytine (loratadine) - For greyhounds, give 1 tablet.

Zyrtec (Cetirizine) - For greyhounds, give 10mg.

To treat dehydration-

Although [Hydralyte](#) (available from chemists) can be used to treat if nothing more appropriate is available, Lectade (available from Vet-n-PetDirect or most vets) is inexpensive and far more suitable.

If using Hydralyte, use half of one packet or half of one Hydralyte ice block and mix with extra water.

In cases of *severe* dehydration or suspected heat stroke, your greyhound should be taken to a vet immediately- greyhounds are more prone to these things for a number of reasons and proper treatment can literally be the difference between life and death for your greyhound.

Parasites-

Ticks- Paralysis ticks, although more common on the mainland, are found in northern Tasmania and usually live in long grass, especially in coastal areas (see [here](#) for distribution map).

For more information on ticks, click [here](#) or [here](#).

If you find a tick on your dog, we recommend that you see a veterinarian immediately to identify the species and treat the dog if necessary. Paralysis ticks (if not removed) can kill a dog in under a week- another reason why parasite prevention products are very important.

Vaccination-

Although many vets will recommend vaccinating annually, there is substantial evidence to suggest that dogs maintain immunity for up to three to seven years after vaccination and that more frequent vaccination may not be in the best interests of the dog. Considering this, we vaccinate our dogs (C5)

Greyhound Haven Tasmania

Greyhound care guide

on a three-yearly schedule and recommend this for adopters (unless additional vaccinations are required- such as for boarding, training classes, etc).

When having your dog vaccinated, it's important to know what is being used and what it protects against.

As a general rule, most vets will offer either a C3 or a C5 vaccination. The C3 vaccination will cover [parvovirus](#), [distemper](#) and [infectious hepatitis](#), the C5 protects against those and [kennel cough](#) (both parts- parainfluenza virus[C4] and Bordatella br. bacteria[C5]. Adenovirus is sometimes included in this vaccine or may be part of the C3 vaccination).

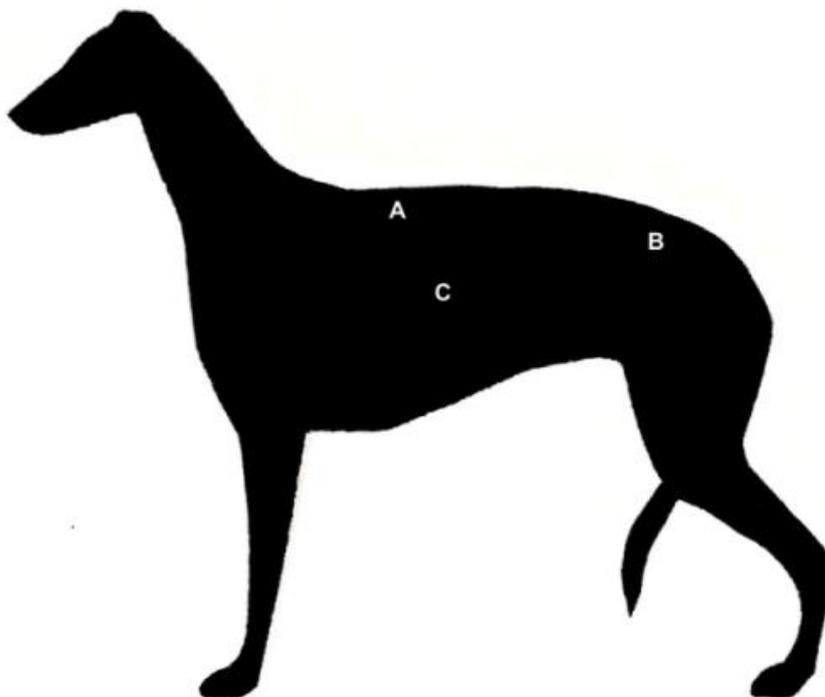
Additional to these vaccines are the vaccines to prevent [Corona virus](#) and [Leptospirosis](#). Vaccines to treat giardia, tetanus and Lyme disease are also available but not generally recommended by vets as being necessary.

Greyhound weights can vary very widely (especially between males and females) so it can seem difficult to estimate the correct weight for your dog.

Generally speaking, most greyhounds weigh somewhere between 20kg (small females) and 40kg (large males). When you adopt your greyhound, it's a good idea to ensure you retain weight records provided to you as these often list racing weight and racing weight is usually a good way to estimate correct pet weight.

A healthy greyhound should not weigh more than five kilograms more than its racing weight.

If racing weight is unknown, use to chart below to access correct weight.



A - You should be able to feel but not see three vertebrae.

B - You should be able to feel the dog's hip bones but not see them.

C - You should be able to feel ribs, with only two being (barely) visible at the end.

4. Nails and grooming

Generally speaking, greyhounds are very easy to keep clean. Brushing with the Zoom Groom, once or twice a week, is usually enough to remove loose hairs and keep the dog's coat looking nice. The furminator (no more than once or twice a month) can also be used to thin the coat back out if undercoat begins to grow.

Because of their thin fur and the lower amounts of oil in it, greyhounds should not be washed (using soap) any more frequently than once a month as otherwise, their skin may become excessively dry and dandruff will occur. We recommend that adopters select a shampoo suitable for the greyhound skin type as products designed for dogs with heavier oils (such as labradors) may strip out too much oil and dry the skin (leaving the fur dull and brittle).

Nails

We recommend that nails be done weekly and when cutting, to focus more on removal of the tougher outer layers (the areas that do not wear down well) rather than trying to *just* keep them short- overly short nails are not necessarily the best thing for the dog and may still grow incorrectly, leaving the dog with very hard nails that take longer to correct. When you adopt a greyhound from us, we will demonstrate (on an actual greyhound) the methods we use for cutting as well as discuss the differences in clippers and how to use them.

When to clip If your dog does a lot of walking on hard surfaces (in particular, concrete), the nails may not need regular clipping at all; or if they do, only the front paws and dew claws. If your dog does *not* have regular exercise on hard surfaces, it's likely the claws will need at least semi-regular trimming.

An audible clicking when the dog walks on hard surfaces is generally okay, providing there's a gap between the dog's claws and the ground when standing still. This can be checked by sliding a sheet of paper beneath the claws, if the paper catches on claw, they need to be trimmed back. In other cases, the shape of the dog's foot prevents the claws from wearing sufficiently and the paper test can give inaccurate results; if you're not sure, veterinary advice should be sought- overly long claws can cause dogs considerable discomfort and lead to more costly and dangerous problems over time.

How to clip The key to keeping claws at reasonable length is routine. Claws are easier to cut and the process less stressful for the dog if claw length is managed and claws not allowed to become overgrown. As the dog's claw grows, the quick continues to grow downwards inside it, meaning that the claw cannot be simply trimmed back to optimal length and the quick has to be trained back up by a more difficult and time-consuming routine of regular clipping.

To trim, the first step is to identify the quick (it's the pinkish shape inside the nail). In the case of black claws where the quick cannot be seen, unless you have considerable experience in trimming black claws, it's safer and often just as easy to file the claw back instead (taking care to ensure the abrasion doesn't heat the claw up too much).

Once the quick has been found, position the clippers vertically (ie, positioned to cut vertically to the claw if the dog were standing normally, rather than at an angle) and before cutting, take a moment

to ensure the quick is well back from the cut line (cutting the quick tends to be quite painful for the dog and may result in later difficulties in claw trimming). When ready, hold the dog firmly and cut *quickly*; slowly squeezing through the claw will crush the quick and hurt the dog. Keep cuts gradual, you're far less likely to hurt your dog if you trim in one millimetre increments, even if it requires two or more cuts to obtain the required length.

Finishing

Continue making one millimetre cuts until the claw passes the paper test and then quit while you're ahead. If you cut into the quick, the greyhound will be more likely to respond poorly to future attempts to trim its claws.

Any excessively sharp edges can then be gently filed back.

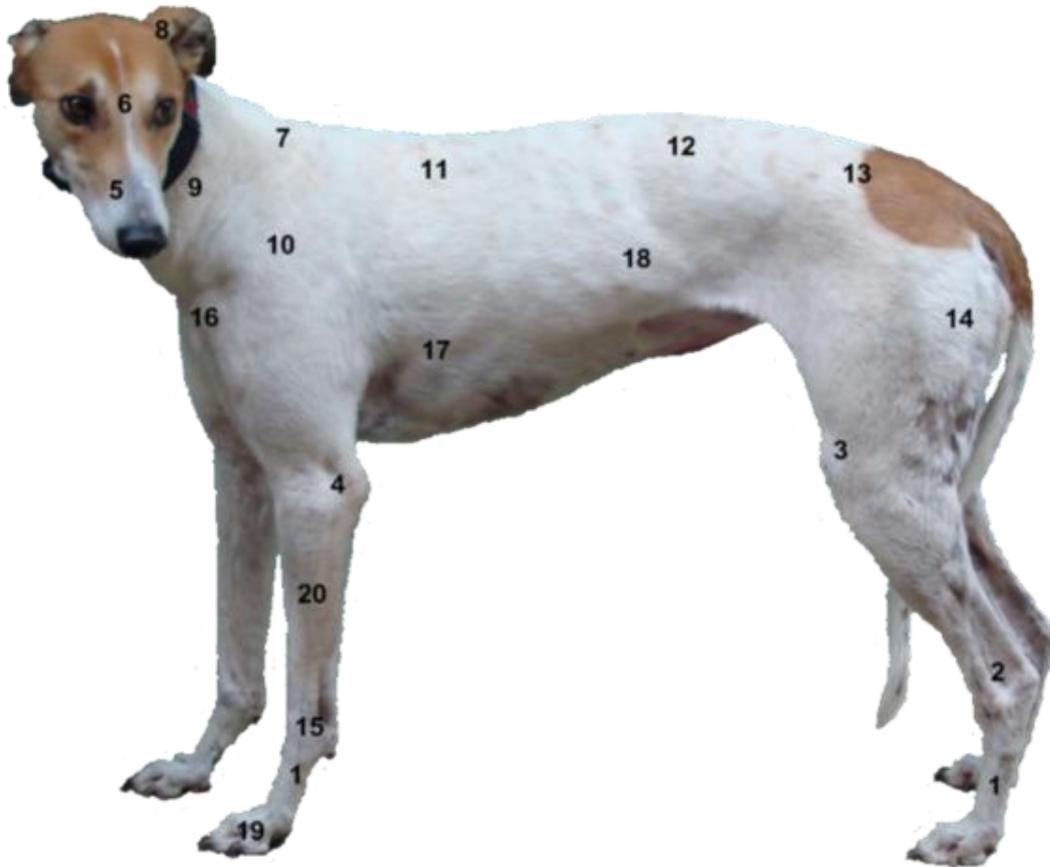
For greyhounds who react poorly to trimming, it may be safer to muzzle the dog and have someone at the dog's head, preventing it from turning towards the person doing the trimming.

Teeth

Many greyhounds have poor teeth, even at younger ages so proper oral hygiene is very important for greyhounds. Although there are products designed for teeth cleaning (everything from toothbrushes and pastes through to chew products that claim to clean the teeth), in our experience, bones are the best way to keep a greyhound's mouth clean and fresh. Bones do carry with them risks (such as choking) but these risks are also present in other chew products and can be minimised by supervision.

Bones also provide your greyhound with mental stimulation, they work the muscles of the jaw and they provide a good source calcium, making it not only a better way of keeping teeth clean but also one that your greyhound will likely enjoy far more than the foreign taste of toothpaste and your fingers in its mouth.

5. Greyhound anatomy



1 - Pastern (front/rear)	6 - Stop	11 - Back	16 - Prosternum
2 - Hock	7 - Wither	12 - Loin	17 - Chest
3 - Stifle joint	8 - Ears	13 - Croup	18 - Flank
4 - Elbow	9 - Neck	14 - Buttocks	19 - Feet
5 - Muzzle	10 - Shoulder	15 - Wrist	20 - Forearm

Blood values

RBC = [Red Blood Cells](#)

Hgb = [Hemoglobin](#)

PCV/HCT = [Packed Cell Volume/Hematocrit](#)

WBC = [White Blood Cells](#)

Platelets = [Help to form blood clots to stop bleeding](#)

T.P. = [Total Protein Globulin](#)

Creatinine = [A waste product filtered out of the blood by the kidneys](#)

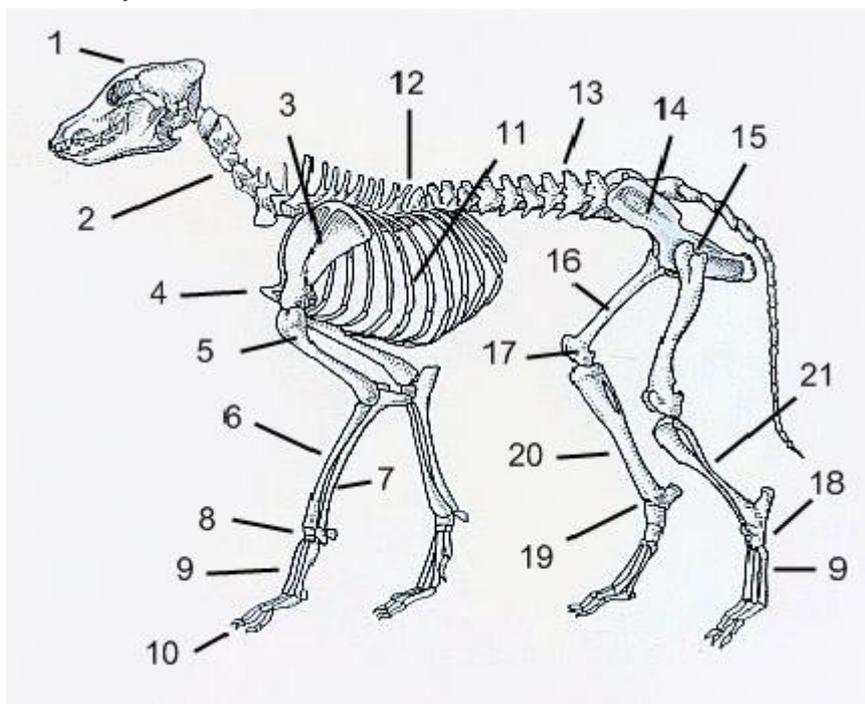
T4 = [Thyroid level](#)

Greyhound Haven Tasmania

Greyhound care guide

RBC: 7.4 - 9.0	Platelets: 80,000 - 200,000
Hgb: 19.0 - 21.5	TP: 4.5 - 6.0
PCV: 55 - 65	Globulin: 2.1 - 3.2
WBC: 3.5 - 6.5	Creatinine: 0.8 - 1.6

Skeletal System



1 - Skull	8 - Carpus	15 - Acetabulum (Socket)
2 - Vertebrae (Cervical 7)	9 - Metacarpus	16 - Femur (Thigh Bone)
3 - Scapula	10 - Phalanges	17 - Patella ('knee cap', 'stifle')
4 - Sternum (Breast Bone)	11 - Thorax (Ribcage)	18 - Tarsus
5 - Humerous	12 - Thoracic Vertebrae (13)	19 - Hock
6 - Radius	13 - Lumbar Vertebrae (7)	20 - Tibia
7 - Ulna	14 - Pelvis	21 - Fibula

30 vertebrae in total

13 pairs of ribs

42 teeth (adult)

6. Coat

Coat Type

The coat type of the greyhound is classified as smooth, fur is short and soft and lacking the [undercoat](#) present in many other breeds of dog. Because of their thin coat, greyhounds are more susceptible to extreme temperatures.

Colours

Black



Black can be either dominant or recessive. Dominant black will not produce blue, fawn, brindle or particolour pups. Nose leather will always be black.

Blue



Blue is a dilute of black, coat colours range from very pale blue through to an almost black shade of blue. Nose leather will be usually be slate grey.

Dun



Dun is a very rare colour occurring once in every 1500 to 2000 litters.

Coat colour can range from a very light fawn through to a deep chocolate brown. Nose leather will usually be either pink or brown.

Fawn



Fawn ranges from a pale biscuit colour through to a very dark red. Nose leather should be black.

Greyhound Haven Tasmania

Greyhound care guide

White



White isn't actually a colour in itself but an absence of colour. Nose leather will vary depending on secondary colour.

Brindle



Brindle is a coat pattern in which black stripes overlay a base colour.

Variations of brindle:

- Black brindle
- Blue brindle
- Red brindle
- Fawn brindle
- Red fawn brindle
- Blue fawn brindle
- White fawn brindle

Particolour

Particolour refers to a white dog with patches of any other colour.

Coat must be 50% white to be named as particolour, if not, the colour will be named as [base colour] with white.

Colour Inheritance

Basic colour inheritance

- Black - Black

Will produce Black, Blue, Dun, Fawn or Brindle or any of those colours with white.

- Dun - Dun

Never recorded.

- Blue - Blue

Greyhound Haven Tasmania

Greyhound care guide

Will produce Blue, Fawn or Brindle or those colours with white. No Blacks or Duns should be present.

- Brindle - Brindle

Will produce Brindles and Fawns, or those colours with white. No Blacks, Duns or Blues should be present.

- Fawn - Fawn

Will produce Fawn or Fawn with white only. No Blacks, Duns or Blues or Brindles should be present.

Conditions Affecting The Coat

Atrophic Follicular Dysplasia

[Atrophic Follicular Dysplasia](#) (Bald Thigh Syndrome) is characterised by bilateral hair loss on the lateral and caudal thighs.

The cause is currently unknown but contributing factors may include stress, thyroid levels or sleeping on rough surfaces.

Scurf

Scurf (dandruff) is the excessive shedding of dead skin cells which often build up in the coat. Scurf is often the result of rugging the dog (rugs often do not allow proper air flow, creating a damp environment in which fungi thrive) and is caused by the fungi [Malassezia](#).

7. Breed standard

Australian Nation Kennel Club [ANKC](#) Standard

Group: Hound Group

- **General Appearance**

Strongly built, upstanding, of generous proportions, muscular power and symmetrical formation, with long head and neck, clean well laid shoulders, deep chest, capacious body, arched loin, powerful quarters, sound legs and feet, and a suppleness of limb, which emphasise in a marked degree its distinctive type and quality.

- **Characteristics**

Possessing remarkable stamina and endurance.

- **Temperament**

Intelligent, gentle, affectionate and even tempered.

- **Head And Skull**

Long, moderate width, flat skull, slight stop. Jaws powerful and well chiselled.

- **Eyes**

Bright, intelligent, oval and obliquely set. Preferably dark.

- **Ears**

Small, rose-shaped of fine texture.

- **Mouth**

Jaws strong with a perfect, regular and complete scissor bite, i.e. the upper teeth closely overlapping the lower teeth and set square to the jaws.

- **Neck**
- **Forequarters**

Shoulders oblique, well set back, muscular without being loaded, narrow and cleanly defined at top. Forelegs, long and straight, bone of good substance and quality. Elbows free and well set under shoulders. Pasterns moderate length, slightly sprung. Elbows, pasterns and toes inclining neither in nor out.

- **Body**

Greyhound Haven Tasmania

Greyhound care guide

Chest deep and capacious, providing adequate heart room. Ribs deep, well sprung and carried well back. Flanks well cut up. Back rather long, broad and square. Loin powerful, slightly arched.

- **Hindquarters**

Thighs and second thighs, wide and muscular, showing great propelling power. Stifles well bent. Hocks well let down, inclining neither in nor out. Body and hindquarters, features of ample proportions and well coupled, enabling adequate ground to be covered when standing.

- **Feet**

Moderate length, with compact, well-knuckled toes and strong pads.

- **Tail**

Long, set on rather low, strong at root, tapering to point, carried low, slightly curved.

- **Gait/Movement**

Straight, low reaching, free stride enabling the ground to be covered at great speed. Hind legs coming well under body giving great propulsion.

- **Coat**

Fine and close.

- **Colour**

Black, white, red, blue, fawn, fallow, brindle or any of these colours broken with white.

- **Sizes**

Ideal Height: Dogs 71-76 cm (28-30 ins) Bitches 68-71 cm (27-28 ins)

- **Faults**

Any departure from the foregoing points should be considered a fault and the seriousness with which the fault should be regarded should be in exact proportion to its degree.

- **Notes**

Male animals should have two apparently normal testicles fully descended into the scrotum.

Breed type

“A greyhound should be headed like a snake and necked like a drake, backed like a beam, sided like a bream, footed like a cat and tailed like a rat”.

The sighthound "type" has existed for hundreds (possibly thousands) of years, beginning most probably in northern Africa or the Middle East to course game in environments where dogs that hunted by scent did poorly.

Despite the genetic differences between the older breeds of sighthounds and the modern greyhound (a dog that has been proven through DNA testing to be more closely related to herding breeds), many similarities remain, owing to these dogs sharing the same basic "type".

The greyhound type is a tall, well-muscled dog with a flexible spine to allow it to extend fully when running. Greyhounds (like horses) are capable of a double suspension gallop.

To provide the dog with the lung capacity needed for short sprints, the greyhound type has a narrow but deep chest and a long muzzle.

The greyhound type is bred with speed in mind (rather than endurance) so the body is slender (appearing underfed to some people) and the tail should be whip-thin and slightly curved, held lower than the dog's topline. The greyhound's body should be capable of achieving rapid acceleration, facilitated by large muscles in its shoulders and hindquarters.

The feet of the greyhound type are small, compact and shorter than those of other breeds of dog, without appearing heavily knuckled.

The greyhound's head should be long and narrow, with small ears that are naturally held back against the head when at rest. The eyes should be large and dark.

Because the greyhound was expected to hunt or chase beside other dogs, the type temperament should be one that can exist comfortably with other dogs.

Coat colour has no effect on coursing (as the dog does not need to stalk or track its quarry without notice) so the greyhound type allows for a fairly broad range of basic colours.

More information on the greyhound type can be found [here](#).

8. Greyhounds and other pets

While most greyhounds can learn to live well with other dogs, smaller pets or poultry can be a very different matter, depending on the dog (and the other animals involved).

A dog that tests as cat-safe may not be safe around a cat that displays excessively fearful behaviour and for this reason, some homes with cats will simply not be suitable for a greyhound (and likely many other breeds of dog).

Another consideration is familiarity- a greyhound that was fostered with cats may not immediately accept the cats in its new home as being off limits for chasing so careful introductions are always necessary.

Some important points-

Do not encourage your greyhound to play with (paw at, nip or chase) other pets- what starts out as cute behaviour may quickly escalate if encouraged or allowed.

During the first few months, if you are unable to directly supervise the greyhound with other pets (during work hours, etc), it's far safer to securely separate them- a muzzle is no guarantee that a smaller animal cannot be hurt.

Supervise very closely when your greyhound is outside with other pets. Smaller animals are far more likely to run outside and, in this different environment, a greyhound may not recognise that the same rules still apply.

Introductions-

It is important for both the safety of the dog and other animals involved that the greyhound be muzzled and on a short leash during the first introduction (and that introductions be done in the house where behaviour can be more controlled).

Walk the dog quietly into the room and closely observe the dog's behaviour (signs of prey drive are listed below). Some pets will never be compatible and in some cases, this will be immediately apparent in the dog's behaviour. If the dog displays strong predatory behaviour, it is unlikely that the dog will ever be reliably safe around smaller animals.

If the dog's behaviour is acceptable, introductions can then continue. It is important to closely supervise all interaction between the greyhound and other pets in the following weeks to pick up any missed signs of predatory behaviour and to correct other inappropriate behaviours (dominance, etc) if they show up.

Signs of prey drive-

- A fixed stare or watching the other animal very intently. When this happens the dog's attention will be quite difficult to distract away from the animal and even when its head is turned, the dog will immediately return its gaze to the animal when its head is released again.
- The greyhound becomes very alert. The ears are usually pricked and the dog may begin to slowly stalk towards the other animal, holding its tail out directly behind it. If the small animal makes a sudden movement, the dog may lunge forward and attempt to chase.
- The greyhound's eyes become slightly bulged (from a slight increase in blood pressure as the dog's body prepares for the physical exertion of pursuing prey) and in some cases, the whites of the eye become visible.

- Licking at its lips or excessive salivation.
- The greyhound becomes still and appears to show little reaction to other stimuli (hand clapping, whistle, touching the dog). The dog's body will become very stiff as the dog prepares to make the sudden lunge forward that marks the start of chasing.
- The greyhound positions itself over the other animal, holding its neck in an arched and stiff position (not to be confused with dominance posturing in which no other signs of prey drive would be present).
- Nipping at, pawing or nudging the other animal (with either paw or muzzle). This behaviour is intended to incite the other animal to run, similar to a cat playing with a mouse.

In some cases, the greyhound may be sociable with other dogs or animals but the existing pets may not be. In cases such as this, we feel it's important to rectify issues before the environment causes the greyhound any negative experiences that may effect the dog's ability to cope with other animals. In the case of livestock, many greyhounds are wary of bigger animals anyway and will not approach them. However, not all greyhounds seem to be aware of the risks of approaching livestock so careful introductions should be made to assess any risk and if the greyhound seems interested in approaching livestock that may react poorly, provisions should be made to ensure the greyhound does not have unsupervised access.

If the problem is the other dog/s, things can be a little more complicated. Although Greyhound Haven can assess the greyhounds rehomed to ensure suitability, we have no control over existing pets and in some cases, lack of correct socialisation or training can mean that, realistically, no dog is going to be suitable for that home until the owners address the existing problems with their own pets.

In these cases, while we are happy to offer some basic advice if problems are minor, without knowing the dog's history or temperament, we highly recommend that treatment is sought with a professional behaviourist.

9. Greyhounds and children

Although greyhounds are generally very tolerant of children, the dog's behaviour should be noted during initial introductions. Greyhounds usually react in one of three ways:

- Dog approaches child and sniffs or licks the child. Shows interest in interacting with the child.
- Dog briefly sniffs the child then walks away.
- Dog does not approach the child or avoids contact.

A greyhound that does not approach the child or avoids contact is probably not suitable for a family with children.

As greyhounds often display more subtle body language compared to other breeds, it's important to closely supervise greyhounds with small children.

The behaviours listed below may be an indication that the greyhound is feeling threatened or uncomfortable around the child.

Half-Moon Eye

Notice the whites of this dog's eyes. You often see this when a dog is nervous or anxious about something.

Freezing

Dogs will typically freeze when they get worried by something approaching them. Watch for these tiny freezing moments when your dog is interacting with toys, food, or people. It's a sign of stress that should be heeded.

Yawning

Yawning isn't necessarily a sign of boredom. Dogs often yawn when they are a bit overwhelmed by things happening to them.

Lip licking

This is an easy one to see when you are looking for it. Dogs will often quickly lick their lips when they are nervous. Watch for tiny tongue flicks.

Introductions-

It's not unusual for new adult dogs to growl or even air snap (snapping as if to bite, only pulling up just short instead, resulting in a rather audible click of the teeth as the mouth snaps shut over air) in the first few days after initial introductions. This is normal behaviour for dogs when defending resources from another (generally lower) member of the pack. In cases where a dog is displaying dominance or resource guarding behaviour, it is important to reinforce the dog's position as being lower than everyone else in the house (this means not allowing dogs to sleep on childrens beds, not allowing dogs to steal food from children, etc.).

Never leave children and dogs together unsupervised. Almost every incident involving dog bites and children has occurred in the absence of an adult. The behaviour of a child can change rather dramatically when they are aware they are not being watched by an adult and all it takes is a few seconds for a child to scare or hurt a dog and an accident to occur.

Encourage your child to interact positively with the dog.

For example, have your child feed the dog or participate in training the dog to help the dog further understand the child's place in the family structure and, in addition to that, to help build the child's

confidence when handling the dog. Always ensure these interactions take place when both the child and the dog are calm and quiet.

Provide the dog with a quiet area it can go to be away from children.

A covered crate, spare room or a sheltered corner are all good options. It is important to help your child to understand that the dog's area is off limits, regardless of whether or not the dog is currently using this special area. Having such an area allows the dog to retreat from situations where it feels overwhelmed.

Supervise the child's handling of the dog and ensure this handling is appropriate.

Many dogs will feel threatened when being tightly hugged around the neck or backed into a corner by a well-meaning child so it is important to closely observe both the child's behaviour and the dog's reactions and to correct the child when their behaviour is not appropriate. Similar threatening gestures including the child attempting to kiss the dog's face (children are often at eye level with dogs and being approached so directly from the front can be seen as a threat), leaning over the dog when it is sitting or lying down or waking the dog up by touching it. Teach your child to call the dog's name to wake it and to refrain from approaching until the dog is standing.

Unfortunately, a sad majority of dog attacks involving children would have been entirely preventable with nothing more than a little common sense. If you have *any* doubts about your greyhound's behaviour around your child, do not hesitate to contact us. Problems are often much easier to fix if addressed promptly.

Sometimes, even when the greyhound is well behaved, other members of the family may not get along as well with the dog as hoped. Small children may initially be keen on the idea of getting a dog but find themselves scared by the large, skinny dog with the wire muzzle on its face or older people may be concerned about being knocked over by the dog if the dog is overly boisterous.

When dealing with other members of the family it's very important to take concerns seriously and discuss any issues to ensure all parties feel heard- ignoring concerns can lead to resentment of the dog, something that can ultimately lead to the dog being returned. That said, it's also worth discovering whether or not these concerns are realistic and if so, what can be done to minimise any risks or make the concerned party more comfortable.

Many smaller children find the wire muzzle to be a little unnerving so it may be helpful to change the child's perception of the muzzle; rather than telling the child that the muzzle is there to stop the dog from biting, perhaps instead refer to the muzzle as the dog's "nose protector", maintaining emphasis on the importance of the muzzle being on when the dog goes out without implying the dog is something to be scared of.

10. Frequently Asked Questions

Do Greyhounds need a lot of exercise?

Despite being bred to race, greyhounds generally require less exercise than most other breeds of dog. Exercise requirements are dependent on the individual dog but most are happy with a twenty to thirty minute walk per day. Exercise needs also vary greatly depending on age, younger dogs may require more stimulation to keep them happy. When applying for a dog, if energy levels are a concern, it's a good idea to note what exactly you're looking for.

Why do greyhounds have to be muzzled?

While greyhounds are no more likely to bite people or other dogs than most breeds of dog, they are required by law to be muzzled in Tasmania when in public (unless competing in agility, obedience or racing activities or being exhibited in show).

Muzzles are often unappealing to people but from our experience, the dogs don't seem to mind them too much and they do serve a few purposes and if used correctly, can be valuable training tools.

How big are Greyhounds?

Greyhounds (like most breeds) can vary considerably in size, especially between males and females. Male Greyhounds can vary between 67 – 72cm in height and approx. 30 – 35 kg in weight (in racing condition) and up to 45 kg after retirement. Bitches are generally smaller, usually measuring between 62 – 68 cm and 24 – 30 kg and up to 40 kg at pet weight. It's worth bearing in mind that although they are slender dogs, they can often be quite tall and this can result in "counter surfing" or stealing food or toys from higher surfaces that other breeds might not be able to reach.

How long do they live?

Greyhounds can live anywhere between ten and fifteen years, depending on a few factors. Keeping your greyhound's teeth clean, managing parasites appropriately and exercising caution when allowing your dog to run freely will contribute to a longer, happier life.

What do greyhounds eat?

Generally speaking, greyhounds do far better on decent quality food (supermarket brands are often insufficient in terms of meat content and nutrients). Raw meat such as kangaroo is often just as inexpensive as supermarket brands of commercial dog food and (providing the raw bones are included) have the added benefit of keeping your dog's teeth clean without the additional expense of artificial bones or dental chews. Regardless of food chosen, care should be taken to time meals well apart from exercise as greyhounds (like many deep-chested breeds) are more prone to bloat (an often lethal condition).

Can greyhounds be trained to obey commands?

In most cases, your greyhound will already be trained to walk on a lead without pulling excessively but some of them do respond well to additional training. Greyhounds can have difficulty with sitting (owing to their body shape) and due to the nature of the breed (most breeds of the hound group are bred to hunt with minimal human guidance) greyhounds can be independent thinkers (which can

make for more challenging training). As with any dog though, patience and positive reinforcement can achieve impressive results, even in older dogs or dogs that aren't especially motivated by food.

Why are inside homes preferred?

Unlike many other breeds, greyhounds do not have a double coat and also lack the body fat most dogs carry, leaving them more susceptible to extremes in weather. The greyhound's coat is generally thin, soft fur and this insulates poorly and as such, we prefer to adopt to homes where the dog would have access to sufficient shelter, whether this is inside the house or in a kennel built to meet the needs of a greyhound (bearing in mind their height and length).

Are Greyhounds okay with children and other pets?

Being lower energy dogs, greyhounds are generally quite good with children, although as with any other pet, supervision and educating your children are the most reliable ways to ensure they remain safe and the benefits of education extend outside the home to other dogs, too. In regards to other pets, this varies between dogs. All greyhounds adopted out by Greyhound Haven will be tested with small dogs to ensure safety but we can't provide guarantees regarding cats, poultry or small animals (rabbits, guinea pigs, etc) unless the individual dog has been tested and has been deemed safe to live with other species of companion animal. For this reason, it's very important to note on your application all other pets in your household- to ensure both their safety and the dog's.

Do they make good guard dogs?

Greyhounds aren't especially territorial dogs and they're also usually very quiet, unless excited; so, in general, their behaviour makes them unsuitable for the role. They may offer a deterrent value owing to their size and reputation but an intruder (particularly an intruder who behaves aggressively) is more likely to be avoided than confronted.

What is a sighthound?

A sighthound is any breed of dog bred to hunt by sight, rather than by smell (scenthounds, which include beagles and bloodhounds) and the group includes greyhounds, whippets, Italian greyhounds, borzoi, wolfhounds, salukis and Afghan hounds

How well do retired racers adapt to family life?

Most greyhounds adapt very well to life in a home but there are often noises, objects and surfaces that they've never experienced before. Generally speaking, they adjust to these new experiences with little trouble given time and understanding. Vacuum cleaners, lino floors, mirrors, glass and the like may be difficult for a greyhound initially but by the end of the fostering period (a minimum of six weeks in care) most dogs are comfortable enough to function normally around these things (those that aren't remain in care until they're able to cope acceptably).

What happens if the adoption doesn't work out?

Greyhound Haven will always take back any dog adopted out, regardless of the reason. If a dog is returned to us, we require the previous owner to fill in a short form outlining the reason for return. This form allows us to assess whether or not the dog is suitable for rehoming and after this form is returned, we complete another temperament and behaviour assessment before either returning the dog to foster care or humanely euthanizing.

In the case of some external factor being the reason for return (such as owners dying, moving to a home that did not allow pets, relationship break-ups), the dog will undergo a

behaviour assessment (to ensure it is still fit for rehoming) before being placed back in foster care.

Do females make better pets than males?

This generally depends on what exactly you're looking for in a dog and often, it's a better idea to look at temperament as a whole, rather than relying on gender alone.

Although greyhounds seem to display less sexual dimorphism in behaviour than other breeds of dog, there are some common behaviours that may influence suitability. In terms of dominance, neither gender is usually overly assertive and for this reason, they make great "second" dogs.

Female greyhounds may be slightly less tolerant of young children and treat them in a way similar to how they'd treat puppies whereas males are more likely to see small children as equals. These difference can be good or bad, depending on your situation- large male dog trying to play with very small children may result in accidental injuries or a female dog may find older, more active children to be a little *too* boisterous. We highly recommend that when applying for a dog, potential adopters take the ages and gender of their children into account, as well as taking the time to consider other gender related issues (marking of territory, size difference, etc).

Overall, males can often be a little more friendly and outgoing so it's also worth thinking about preferred temperament and providing as much information as possible on your application form.

Are greyhounds easy to house train?

Usually, greyhounds are very quick to toilet train and this has a lot to do with life in the racing environment.

In a kennel situation, dogs are let out several times a day to "empty out" and because this is so consistent, most greyhounds will never soil their kennels, meaning that toilet training for the home is often just a matter of helping the greyhound to understand that the house is its new kennel- once this is established, most greyhounds never have any issues with being clean in the house. Routine and consistency play a huge part in successful house training so after fostering and adoption, there is still obviously some responsibility on the new owner to maintain these things to avoid confusing the dog or disrupting correct behaviours.

Do greyhounds make good pets?

In our experience, greyhounds make great pets. Often very clean, quiet and easy dogs to care for, greyhounds are ideal for first time dog owners, allowing them a chance to learn how to manage behaviour with a breed that is easy to handle, not especially prone to any health issues and in terms of temperament, a lot more forgiving of mistakes than more assertive or driven breeds of dog. Greyhounds are also usually low maintenance in terms of grooming and require less exercise than many other breeds.

Why do greyhounds have to be kept on lead?

In Tasmania, in public places, it is the law that your greyhound be on a lead (no longer than two metres) unless racing, competing in agility trials or being shown. The person holding the lead must also be at least sixteen years of age.

This aside, owing to the nature of the breed (sighthounds), it is far safer to keep your greyhound on a lead as a greyhound that sees something it wants to chase cannot generally be stopped, placing the dog at risk of hurting itself or being hit by a car. Greyhounds also often have little road sense and can be easily startled, making them very difficult to catch if they become scared by a sudden noise- and in areas with traffic, the results of this are sadly quite predictable.

Even with extensive lead training, we still strongly recommend that greyhounds be walked on lead,

for everyone's safety.

Are greyhounds grey?

Usually, no. The grey colour (actually called blue) is a dilute of black and not an especially common colour in greyhounds.

Greyhounds come in a variety of colours- black, brindle (and all the variations of underlying colour), fawn, dun, blue (the grey colour) and white and within those basic colours, there is a huge amount of variation.

For example, fawn can be anything from a pale, biscuit colour all the way through to a dark red.

Are greyhounds forced to run?

Generally speaking, the short answer is "no".

Greyhounds are sighthounds and the instinct to chase moving objects is very strong in most of these dogs (dogs that display little interest in chasing rarely become racers).

Greyhounds may continue to chase the lure following an injury but the dogs are not "forced" to run by anything other than their own instinct.

Is greyhound racing cruel?

Racing dogs, in itself, is generally not cruel.

Issues with welfare most often arise from care standards, methods used to destroy dogs or the sheer number of dogs bred.

The issue of greyhound racing and the welfare of the dogs concerned has been debated but a *properly managed* industry, breeding responsibly, maintaining tracks and ensuring welfare standards are met by trainers and owners should be able to exist without any cruelty to the animals involved.

How old are greyhounds when they retire from racing?

Generally, most greyhounds are retired between eighteen months of age and four years of age.

In younger dogs, retirement is usually because the dog is not fast enough or interested enough to race. In older dogs, they are most often retired due to an injury that does not affect their quality of life but does impact on their ability to perform at the levels needed.

Are greyhounds prone to any particular health problems?

As a rule, greyhounds are very robust dogs but some conditions have been noted as being somewhat common.

Pannus (an eye condition) occurs and gastric torsion (also known as "bloat") is slightly more likely

11. About greyhounds

Breed History

Despite many assertions to the contrary, greyhounds are not an "ancient" breed of dog nor is the breed the oldest pure breed of dog. Recent DNA evidence suggests that greyhounds are actually closely related to herding breeds (breeds such as cattle dogs, border collies, corgis and German shepherds), rather than dogs like the saluki or sloughi (the dogs featured in art and literature that many assume to be greyhounds or their ancestors).

Although there are obviously many physical similarities between greyhounds and these older breeds of dog, these similarities are more than likely a result of the dogs being bred for the same purpose (and thus certain common traits are more desirable- for example, a deep chest and slender body), not unlike [convergent evolution](#). So, while the *type* of dog (sighthound) is certainly very old, the breed itself is not.

The modern greyhound is descended from dogs registered in the 18th century in the United Kingdom and despite many theories, the exact origins of the name remain unknown.

Racing life

The greyhound's racing life (despite many misconceptions spread by animal rights groups) is often a pleasant enough existence. Racing greyhounds must be cared for correctly to perform well (and make money) so there is little incentive for breeders or trainers to mistreat their dogs or starve them.

Racing greyhounds receive a lot more exercise than many pet dogs (pet dogs that often live lonely lives in their owner's backyards as furry lawn ornaments) and greyhounds that race are often far better catered to nutritionally- although the food given isn't always the best for their dental health. Training a greyhound to race does not involve live prey as suggested by animal rights groups (this is illegal in every state of Australia) and generally speaking, there is no real need anyway- greyhounds are sighthounds and it is in their nature to chase (and those who show no interest cannot usually be trained into having that interest).

Our greatest concern regarding the racing industry is not the treatment of the dogs (who are often treated far better than many pets) but the numbers of dogs bred and the outcomes for all of these dogs after their racing careers are over. A large number of these dogs are put down because the owners either do not know about the rehoming options available or because the waiting lists or costs to enter their dogs into these programs are too prohibitive (both things which can be eased to some degree by public support of rehoming programs).

Exercise requirements

While a greyhound that is currently racing may require longer periods of daily exercise to improve fitness and endurance, many pet greyhounds do fine with a short daily walk or a run around the yard and due to their metabolisms, many greyhounds will actually begin to lose weight if fed on pet quality food and exercised in a way more appropriate for working breeds of dog (working breeds are generally bred to be able to work long hours at a lower intensity whereas a greyhound- even in hunting- will only work a few minutes at a time, at a much higher level of intensity).

Training and focused walking (where the dog's attention is on the handler, rather than on other things going on around it) are also important for any breed of dog and provide valuable mental stimulation- something that also tires the dog out and may help prevent destructive behaviour due to boredom.

It is also worth noting that many greyhounds have quite soft pads on their paws (racing greyhounds only run on sand so the pads do not thicken much) and extended periods of walking on concrete may actually cause the dog discomfort.

Temperament

Bred originally to hunt in small groups, greyhounds are quite a dog-social breed and many appreciate the company of other dogs in their homes or, if no other dogs, at least a person or two. Generally speaking, greyhounds (although quiet and well-behaved) do not tend to do quite so well in homes where they are by themselves for most of the day and because of this, some can be destructive or suffer separation anxiety (although this does seem to respond quite well to training and treatment).

Greyhounds are also quite a sensitive breed of dog, disliking loud noises and rough behaviour and so training methods that involve physical correction (flicking the dog's ears, hitting, shouting or other loud, sudden sounds or actions) may upset the dog and cause it to "shut down" (where the dog becomes very unresponsive to external stimuli) or become overly timid. While most greyhounds cope well with small children, some greyhounds are too reactive to the often loud noises that children make and are simply unsuitable for that sort of environment.

Overall, greyhounds are very gentle, quiet dogs, preferring to cuddle on the couch or lean quietly and watch, rather than expend any energy (unless food is involved- some greyhounds will eat until they vomit, if given the chance).

Grooming

Greyhounds are possibly one of the easiest breeds of dog to groom. With single coats (rather than double coats like many other breeds of dog) of short, fine hair, brushing a few times a week with a Zoom Groom or something similar is usually enough to keep the coat in good condition.

Another advantage of greyhounds is that owing to the frequent handling many racing greyhounds receive (from quite a young age), they are often more accepting of grooming and will stand quietly and allow themselves to be handled.

Due to the single coat they have, greyhounds are also less prone to the doggy smell common to many other breeds and they shed very minimally, even in the seasons when other breeds of dog often drop coat (Autumn and Spring).

12. Training and behaviour.

Although greyhounds generally have what is considered a "soft" temperament (ie, they are usually submissive towards humans, will not attempt to control situations and are very compliant), they are also hounds and because of this, they are often quite independent thinkers (a trait necessary for a dog that moves out of command range from its handler in work) and will not obey commands that do not make immediate sense to them.

Additionally, greyhounds are quite sensitive to correction so this combination can making training a pet greyhound challenging.

Behaviour

A lot of greyhound behaviour is either instinctive or habit, learned from the kennel environment. Although they spend a large portion of their lives living with trainers and being "trained", this training rarely includes basic obedience and manners (sort of like the difference between an athlete training to run and someone being trained for a job; one is physical, the other is mental) so greyhounds straight from racing may be easier in some respects (such as house training and behaviour with other dogs) while being more difficult in other respects (for example, stealing food). When looking at behaviour in greyhounds, it's useful to look at the behaviour in the context of kennel environment- a greyhounds that eats everything left out if not necessarily a badly behaved greyhound, it's just doing what it has always known to be right- in a kennel situation, the only food the greyhound will ever encounter will be its own, so, to a greyhound, all food left sitting around is intended for him.

When managing behavioural problems, it's also worth bearing in mind that while greyhounds may at times not seem very bright (they're admittedly prone to falling over and running into things, despite their elegant and graceful reputation), greyhounds are actually very intelligent dogs and will learn things that you might not necessarily want them to learn. This means that consistency is very important and rules need to be enforced by all members of the family- an exception made here or there by a certain family member is usually not forgotten and will be gently pushed for again until the greyhound has effectively trained the human to comply (which is not an ideal situation).

When you adopt your greyhound, you will be provided with a summary of the dog's behaviour, outlining any areas that we feel may need continuing work (although these are usually quite minimal) and management methods will be discussed to ensure the dog has the best possible chance of learning to be a great member of the family.

Training

Although certain behaviours may be difficult to teach your greyhound (such as sitting on command), many of the basics needed to ensure a well-mannered dog are very simple and most greyhounds accept them readily.

Because of their soft natures, greyhounds learn best through positive training and being a fairly food motivated breed, this is quite easy to do (especially with methods such as clicker training, more information on clicker training can be found [here](#)).

Ideally, your greyhound should learn to understand:

Wait - A command given when the dog's food is put down, this command also helps your dog to learn the difference between things it can have and the things it can't.

Bed/on your bed - A greyhound that can be moved around without trouble is going to be a lot easier to manage around visitors, small children and in situations where you need the dog to move to a given position and you cannot physically move the dog yourself. It can also be used as a starting position for teaching a **sit** or **stay**.

Greyhound Haven Tasmania

Greyhound care guide

Heel - For many dogs, the difference between whether they are walked or spend their lives in the backyard comes down to their ability to walk nicely on lead. Heel is an especially valuable skill to learn and will help with learning other positive behaviours also.