

Greyhounds and other dogs

Greyhounds spend their life in the company of other greyhounds and have met few, if any, other breeds of dogs prior to coming into the rehoming program. Initially, being exposed to the wide variety of shapes, sizes, fluffy coats, flat faces, and play styles of different breeds can be confronting and they are not always sure how to interact.

Some hounds take all these new faces in their stride, some are playful, others over excited and not sure what to do, others are scared and would rather be left alone. You'll likely notice that when you meet other greyhounds your dog lights up as they recognise 'one of their own kind'.

Like people, dogs are individuals, and while some dogs are 'disco dogs' and want to party and hang out with every dog they meet, others are 'library dogs' and would rather catch up with a few close buddies or hang out with their people. It's important to recognise because even though you might enjoy socialising at the dog park, your hound might prefer to be absolutely anywhere else! Most greyhounds, in part due to their background living exclusively with their own breed, are 'library dogs'.

Below is some information on integrating a new hound into the home with an existing dog, meeting other dogs, small dog greetings, and body language to watch out for.

A note on prey drive (a dog's motivation to chase):

Greyhounds belong to the sighthound group of dogs and were historically bred as hunting companions and more recently for the sport of racing. They have been selectively bred to sight and chase prey and it feels good for them to engage in this behaviour, much the same as it feels good for collies to herd, terriers to bite, retrievers to fetch, beagles to follow a scent, or huskies to pull. It is important to recognise that an element of prey drive is to be expected with this breed and to take the steps to keep others safe.

Multi-dog households: settling in a new family member

It can take time for any dogs to build a relationship with dogs, especially when living together, and we want to set everyone up for success. Two key things you can do to keep everyone safe are:

1. Be present

There's absolutely no rush for them to be best friends straight away; relationships take time to develop, and you will need to facilitate this to ensure everyone is comfortable and safe. While the dogs are developing a relationship, treat interactions as "training sessions" where the dogs have your full attention. Otherwise the hound is crated, behind a baby gate, outdoors etc so they don't have access to the other dog.

2. Manage resources

The three most frequent triggers of conflict between dogs are excitement, the presence of food/toys or proximity to owners.

- **Always feed dogs separately**, this includes edible chews or filled Kong toys. Ideally out of sight from each other, either one dog outside, in a crate or a separate room. Food is a highly valuable resource and it can cause unnecessary stress and conflict to have dogs eating in proximity. Remove empty food bowls before having the dogs enter the same space as these too can be a point of conflict.
- Remove toys unless you are there to supervise, at least initially.

- Ensure dogs have their own spaces where they can have a break from each other if needed. Dog beds, crates, and human furniture like sofas and beds, can be valuable areas and dogs may not like to share with each other. Watch for stiffening body language when the other dog approaches.
- Keep the energy levels low while the dogs are getting used to each other.
- Your attention may be the most valuable resource of all. If one dog keeps heading the other dog off by blocking them with their body, or stiffening up when they try to approach you, this may be an indication that they are feeling threatened.

Introducing your greyhound to other dogs:

- Ensure your greyhound is wearing a plastic basket muzzle when being introduced to new dogs or playing off lead, as well as a martingale collar or well fitted harness.
- We suggest you avoid off lead dog parks as there is an unnecessary risk of your dog feeling threatened or overwhelmed by unfamiliar dogs rushing up to them and having a negative experience. Instead try to seek out confident, dog social dogs belonging to friends or family that you may already be familiar with to introduce your greyhound to. If possible, introduce larger dogs initially, such as Labrador sized, then work down to Spaniel sized, Jack Russell sized, then finally smaller fluffy dogs as these are more likely to cause your greyhound to be over excited and exhibit signs of predation.
- Take your time, gradual positive exposure to different dogs, even when the dogs do not greet, will be far more beneficial, rather than rushed over excited greetings.
- You can begin introductions on lead and start with a short period where both dogs are at enough distance from each other where they can remain calm. After this walk alongside each other (parallel lead walking) allowing the dogs to turn to look at each other but keeping them focused on their handlers or sniffing and exploring, rewarding calm behaviours with treats, or verbal praise.
- If the dogs are calm, they can meet on lead, keep the leads nice and loose, let the dogs sniff each other for 3 seconds. Rather than putting tension on the lead to pull the dogs away (as this can cause the dogs to react) try to encourage them away from each other with an excited voice, or fast movement like you're off somewhere interesting, or with a treat.
- When greeting unknown dogs in public you can follow this rule - "1 in every 3 dogs you meet you will meet on lead for 3 sniffs then you're done. 1 in every 3 dogs you meet you will completely ignore." This helps to prevent the expectation that every dog your hound meets they will be able to say hello to and play with.

Introducing greyhounds specifically to small dogs:

- Ensure the greyhound is wearing a securely fitted plastic basket muzzle.
- Parallel walk at a safe distance (2-5m) for a few sessions until the dogs can do this calmly. Then alternate between parallel walking and "truck and trailer" with the small dog having time

both in front and behind greyhound, gradually closing the distance until they are nearly touching.

- If the small dog is comfortable and the greyhound is interested in greeting (refer to body language information on the second page) allow this carefully (short lead, very brief interaction for up to 3 seconds, move the greyhound away from the small dog not vice versa) then make a really big fuss of the greyhound with treats and pats after a successful interaction.
- Progress to having the small dog off lead if they are more confident that way, then have the greyhound on a longer lead on so they have more freedom, allowing dogs to greet but only for 3 seconds.
- Progress to having both dogs off lead in a confined space or dropping the greyhound's lead so it's trailing behind them.
- From there you can start increasing excitement and activity levels with both dogs while being mindful that the small dog running or vocalising will likely be a trigger for the greyhound and it is best to keep interactions in a smaller space to begin, then repeat this process outdoors.
- Another strategy is having the greyhound shut in their crate with the small dogs walking around the room. Drop treats through the roof of the crate for calm or appropriate body language, then progress to feeding the small dog treats near the crate (provided no one resource guards their food or crate) or just alternate feeding them treats for being in the presence of one another.

BODY LANGUAGE:

Cut off signals: when two dogs meet, cut off signals are behaviours that are requests for additional space or a reduction in stress levels of the meeting. These are used to avoid conflict.

- Passing glances
- Sniffs ground
- Turns body away with loose spine
- Scratch
- Lip or nose lick
- Yawn
- Shake off

Signs of interest in greeting:

- Soft eyes, slow blinking
- Ears relaxed/neutral
- Play bow
- Sniff previous location where the other dog was
- Sniff rear of the other dog
- Air scenting
- Dogs tend to approach side on or in an arc rather than head on. Dog greets with a loose body posture (no tension in body), soft open mouth and neutral ears. Dogs usually sniff noses then move to the anogenital region.
- Dog may be more alert, standing taller, tail up higher, looking more directly, mouth closed, eyes more intense with more pupil dilation.

- The dog disengages easily. Dog may disengage and return to handler, explore the environment, or show signs of wanting to play (play bow, loose and wriggly body, huffing (sort of like snorting), low sweeping or circular wagging tail, popping (jumping side to side)).
- When playing taking turns (one dog chases then the other or one lays on their back then they switch places)

Warning signs of predation indicating that things have escalated / unsafe interactions:

- Intense, fixed staring unable to take their eyes off the small dog
- Licking lips, salivating, teeth chattering
- Neck arched, stiff tall stance, tail up, standing over the small dog
- Stalking
- High pitched whining/squeaking while looking at the small dog
- Pawing at the small dog or bunting the small dog with their nose
- Barking if restricted from reaching the small dog