

## Multi-dog households: settling in a new canine family member

It takes time to integrate a new dog into the family and for the dogs to build a relationship with each other, below are guidelines to keep everyone safe. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us.

### **SUPERVISION:**

For at least the first three weeks while the dog is learning your routine, make use of indoor playpens, crates, and baby gates, and unless you are directly watching both dogs, keep them separated. This way you can observe all interactions to ensure there's no unnecessary conflict.

It is worth noting that non-injurious squabbles between dogs are normal and are their way of communicating and resolving conflict. You can expect to see the odd lip curl, growl, or snap to say, "that's mine!" or "give me some space!"

However, these squabbles can be avoided by integrating new dogs slowly into the household; the better their initial impressions of each other are, the more likely they are to have a healthy long-term relationship. So set them up for success by having them coexist on opposite sides of a gate and gradually increase time together over the first few weeks to set them up to have a good friendship.

### **FOOD:**

Food is a highly valuable resource; it can cause unnecessary stress to have dogs eating next to each other and can result in fights causing serious, sometimes fatal injuries.

*During their racing lives, most greyhounds will always have been fed separately from other greyhounds. It may take months for dogs to be safe and comfortable eating in close proximity, and some dogs may never learn to tolerate it.*

**Always feed dogs separately with a barrier so that they can't reach each other.** e.g., one dog outside and another inside with the door shut, in separate rooms with a door shut, either side of a shut baby gate, or one dog shut in a crate. In addition to being separated with a barrier, some dogs are more relaxed if they can't see other dogs when they are eating. This applies to feeding at mealtimes, edible chews, raw meaty bones, and food dispensing toys.

Remove empty food bowls, empty food dispensing toys, or half eaten chews before letting the dogs back in together as they can still fight over these.

### **TOYS:**

Often dogs do not want to share toys with their new housemate, and giving dogs toys together can result in fights causing serious, and sometimes fatal injuries. Until you know how interested your dog is in toys, remove all toys from shared areas and put them away. Make use of indoor playpens, crates, and baby gates so you can safely give dogs toys separately on their own or you can play with them individually.

*Many greyhounds will not be used to playing with toys, and certainly not playing with other dogs with toys. This is something they may need to learn, with careful supervision over time.*

### **BED AREAS:**

Often dogs do not want to share their beds, sleep near each other, or be pestered while they are resting. Make use of indoor playpens, crates, and baby gates so you can give the dogs some down time away from each other and make sure they're both getting plenty of sleep.

*During their racing lives, most greyhounds will have had their own bed and sleeping space separate from other dogs. This can mean they initially feel the need to defend their bed or sleeping space from others.*

### **TIME**

Remember, it is much better to take it slow and avoid incidents, than to have to repair a relationship if there is a serious altercation. Hopefully your dogs will have a long and happy life together, so it is worth being cautious and taking a few weeks or months at the beginning to ensure they have the best chance of success.