

# Retired Greyhounds

INFORMATION SHEET

[www.gbgb.org.uk](http://www.gbgb.org.uk)

## Welcoming your greyhound

### Getting ready for their arrival

**Before bringing your greyhound home, it is important to get a few things ready for them. The information below will guide you through what you, as a responsible owner, need to do before or soon after you welcome your new canine companion.**



### Lead and collar

Greyhounds wear a different collar to other dogs. This is wider and 'fish shaped' because the shape of a greyhound's head and neck is narrow – a normal shaped collar would exert too much pressure on their neck.

Some greyhounds can slip out of their collars by wiggling backwards, so ensure it is properly fitted before heading out for a walk. It should go behind the ears at the thinnest part of the neck and should be tight enough to get two fingers between the collar and the neck.

Never use an extendable lead to walk your greyhound. This can be potentially dangerous if your dog decides to run. Remember, it is your responsibility to always be in control of your greyhound when out in public and to clean up after them!

### Muzzle

While you do not need to muzzle your greyhound forever, it is strongly recommended that they wear one until you are confident about their behaviour around other breeds of dog, cats and any wildlife they might come across when out and about on their walks.

The homing centre or trainer that you are receiving your greyhound from should provide you with a 'box' type muzzle and should show you how to fit this correctly. This type of muzzle gives the greyhound plenty of room to pant in and drink through. Greyhounds are used to wearing box muzzles during their racing careers and associate it with going for a walk, or the excitement of racing, so it should not be a negative experience for them. Wearing a box muzzle does not mean your greyhound is aggressive; it means you are being a proactive and safety-conscious owner.

A box muzzle may also be helpful in other situations. For example, you may wish to use one to introduce them to other dogs during play meets, or to stop them picking up or eating things they shouldn't during a walk. If your greyhound must wear a bandage at any point, a box muzzle can also be useful to stop the dog from chewing it.



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### Indoor kennel



Many owners decide to set up an indoor kennel for their greyhound (also known as a crate) which must be of an appropriate size. This is a safe, comfortable place for your greyhound to switch off and relax for short periods of time. You must always make sure your greyhound has access to an adequate supply of water whilst they are in their kennel. The door should be left open, so they are able to access the space when they want to. They should not be shut in the kennel for extended periods of time.

While they come in various shapes and sizes, an indoor kennel should be big enough for your greyhound to stand up, turn around in and lie down comfortably. The most common type is a metal cage with doors at the end and side which often have a removable plastic base so they can be easily cleaned.

It is important to introduce your greyhound to their indoor kennel space slowly so they have positive associations with it. To begin training your greyhound to use their kennel, place their favourite bedding in it and use it as a place to give them treats. Take their training slowly and, in time, they should go in and out of their crate as they please to relax.

### Other items:



Water and food bowl – some owners prefer to use ‘raised’ bowls on a stand to elevate their greyhound’s eating position.



Soft, comfortable bedding both inside and outside their indoor kennel (if you’re using one).



Enrichment items and suitable toys for them to play with and safely chew – e.g. Kong toys (the ‘strong’ type, usually black coloured, is recommended); it is advisable to always supervise greyhounds when playing with toys.



A suitable coat for cold and/or wet weather (you can find more about caring for your greyhound in extreme weather in the ‘Caring for Your Greyhound’ pages).



Clean towels for cleaning and drying their feet after any muddy walks or drying after baths.

### Identification

You are required by law to ensure your greyhound has suitable identification.

#### ID tag

Your greyhound must always wear an ID tag/disc on a collar when out in public. This must include your name and your address (house number and postcode).

#### Updated microchip details

All racing greyhounds are registered with GBGB’s microchip database – Microdog ID. It is important to update your greyhound’s details when you receive your greyhound so the correct contact name and address is attached to the microchip.

If you wish to transfer your greyhound’s microchip details to another DEFRA compliant database – e.g. Petlog, PETrack – you should contact the database directly: <https://www.gov.uk/get-your-dog-cat-microchipped>

If you require any assistance, please contact the GBGB Welfare Department on 020 7822 0900.

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### Check your surroundings

Before you bring your greyhound home, you should double check for any potential dangers in your home or garden to check they are 'greyhound safe'.

#### For example:



Ensure any electrical wires are raised from the floor and/or safely away from where your greyhound can reach them while they become accustomed to their environment, and until you are confident they are not going to chew them;



Stick a strip of coloured tape on any large glass doors (e.g. patio or conservatory doors) while your greyhound is getting used to their new home to make them more visible;



Check your garden is secure and there are no gaps in fences, low walls or low fences that they might be able to climb over;



Fill in any holes in your garden (caused by rabbits, moles, etc.) which your greyhound's legs may slip in when playing or running around;



Check that you do not have any plants or other household items within reach of your greyhound that can be harmful to them. The list below is not exhaustive, so it is worth doing some extra homework on potentially harmful substances:

- Alphachloralose rodenticides
- Anticoagulant rodenticides (e.g. difenacoum, bromadiolone, coumatetralyl)
- Antifreeze
- Anti-inflammatory medications (e.g. Diclofenac sodium, Naproxen, Ibuprofen etc.) in creams/tablets/liquid forms
- Batteries
- Blue-green algae
- Psoriasis cream containing for example Calcipotriene, Calcipotriol, Calcitriol, etc.
- Cannabis
- Cement powder
- Chocolate / theobromine
- Caffeine (e.g. coffee)
- Creosote
- Grapes/raisins/currants/sultanas
- Household products (e.g. bleach, drain and oven cleaners, detergent capsules for washing clothes, etc.)
- Other human medicines, e.g. Loperamide (anti-diarrhoea drug), Salbutamol (e.g. Ventolin inhalers), Baclofen, 5-hydroxytryptophan, etc.





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- Slug bait (e.g. Metaldehyde, ferric phosphate)
- Various pesticides and garden products (e.g. Lawn feed, weed and moss killers, Glyphosate based herbicides, Insecticides, Paraquat, Pyrethrin-based insecticides, Bonemeal and other fertilisers, etc.)
- White spirit / barbecue lighter fluid
- Xylitol (E967) – this is a sugar substitute. It is a sugar-free sweetener that may be found in, for example, chewing gums, sugar-free sweets, oral rinses, toothpastes and some human vitamin/mineral supplements and human medications. The ingredients list of a product could help you check for the presence of xylitol as it may be listed by its food additive code E967.

If you believe your greyhound may have accidentally consumed any of the above, contact your veterinary practice immediately for advice.

### Register with a vet

Your greyhound will need to be registered with a veterinary practice close to your home. This will be where you take your greyhound for routine health care and advice – such as booster vaccinations or dental check-ups – but also in the event they ever require emergency treatment.



All veterinary surgeons must be registered by the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS). Follow this link to find your nearest vet practice: [findavet.rcvs.org.uk/home/](http://findavet.rcvs.org.uk/home/)

When they retire their greyhound, GBGB-licensed trainers are required to provide the homing centre, or the new owner of their greyhound, with an overview of the greyhound's individual veterinary and behavioural history. This includes the dates of their latest vaccinations, flea and worming treatments and, if applicable, details of any previous injuries or medications.

If you are unsure of any details regarding your greyhound's health history, please contact the homing centre or the greyhound's racing trainer directly.

### Pet insurance

As a responsible owner, you must ensure your greyhound gets the veterinary treatment it requires should it have an accident, become injured or develop an illness. As veterinary bills can be very expensive, you may wish to consider getting pet insurance. There are various plans on the market with different limits of cover, so it is worth shopping around to find the best policy for you.

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### Bringing them home

When bringing your greyhound home for the first time, remember this is a brand-new experience for them with different sights, sounds and smells. They will likely not have spent much time in a domestic home before and will instead be used to the routine and structure of life in a kennel environment. Remember to take things slowly and keep in mind that this is a big change for them!



When you first arrive home, we recommend you take your greyhound directly to the garden or their designated toilet spot. Hopefully, they will relieve themselves and you should actively praise them for doing so by saying their name, "good boy/girl" and by giving them a small treat as a reward. Keep repeating this process every hour or so for their first day and then get into a routine of letting them out regularly and before or straight after meals.

You can take them around on a lead first so they can calmly view their new home. After ten minutes or so take the lead off and allow them to explore on their own. Give them time to sniff and discover their new surroundings and introduce them to their new bed area and indoor kennel if using one. Make sure their water bowl is placed somewhere where they can easily access it.

While it might be tempting to invite friends and family members to your home to meet your new greyhound, it is advisable to keep visits from guests to a minimum during their first few days at home (or until they seem settled) so that they can become accustomed to their new environment and their family unit in a calm way.

As with any dog entering a new environment, it may be that your greyhound will be a little anxious in their first few days. They may not have much of an appetite, or may pace, pant or even display some destructive behaviour such as chewing. Be patient with your greyhound while they adjust. Every greyhound is different and will settle in their own time – remember to take things slowly and before you know it, they will be right at home.



