

# PET PREP

## 6-Week Guide

### Why does my greyhound behave this way?

How an individual dog behaves in any given moment is determined by:

1. The internal environment. This includes the dog's genetics, early life experiences, its learning history, physical health and mood.

2. The external environment. This includes the dog's physical environment (what can be seen, smelled, heard, tasted, felt) and the behaviour of the humans and other animals around.



### Can I change my dog's behaviour?

Yes! There are several ways to influence a dog's internal and external environment and through that, their behaviour.

Good dogmanship involves working with your dog in such a way where the dog is set up for success. For transitioning a greyhound from racing to retirement, good dogmanship means preparing the dog for all the potential experiences that will come with living as a pet. Some general suggestions for setting your greyhound up for success are detailed in the following table.

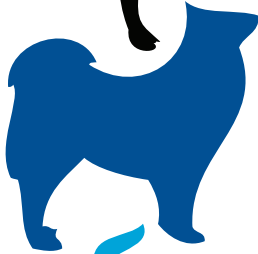
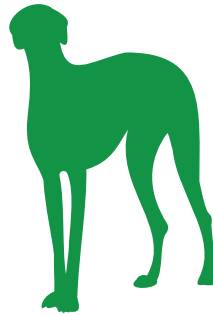
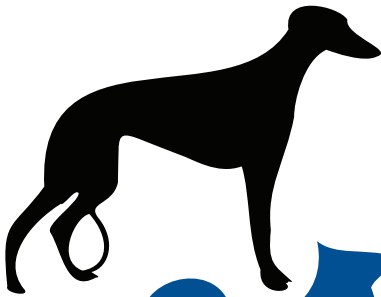
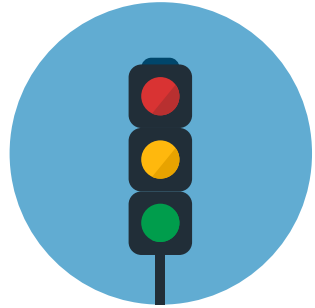
# Using good dogmanship with your greyhound

PRINCIPLE	WHAT TO DO	WHAT TO AVOID
<b>CONSISTENCY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Establish a routine with your dog</li> <li>- Use the same communication e.g. saying "bed" when encouraging them to go to their bed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Feeding, toileting and interacting with your dog at unpredictable times</li> <li>- Introducing changes suddenly instead of at your dog's own pace</li> </ul>
<b>POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Give treats and praise when it is calm and socially appropriate</li> <li>- Reward your dog when you are giving it a new experience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Aversive training tools such as choke chains or shock collars</li> <li>- Exposing dogs to new things and not pairing the experience with something enjoyable</li> </ul>
<b>SAFETY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Expose to new things gradually where it can remain calm</li> <li>- Provide an exit from situations when your greyhound is uncomfortable</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Expose your dog to new things suddenly without giving it time to habituate (get used to) to change</li> <li>- Intentionally yelling or scaring your dog</li> </ul>
<b>SPENDING TIME TOGETHER</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Take your dog on regular walks in suburban areas</li> <li>- Give your dog some exposure to inside your house while you do chores or watch TV</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Leave your dog alone without providing them with something to do in your absence</li> <li>- Ignore your dog when together</li> </ul>
<b>BUILD ON WHAT THEY HAVE LEARNED</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Expose your dog to new things, increasing the intensity each time</li> <li>- Introduce your dog to other greyhounds at first and then move on to meeting other large/medium breeds and finally smaller breeds</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Give your dog experiences with no prior settling-in</li> <li>- Introduce to small dogs when they have not had a chance to meet other greyhounds or large breeds first</li> </ul>

# Gradual exposure to domestic environments

Like with people, greyhounds learn best when in a relaxed state and using a gradual approach.

It's best to use a traffic light system to maximise learning and recognise when it's a good time to take a step back and try again later. Setting your greyhound up for success will mean exposing your dogs to new things and keeping them in the 'green' zone, taking note/slowing down when in the 'yellow' zone and avoiding the 'red' zone as much as possible.



**STAY IN THE GREEN ZONE WITH DOG INTERACTIONS**

**GRADUALLY INTRODUCE SMALLER BREED DOGS**



# GREEN ZONE

*Able to think and learn*



- Relaxed muscles
- Open/loose jaw
- Loose tail wag
- Neutral ear position
- Well-balanced movement
- Able to sniff and explore
- Slowly investigating its environment
- Bouncy and exaggerated movements when playing
- Readily engages with humans

# YELLOW ZONE

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## Take note and slow things down

- Some body stiffness and stiff movement
- Lip licking or repeated licking towards humans
- Whites of the eyes visible (sometimes called 'whale eye')
- Staring
- Body shaking
- Low tail (not tucked)
- No longer eating treats
- Increased panting (without high temperature environment or vigorous exercise)
- Lowered body posture
- High/stiff tail with possible slight wag
- Jumping up and overall increased activity

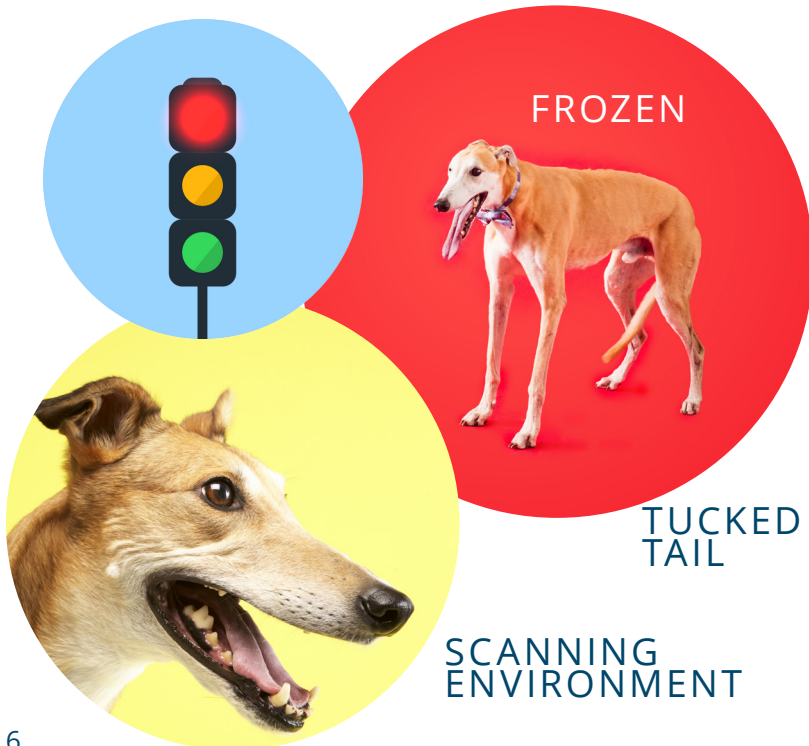


# RED ZONE

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## Stop and take your dog out of the situation

- Growling, snapping or (in extreme circumstances) biting
- Hypervigilance (constantly scanning its surroundings)
- Tense entire body
- Closed mouth
- Staring and unable to distract
- Covering
- Retreating
- Urination/defaecation while laying down
- Freezing and/or appearing 'shut down' (glazed eyes and unresponsive)



# Examples of gradual exposure

There are several things that an ex-racer will need to become familiar with to succeed in its forever home. Using the traffic light system is a helpful way to introduce your greyhound to new things in a way that keeps it learning (green zone) and avoids fear and anxiety (red zone). Successful

exposure means starting at the lowest possible intensity and only increasing the difficulty if the dog remains in the green zone. The intensity shouldn't be increased in the same session. Again, the dog's behaviour should dictate the pace. Examples of different stages of exposure are detailed below.

Exposure	Level 1**	Level 2	Level 3
<b>Meeting other dogs*</b>	Other greyhounds	Other large breeds	Medium breeds and then smaller breeds
<b>Time alone</b>	5 minutes alone	20 minutes alone	1 hour alone
<b>Inside the house</b>	One room with outside access	Multiple rooms with outside trips	Extended time inside busy rooms (e.g. kitchen)
<b>Walking on leash</b>	Short trips around the property	Walking in a quiet suburban area	Walking in a busy suburban area

\* Dogs that show unsafe behaviour (e.g. attempting to bite) with other dogs should be observed by a veterinary behaviourist for review.

\*\* Dogs that cannot be exposed to level 1 tasks without showing 'red zone' behaviours should be reviewed and treated by a veterinarian with experience in animal behaviour and welfare.

# PET PREP program for Ex-Racing Greyhounds

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The following program is intended to be used in conjunction with the above traffic light system. The stages are a guideline only and all instances of 'yellow zone' and 'red zone' should be used as a sign to take things slower.

## Week 1

Write a list of things that make your dog in the green zone and things that lead to your dog being in the yellow or red zone. Are any of the things that cause your dog to be in the 'yellow' or 'red' zone? What are the things that your dog would likely have to deal with if rehomed living as a household pet? If so, you can start to think about how you would use gradual exposure as in the table above to help it get used to those things.

Practice getting your greyhound used to walking on the lead. Clip a regular lead to your greyhound's house collar and move slowly around an area that your dog is used to. Try to give enough length so your dog is able to walk on a loose lead.

Practice getting your dog used to being touched. Gently pat and scratch your dog and then walk away. If it follows you and is in the 'green' zone (comfortable and relaxed), continue patting. If your dog doesn't follow you and appears 'yellow' or 'red', toss it a treat and move further away.

### **Reward good social behaviour.**

Give your dog a treat for walking past a dog that it is already familiar with. If your dog seems tense or attempts to chase or injure another dog, repeat from much further away and only move closer when your dog is calm and relaxed.

### **Enrichment Level 1**

Give your dog access to a space with natural scents. Examples are herbs, native flora and grass.



## Week 2

Continue to do things that make your dog show 'green' behaviour. There is no limit if your dog appears to be bright and happy, although it helps to let your dog 'come down' from exciting experiences with something to chew in a quiet area.

Now that your dog is used to being on lead. Start going for walks in quiet areas around your property and local street.

### **Gradually increase time alone.**

Get your dog used to spending time alone in an environment similar to an average backyard (fully fenced). When being left in these places, it should have access to comfortable bedding, things to chew (such as toys), a treat, water and shade. Gradually get it used to longer and longer periods alone.

Now your dog can begin to meet calm and quiet people at home. As you did with the handling section, people can meet your dog then leave after giving them a gentle pat. Tossing treats away from you can help to get your dog used to moving away when it has had enough of socialising.

Practice rewarding your dog with a treat when you call its name and looks at you. Do this for 2 minutes every day.

### **Enrichment Level 2**

Give your dog access to the same space with natural scents. Begin adding objects from within your house for your dog to sniff and check out. Some good things to start with are items of clothing, shoes and small pieces of furniture. Only add one new thing at a time. Give your dog a chewable treat so they can learn to relax while there are new things around them.



## Week 3

Now you can begin to introduce your dog to indoor household environments. The first level of exposure should be the dog having access to a room that is attached to a secure outside space. This lets it explore at its own pace and exit when needed. Provide it with plenty of treats to help it stay in the green zone.

Continue to let your dog have access to backyard environments. Try to leave it alone there for gradually longer periods.

You can now start walking your dog in your local streets and beyond, trying to keep the areas quiet and filled with plenty of grass and plants to sniff. Now is a good time to introduce your dog to other greyhounds while on these walks, shy dogs can learn from more confident canine friends.

A useful skill to begin practising is the U-turn. Practice walking your dog on lead in a particular direction, then lure it with a treat so it heads in the opposite direction. This will help your dog be able to walk away from situations that could become unsafe (e.g. off lead dogs).

### Enrichment Level 3

Continue to introduce new objects (ideally household items) for your dog to check out. Practice scattering treats and smelly dog-safe food (like grated cheese) around the area to encourage it to sniff and explore.



## Week 4

You can begin gradually letting your dog into indoor spaces with the door shut. As always keep these experiences brief and provide plenty of treats before gradually increasing the time your dog is indoors. Like backyard time, dogs should have access to toys, water and comfortable bedding while inside.

Continue to leave your dog in a backyard environment. This can also tie in with the enrichment activities.

Your dog can start meeting more people and, if they are doing well, children. Continue to encourage people to gently pat your dog (if the dog approaches them) and then toss a treat away so the dog gets used to approaching and moving away from different people.

Continue to walk your dog in public areas, graduating to sports parks (not during sports!) and dog-safe reserves if your dog continues to be green.

Practice doing those U-turns when your dog is going on their walks.

Now you can begin introducing your dog to other breeds of dogs. If your dog has not met any other breeds before, it's best that these meetings are done at a distance and only allowed to progress to direct meetings if both dogs appear calm and social.

## Enrichment Level 4

Continue to add things to an outside space for your dog to sniff and check out, now you have 'snuffle garden' to introduce your dog to new things in with plenty of normal scents that your dog likes mixed in. You can make things interesting by hiding treats in empty cardboard boxes or similar.



## Week 5

Introduce your dog to new rooms in your house, especially those with more activity. Again, make sure you use a gradual approach and have treats available.

Now that your dog is used to being indoors, you can let it meet guests who visit your house. Use the treat tossing method to keep things brief and positive.

Continue to walk your dog in public, going to busier areas than in the previous weeks OR going for slightly longer walks.

## Week 6

Now you can think about having your dog visit homes different to your own. Keep things low key and try to keep your dog in the green zone.

Go on walks with other breeds of dogs, rewarding your dog for being calm and relaxed and using the U-turn if needed.

Practice calling your dog's name (and giving a reward for looking at you) in different environments: both indoors and out on walks.

Continue to let your dog meet other breeds of dog, allowing them to briefly sniff each other (maximum 3 seconds) before moving them away. Only allow this if it is safe to do so.

## Enrichment Level 5

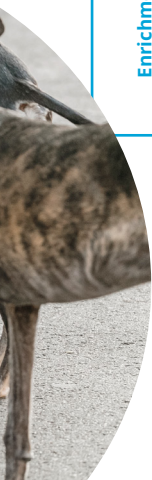
Continue level 4 with the addition of frozen treats to both keep your dog cool and introduce them to something new to chew.

Introduce your dog to Kongs and puzzle toys in addition to the other enrichment levels mentioned previously.

























































## 6-Week Pet Prep Summary



















Activity	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6
Walking	Getting used to lead	Walking on property	Walking on street	Walking in quiet park	Walking in busier park	Walking in town area, busy area etc.
People	Handling by you	Meeting quiet family/friends	Meeting polite people on walks	Meeting new people at home	Meeting people at parks	Meeting people in busy areas
Other dogs	Seeing familiar dogs	Meeting familiar dogs	Walking with other large dogs	Meeting medium/large dogs	Walking with different dog breeds	Polite (on lead) greetings with other dogs
Households	Sniffing things from indoors	Backyard type environment	Indoor access with escape	Quiet room with door shut	Busier rooms with door shut	Inside different household
Learning	Observe your dog	Name recall	U-turns	Name recall on walks	U-turns on walks	Name and U-turns in busy areas
Enrichment	Natural scents	Household + natural scents	Household items + chew treats	Household items + searching for hidden treats	Frozen treats + snuffle garden	Snuffle garden + Kongs or other puzzles



# 6-Week Pet Prep Observation Summary

Activity	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3
Walking	Getting used to lead   	Walking on property   	Walking on street   
People	Handling by you   	Meeting quiet family/friends   	Meeting polite people on walks   
Other dogs	Seeing familiar dogs   	Meeting familiar dogs   	Walking with other large dogs   
Households	Sniffing things from indoors   	Backyard type environment   	Indoor access with escape   
Learning	Observe your dog   	Name recall   	U-turns   
Enrichment	Natural scents   	Household + natural scents   	Household items + chew treats   

Select the "traffic light zone" your dog is in during each activity. When your dog is in the 'green zone' you can advance to the next week.

Week 4	Week 5	Week 6
Walking in quiet park 	Walking in busier park 	Walking in town area, busy area etc. 
Meeting new people at home 	Meeting people at parks 	Meeting people in busy areas 
Meeting medium/large dogs 	Walking with different dog breeds 	Polite (on lead) greetings with other dogs 
Quiet room with door shut 	Busier rooms with door shut 	Inside different household 
Name recall on walks 	U-turns on walks 	Name and U-turns in busy areas 
Household items + searching for hidden treats 	Frozen treats + snuffle garden 	Snuffle garden + Kongs or other puzzles 





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