



Trainer's Competency Pack

Level 2 - Owner Trainer

Version 1.0



Greyhound Racing Victoria

Trainer's Competency Pack - Level 2

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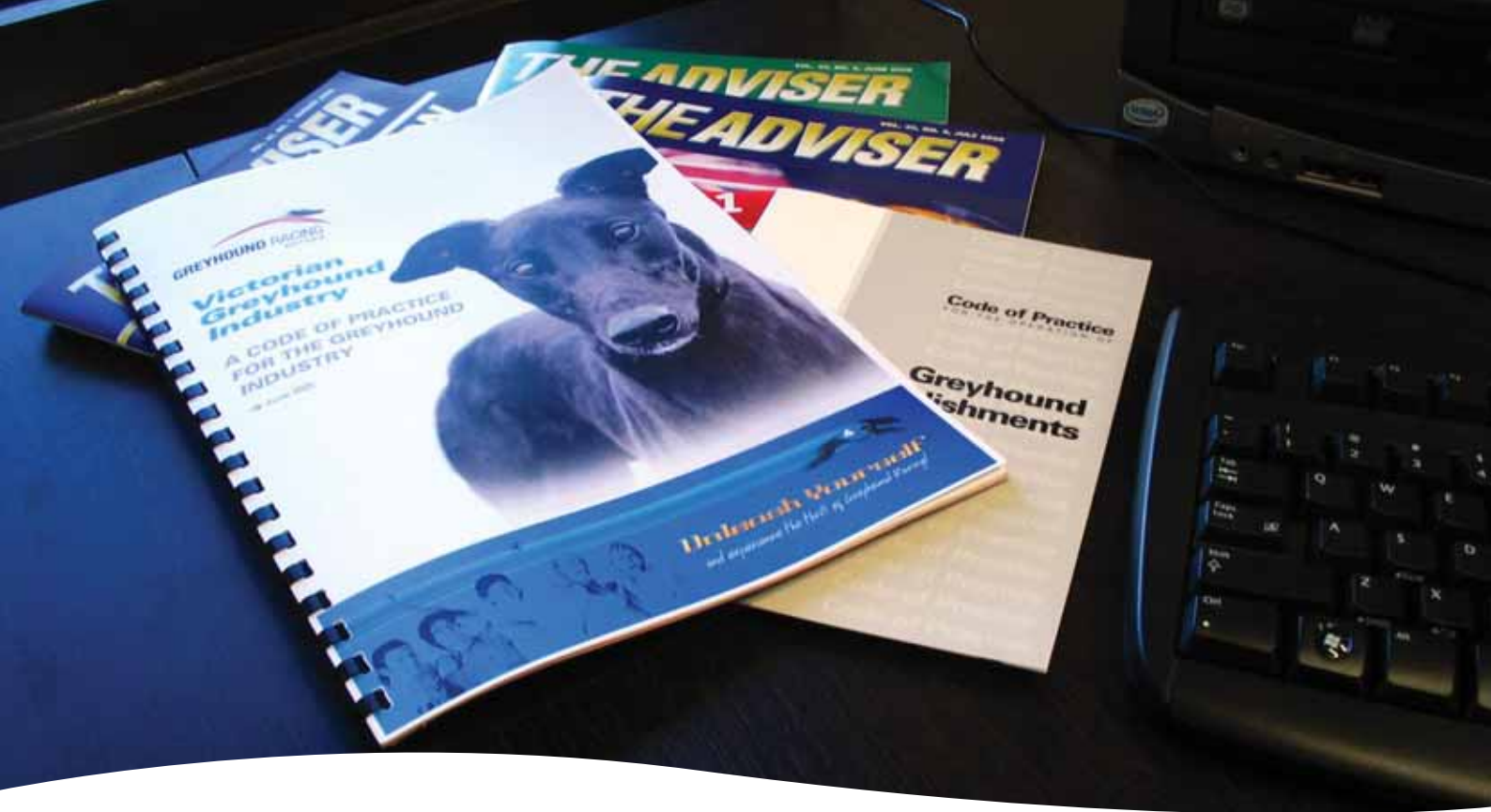
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Chapter 5

5.1 – Code of Practice

What is a Code of Practice?

In Victoria, there are a number of different pieces of legislation that apply to the keeping of animals such as the '*Domestic Animals Act 1994*' and the '*Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986*'.

Under these Acts there is the provision to make 'Codes of Practice'. These codes reflect the views and values held by Victorians with respect to the care of animals and provide a written 'minimum standard' for accommodation, management and care of animals in certain situations. There are Codes applying to Pet Shops, Boarding Kennels and Dog Training Establishments. There is even a Code of Practice for the Private Keeping of Dogs. Regardless of your level of involvement with greyhounds, there are Codes of Practices that apply to you and you should be aware of what they contain.

In 2005, Greyhound Racing Victoria, in consultation with other industry stakeholders, helped prepare a 'Code of Practice for the Greyhound Industry'. This code sets out the minimum accepted standards for participants in the Greyhound Industry. It includes principles for design, siting, construction, operation and management of the various types of greyhound premises. The code also provides for the care and welfare of greyhounds by specifying the minimum standards of accommodation, management and care that is appropriate to the physical and behavioural needs of greyhounds of all ages.

The GRV code is used by councils to assess planning permits, and is used as a benchmark for the level of care expected of industry participants. If complaints are received about the conduct of registered persons, or about the welfare of any greyhound, stewards will deal with the complaint under the Rules, using the Code of Practice as their guide, so it is important that anyone keeping greyhounds is aware of what the Code specifies.

A copy of the Code of Practice can be obtained online from the GRV website (www.grv.org.au), or you can contact GRV for a hard copy version.



What the Code Contains

The Code is in three parts:

- 1 - The Planning Process
- 2 - Managing Greyhound Premises
- 3 - Registration of premises by GRV

Part 1 - The Planning Process

Part One of the Code of Practice covers the planning process for new greyhound facilities. It defines the different types of greyhound establishments from small domestic scale facilities to major commercial establishments, and discusses the planning processes that apply under the Victorian Planning Provisions.

If you are aiming to develop a greyhound facility, the Code helps to walk you through the requirements that will have to be met, where you should aim to be setting up your facility, and whether or not planning approval will be required from your council.

It is still important that you check with your local council before going ahead to ensure that you meet their requirements and they don't have any special rules that might apply to you.

The Code outlines key elements of facility design:

- » Element One - Site Layout, Building Design and Landscaping
- » Element Two - Site Security including Lighting
- » Element Three - Waste Management
- » Element Four - Storm-water Management
- » Element Five - Noise Emissions

All new facilities are expected to comply with the minimum standards set out in the Code, and each Council has a copy of the Code to refer to when assessing applications for greyhound premises. For older premises, any renovations or extensions must also comply with the code.

Part 2 - The Care and Welfare of Greyhounds

This section of the Code specifically addresses how greyhound establishments are to be operated on a day to day basis to ensure the welfare of all greyhounds, whether they are being boarded, reared, trained or are breeding animals.

It is vital as the 'Proprietor' of a Greyhound Facility you are aware of your responsibilities under the Code as it is your job to supervise the overall management and conduct of the establishment and you are the person responsible for the welfare of the greyhounds you house.

In particular you are responsible for:

- » The well-being of all greyhounds in your establishment
- » The supervision of staff
- » The maintenance and collation of records and statistics
- » Supervision of daily feeding, watering and inspection of all greyhounds
- » Supervision and examination of greyhounds upon entry
- » The overall level of hygiene in the establishment, including the disposal of waste materials
- » Provision of prompt veterinary attention for greyhounds when required

- » Notifying owners (or their authorized representatives) of boarded greyhounds as soon as possible when an animal is observed to be ailing or injured or promptly after a veterinarian has examined the animal
- » Ensuring that Part 5 of the Act - Boarding of Dogs and Cats is prominently displayed in the reception area of the establishment so that all prospective clients can read it
- » Developing a plan for an emergency situation

The code also outlines the role of Kennel Staff and the Veterinarian.

'Husbandry'

The husbandry section outlines minimum standards for nutrition, vaccination and health care, sale of pups, hygiene, exercise and security.

'Housing'

The section of the code relating to housing of greyhounds gives minimum pen sizes, pen construction and materials including specifications for inside pens, outside pens, sleeping areas and fencing. The acceptable pen and yard sizes differ according to the type and number of greyhounds housed.

'Record Keeping'

Record keeping is very important, and the code outlines what records must be kept both for greyhounds you own, and for greyhounds being boarded, reared or trained. Records need to be kept for a minimum of five years.

If you are boarding other people's greyhounds all reasonable requests from the owner must be complied with, including feeding of special diets, bathing, grooming, or giving of medication. Breeding and rearing establishments must display the guarantee defined in Part 3.3 of the code in a prominent position on the wall of the reception area where greyhounds are sold.

All greyhound boarding/rearing establishments must carry a minimum of \$5,000,000 public liability insurance cover.

Part 3 - Registration of Greyhounds with Greyhound Racing Victoria

The third part of the Code of Practice details the key requirements to be met by owners of greyhounds and managers of greyhound premises to meet the standards required for registration by GRV.

There are extracts from the Rules of Racing that are particularly applicable to greyhound premises. The Rules provide controls for stewards or other persons authorized by GRV to inspect, police and enforce standards and behaviour that cannot be applied under planning or local government legislation.

So Which Code applies to You??

The Industry Code covers **all participants** registered with GRV, but it is important to be aware that other Codes of Practice may also apply to you, especially if you board or train other people's greyhounds. The Code of Practice for the Operation of Greyhound Establishments applies to all participants that operate a greyhound facility for profit - that is they have large numbers of dogs, or charge a fee for breaking, training, or rearing. It is a 'gazetted' government Code of Practice (compared to the industry code), and can be obtained from the Bureau of Animal Welfare website - www.dpi.vic.gov.au/animalwelfare or from GRV.



5.2 – Setting Up and Maintaining an Appropriate Kennel Environment

What the Code Contains

Basic Considerations

The Code of Practice states:

'Greyhound kennels must be designed, constructed, serviced and maintained in a way that ensures the good health and well being of the animals, whilst preventing escape or injury to humans.'

When designing and building your kennels, any materials you use should be selected for ease of maintenance and cleaning, durability and non-toxicity. After all, they are going to be subjected to daily cleaning (as a minimum). There will be exposure to detergents and disinfectants along with water when they are 'hosed out'.

Your greyhounds will need to be protected from the weather - heat, cold, wind and rain. Ventilation must be adequate to keep greyhound housing areas free of dampness, noxious odours, and draughts.

New Kennel Facilities

As discussed in the Chapter 5.1, all **new** kennel facilities are expected to meet the minimum standards outlined in the Code of Practice.

Whether you are setting up a facility to house one or two greyhounds in the backyard of a suburban house, or whether you are planning to develop a larger greyhound kennel with training or breeding facilities, you need to consult the Code of Practice to ensure that any kennels, yards, and pens meet the minimum space and fencing requirements.

Extensions to Existing Facilities

If you already have a greyhound facility, and plan to extend or modify it, then your extension will also be expected to comply with the recommended minimums laid out in the Code of Practice.

Lighting and security

It is essential that your facility is well lit, so that you can clearly see if you have to go out to your kennels at night. Paths and walkways should be lit, along with the interior of your kennels, so that every greyhound can be seen. Make sure that all electrical wiring is safely away from wet areas, and the reach of your greyhounds.

Your kennel facility needs to be maintained in a secure state, both to prevent your greyhounds from escaping, and to prevent unauthorized people gaining access to your kennels.

Maintenance of fences and gates, especially those that form the boundary of your property is essential to ensuring your greyhounds are safe. Gates and doors need to be lockable, and kept securely locked in your absence.

Maintenance

Probably the most important thing once your setup is installed and established is to continue to look after the facility so that it remains safe and secure. The kenneling area needs to provide a restful environment for your greyhounds.

All structures and fencing needs to be maintained, painted, and/or repaired as required to maintain the visual aesthetics of the facility. Attending to minor problems will ensure that your greyhounds do not injure themselves or become affected by less than ideal conditions, well before the deficiencies become major ones.

Everyday you should be inspecting your fences, kennels and runs for signs of damage. Sharp edges, or wire snags can easily cut or tear a greyhound's skin, especially if they are running around the yard at speed. Outdoor runs should be inspected for holes and hazards, and these should be seen to or filled to prevent injuries.

Runs and kennels need to be cleaned, and if needed hosed, scrubbed and/or disinfected to maintain cleanliness. Bedding should be clean, warm and dry, and should be changed regularly. All bowls and utensils used for feeding greyhounds should be cleaned and disinfected to prevent disease transmission between dogs. Water bowls need to be cleaned and filled daily or more often if needed, especially in hot weather.

Any waste needs to be taken out and disposed of correctly so as not to attract flies or vermin. Food needs to be stored in such a way that vermin are not attracted to the facility, and if noted, dog-safe pest-control needs to be instituted and maintained.

Grass in and around your facility needs to be kept short, especially in rural areas where snakes can be a problem.

Remember: Stewards can come and inspect your kennel facilities at any time.





Chapter 5.3 – Preparing a Greyhound for the Greyhound Adoption Program

What is the Greyhound Adoption Program?

The Greyhound Adoption Program (GAP) is an initiative of Greyhound Racing Victoria dedicated to finding homes for greyhounds that are no longer suitable for racing. As anyone who has spent time with these animals will be aware, greyhounds are quiet, affectionate, well-mannered and very easy to live with - the vast majority of them will make great pets when they retire from racing.

What happens to greyhounds when their racing or breeding career is over?

Unfortunately, greyhounds have usually finished their racing career by the age of 3-4 years. As the average normal lifespan of a greyhound is 10-15 years, this means that they still have plenty of good years still in them. Many trainers and owners would prefer not to euthanase their greyhounds and decide to place them in the Greyhound Adoption Program to give them a chance to live out the rest of their lives as family pets.

Once accepted to the Greyhound Adoption Program, greyhounds undergo a series of tests to determine their suitability as pets. As greyhounds adopted out by GAP in Victoria are not required to wear muzzles (indicated by a special green GAP collar), all greyhounds that pass the Greyhound Adoption Program must be safe with small fluffy dogs by the time of adoption. Once they pass their initial testing, they are then placed into foster care for a number of weeks to help with the initial adjustment phase from 'racing athlete' to 'couch potato'. During this time foster-carers start them on some basic obedience, and work on house manners and toilet training.

How do I place a greyhound into the Greyhound Adoption Program?

The Greyhound Adoption Program has a waiting list of greyhounds ready to be assessed. This is because there are always more greyhounds available than there are foster homes or permanent homes. The waiting time varies, but can be up to 6-8 months, so it is advisable to put your greyhound onto the waiting list well before it retires from racing (some people place the dog on the waiting list at the time it starts its racing career!). GAP is not able to take dogs at short notice, so you will need to plan ahead.

You can jump up the list by one of two ways:

- (1) If your greyhound attends GAP's Seymour kennels for a 'pre-assessment test', and has been passed by GAP staff
- (2) If your greyhound has had 100 or more race starts

GAP staff will contact you when they have a place ready for your greyhound. If you have changed your mind, or the dog is not yet ready to retire, it does not matter you can simply let them know. Your dog stays at the top of the list until you advise them you are ready. If you decide to keep the dog for breeding, they simply remove the dog from the list.

Are all greyhounds suitable for adoption?

GAP will not accept greyhounds until they have reached 8 months of age, but there is no upper age limit. Any dogs that are accepted must be physically sound and not have any medical conditions that would lead to ongoing veterinary costs for the adoptive owners (i.e pannus, or chronic lameness).

The greyhound should be friendly and of even temperament (not aggressive or extremely shy) and should be sociable in the presence of other breeds of dog. Greyhounds who are excessively timid may find adjusting to this new life very daunting, and become a burden for their new owners. Remember that the greyhounds that pass the Greyhound Adoption Program are often adopted to families in suburban and inner city locations, often with other pets, and must be suitable to be walked around the streets and parks.

What happens when the greyhound is ready to be accepted into the program?

When the time comes for your greyhound to enter the program, you can arrange to have it collected from one of GAP's two collection points (The Meadows or Sandown), or you may deliver your greyhound directly to the GAP kennels in Seymour. The greyhound has to be submitted with a properly fitted wire muzzle, the dog's registration papers (or G form if unnamed) and weight card (if applicable), and a vaccination certificate showing the dog is current for a C5 vaccine. You will then sign some papers transferring the ownership of the dog to the Greyhound Adoption Program and complete a retirement form.

The dog then receives a general health check, has an initial test with small dogs and cats, and is given a parasite preventative treatment. Dogs that pass this initial assessment are then de-sexed, have their teeth cleaned and are micro-chipped. They are then placed into foster care for further assessment and so they can be gradually introduced to household activities. If GAP judge that your greyhound is suitable for adoption, it will then return to the GAP kennels to be matched with a family or person who has applied to adopt a greyhound.

If the greyhound fails the assessments and/or is deemed unsuitable for adoption, it will be returned (if requested) or humanely euthanased. This occurs mostly where a greyhound is found to be unsafe around small dogs, as these greyhounds are not made available for adoption for safety reasons.





What can I do to assist in the transition from racing dog to family pet?

There are many things that you can do that will help your greyhound to adjust to life in a family home. As most families do not have kennels, one thing greyhounds need to get used to is spending time loose in a secure backyard.

Your greyhound needs to walk nicely on a lead, and needs to be familiar with the normal sights and sounds of a suburban street. You can help by taking your greyhound for walks in urban areas, and introduce them to unfamiliar people and well behaved children (under supervision of course!). This is also a good idea for all greyhounds, not just the ones being retired!

Getting the greyhound used to slippery floor surfaces, stairs, and being inside for short periods of time can also be helpful. You can also get your greyhound used to the sight of other animals, livestock, and small dogs, whilst safely under control and muzzled.

As the time for admission nears, you can decrease your greyhound's exercise requirements, and change the time for his walks. It is also advisable to try to put a little weight on the greyhound as the changes associated with the move to the adoption process can be stressful and many dogs go off their food and lose weight. If you have placed your greyhound on the waiting list, yet feel that it may not be suitable for adoption at the end of its career, please simply contact GAP and remove your greyhound's name from the list.

Is it possible to follow my greyhound after it is adopted?

Due to privacy laws, information about yourself and information about the adoptive home of your greyhound can only be given out with the approval of each party. Many people adopting a greyhound are keen to learn about the dog's race history and successes, and some trainers are keen to stay in touch so they can hear how their greyhound is enjoying its new life. It is not unusual for trainers and adoptees to form lifelong friendships when they are brought together through the adoption of the dog.





Chapter 6

6.1 – Feeding the Racing Greyhound

Why is Nutrition so important?

What you feed your greyhound will have a very large influence on how it performs. Food provides the fuel for racing, along with supplying all of the essential protein, fat, carbohydrate, vitamins and minerals for the maintenance and repair of the body and its systems.

If the greyhound's diet is lacking in certain elements, the body may not be able to operate at its peak, in effect preventing the dog from racing well and predisposing it to injury and illness. Conversely, over-feeding or over-supplementing is just as detrimental and will have the same effect on performance, often with the added burden of having to remove the excess from the body putting unnecessary stress on certain organ systems. What you are aiming for is a 'nutritionally balanced' (all elements present in the right amounts) and 'complete' (nothing missing) diet.

Most of the study into nutrition has been done over a variety of dog breeds, with very little specific testing of the requirements for any one breed. It is well documented that the body has differing needs at different developmental stages such as during growth, pregnancy, lactation (feeding puppies), illness and old age. There has been some research into the specific requirements of the racing greyhound, but many of the feeding regimes used by trainers rely somewhat on tradition, folklore or experience.



Nutrition Basics

To function the body requires:

Water

Protein

Protein in the diet is broken down by the digestive process into a variety of 'amino acids'. Protein is needed for building, strengthening and repairing the body. It is thought that greyhounds need about 30% protein in their diets. Protein in the diet is generally derived from meat or meat products.

Carbohydrates/Fibre

Carbohydrates provide energy to the body. They can be divided into 'Simple' carbohydrates and 'Complex' carbohydrates.

Simple carbohydrates require very little breaking down by the body and provide a short-term hit of energy. These simple carbohydrates are generally sugars or starch.

Complex carbohydrates require processing by the body and provide for a sustained release of energy. Complex carbohydrates are often derived from grains such as rice or oats. These also contain protein, vitamins and minerals, but are difficult for the body to access unless they have been well cooked, well soaked and fed soft.

Fat

Fat is an important energy source for greyhounds. Fats also assist in the absorption of some vitamins and are involved in the production of certain hormones. Fat is broken down into 'fatty acids' which are then absorbed. Animal fats such as those derived from meat and fish, tend to contain the best mix of fatty acids, but these rarely form the only fat source with some fats being obtained from vegetable oils. Because fat is so important in the diet, sourcing meats with a high fat content is advisable, rather than using lean or 'diet' meats with the fat removed.

Vitamins

Vitamins are essential for the functioning of many body systems. The body can manufacture some of its own vitamins, but is reliant on diet to supply the rest. Vitamins are involved in a variety of important functions such as growth, metabolism, tissue repair, and the immune system. Deficiencies of certain vitamins can lead to serious problems, and will certainly affect performance.

Excessive amounts of vitamins, especially the fat soluble vitamins A, D and E, (such as that which occurs when over-supplementation occurs) can put stress on the kidneys and liver as the body tries to get rid of the excess or store it safely. It can also lead to problems in nearly every body system from joint pain and bone damage, to reduced muscle function. **More is not better!**

Minerals and Trace Elements

These are diet components that are needed in small amounts to ensure normal body function. Derived from the diet, they include things such as Calcium, Phosphorus, Copper, Selenium, Iron, Iodine, Magnesium, Zinc and Potassium.

Minerals and trace elements may be deficient in some diets, especially those diets containing large amounts of meats. This is because Australian soils are notoriously low in trace elements and subsequently the animals that graze pasture do not ingest sufficient amounts. This is then reflected in the levels of these minerals found in their meat.

Getting the Balance Right

Many greyhound owners and trainers rely on commercially available 'Premium' dog foods as the basis of their dog's diet. These commercial foods are prepared in such a way so as to ensure all of the necessary levels of protein, fat, carbohydrate, vitamins, and minerals are present in each meal. You can simply read the package to determine the levels of fat and protein that the food contains. Someone else has done all the calculations to ensure that everything necessary is there.

It is possible to make up your own diet at home, but special care must be taken to ensure that the diet that you create is nutritionally balanced and complete. Mixing up this kind of diet also takes time and requires you to have adequate storage facilities for the various ingredients (such as a fridge or freezer for any meat). Ingredients need to be kept at the correct temperature to ensure that they do not spoil or become inactive. There is no point feeding spoiled or rotten food to your prize race dog as you will be challenging its immune system, or pouring hot water onto a feed that contains an expensive supplement that actually becomes useless when exposed to high temperatures.

If you are not sure whether the diet you are feeding is nutritionally balanced, it would pay to consult your greyhound vet with a list of the ingredients and their amounts. The condition and weight of your greyhounds, along with the quality of their stools will also indicate how well your feeding regime is going. Sloppy or voluminous stools, poor coats, weight loss and lack-lustre performance are all indicators of your diet's shortcomings.

How much do you feed?

The amount of food required by a greyhound will be influenced by the time of year (increased requirements in the colder months), the amount of work, the individual dog's metabolism and activity level, and any stresses on the dog's body (such as injury, illness, or growth requirements). Each greyhound is an individual, and you will often find that two dogs, even from the same litter, will have quite differing needs. It is your job to ensure that each greyhound gets the correct amount of food to maintain it in peak condition and at the correct weight.

A greyhound is only able to eat a certain volume of food in any one meal. So increasing the amount of food offered may not be the simple answer to your problems if your greyhound is down in condition. Options for feeding include dividing the dog's requirements over a number of smaller meals, or changing the content of the food so that the energy level is either more or less concentrated depending on the needs of the dog.

Timing of the meals is also important, with the aim being to provide the maximum usable energy at the time the greyhound needs it most. You do not want to feed a greyhound just prior to it exercising as this diverts the blood supply to the gut rather than the muscles. Most greyhounds race on an empty stomach, although some trainers will feed a light meal a few hours before a race.

Remember that over feeding is not healthy, as it leads to increased pressure on the body. Fat puppies in particular put a lot of stress on developing ligaments and joints if they are over weight. Having over weight racing dog is a recipe for serious injury as the forces generated are multiplied by the added weight. The extra weight also slows the greyhound down.

Monitoring Individual Feeding Programs

It is important that you are constantly monitoring your feeding program, and making any necessary changes to ensure peak condition. One way to do this is to weigh the greyhound weekly, and assess its body condition. Using your hands to assess body condition also gives you the chance to evaluate the condition of the coat - is it soft and pliable, or dry and harsh?

Recording the dog's weight and condition regularly is a good idea, especially if you are just starting out. This can then be compared to written records of how much, and what type of food has been fed, the exercise and training program and the racing schedule and results. This will give you an excellent idea of how the type and quantity of food fed influences the greyhound's condition and performances.

After Race Nutrition

After the strenuous activity involved in racing, it is important that you address the nutritional needs of the greyhound. Most greyhound vets suggest that you provide your greyhound with some protein and carbohydrate to replace that which has been lost within 2-4 hours of the dog racing.

You will also have to replace lost fluids, especially in the hotter months. Remember travel to and from the track can also promote fluid loss in the hot weather, so you will need to pay particular attention to your greyhound's hydration levels.



Chapter 6.2 – Supplements and Additives

Why use Supplements and Additives with the diet?

There are lots of different brands and types of supplement on the market, many specifically formulated for greyhounds in work. There are multi-vitamin and mineral supplements, electrolyte supplements, and supplements containing essential fatty acids and amino acids.

The idea of using supplements is to overcome deficiencies within the diet that may be due to the way the food is processed, preserved and prepared. Sometimes there are also nutrient interactions that need to be overcome. The decision to supplement a greyhound's diet needs to be based on the greyhound's needs (stress, illness, activity level, physical condition), the diet used, the ingredients in the supplement, and the cost to potential benefit ratio.

You need to be very careful about what ingredients are in each supplement, as some contain products that may lead to a positive swab.

If you are not sure what an ingredient is for, it would be wise to discuss your choice of supplement with your greyhound veterinarian as they will be able to tell you whether or not the ingredient poses a concern.

Using Supplements

It is very important that you follow the instructions on the label of the package. These will tell you how much of the product to use and how often. It will also have storage instructions that need to be followed to ensure the product does not spoil or lose its potency.

Many supplement packages come with a measuring device, which you need to use to ensure the correct amount is used. Over-dosing a greyhound with any supplement can be dangerous, and it is also a waste of money as the excess the body does not require is simply excreted.

Most supplements should be added to the diet just prior to feeding so that they do not interact with other food components, and do not lose their potency.

Multi-vitamin and Mineral Supplements

Feeding these types of supplements can cover most of the greyhound's requirements. This may mean that you do not have to use multiple products to achieve the same effect - in turn saving you money. Trainers are often trying to use calcium supplements, Vitamin injections, and electrolyte supplements, when in many cases a single, good quality multi-vitamin and mineral mix would cover all of the dog's needs.

Electrolytes

Many dogs do not need electrolyte supplementation, and in fact supplementation with excessive electrolytes can lead to dehydration. The best way to detect any electrolyte deficiencies is with a blood test performed by your greyhound vet. This will tell you which electrolytes, if any, are lacking and the product used can be tailored to remedy the situation. Potassium is one electrolyte that is particularly important for normal muscle function.

Dogs with electrolyte imbalances or deficiencies tend to have poor form, struggle in distance events, tend to have increased respiratory distress after a run, and tend to drink and urinate a lot after racing. The treatment will depend on which electrolytes are missing - so speak to your vet about the dog's blood results. It may be that you monitor the electrolyte levels repeatedly over time to see how well your electrolyte supplementation is working, and modify your program accordingly.

Oil Based Supplements

Sometimes the type of fat that is fed in diets is not the best source of the required fatty acids. Greyhounds with poor coats or skin conditions (other than flea infestation), can often benefit from an oil based supplement. Many trainers will simply use animal fat, but there are a number of proprietary formulations that contain increased levels of omega 3 and omega 6 fatty acids. Like everything, the ratio of the fatty acids is more important than the quantity.

Other Supplements

There are some very specific supplements that address nutritional deficits. Things such as Calcium, Phosphorus, Iron and Potassium may occasionally be warranted. It may be that supplementation is recommended after a blood test shows up a problem that is linked to a deficiency of one of these elements, or they might be supplemented regularly, depending on the diet. It has been shown that over-doing the Calcium is just as dangerous to the developing skeleton as a deficiency, so remember to follow the dosage directions closely.

Calcium and Phosphorus need to be given in the correct ratio to ensure the best result, especially in young, growing pups. Calcium needs to be supplemented along with Phosphorous in a ratio that is similar to the Calcium to Phosphorous ratio in bone. These two elements are linked in their action, so too much of one without the other is detrimental. There are a number of supplements that contain Calcium and Phosphorous and the amount used will depend on what the rest of the greyhound's diet consists of - the more meat, the more supplement that is usually needed.

If your greyhound is not performing to the level that you expect given its training history, a thorough check up at the vets including a blood profile should be considered prior to trying to guess what is wrong, and trying to fix it with supplements. It will be money spent wisely!



Chapter 7

7.1 – Basic Health Care

What is required to keep a greyhound healthy?

In order for your greyhound(s) to remain healthy, there are a number of things that need to be attended to regularly. These preventative health care matters ensure that your greyhound is always in the best possible condition, and help to prevent injury and disease.

Preventative health care includes things such as worming and vaccinations, controlling external parasites, and maintaining skin and feet in the best possible condition. Ignoring these things can lead to problems, not just with the individual greyhound, but disease may spread throughout your kennels and affect other dogs.

Vaccination

Vaccination involves injecting an animal with a modified version of a dangerous disease. The modification means the virus or bacteria can no longer trigger the full-blown disease, but will still stimulate the body's immune response, causing the production of anti-bodies. By vaccinating an animal, we can prepare the body for the time where it may be exposed to the real disease. This means that the body fights off the disease much quicker and more effectively than an animal that has no vaccination protection.

Currently, the Rules of Greyhound Racing state that a Litter Registration will not be processed unless it is accompanied by vaccination certificates showing vaccination of each pup to at least a C3 level, and that you cannot name a greyhound unless the application is accompanied by a vaccination certificate showing a vaccination to C3 level was given after the dog turned 12 months of age.

So what do the letters and numbers mean?

The 'C' refers to Canine (for dogs). This identifies the species to which the vaccine should be given.

The number refers to the number of diseases included in the one vaccine.

C3 Vaccination includes: Canine Parvovirus
 Canine Infectious Hepatitis
 Canine Distemper

These are the three 'killer' diseases of dogs. Probably the most common one seen these days is Canine Parvovirus, which causes a very nasty gastroenteritis, with foul smelling, bloody diarrhoea. It is most commonly seen in young puppies, and has been known to kill entire litters.

Canine Distemper was more common years ago, but is not seen much anymore thanks to vaccination. Signs include weepy eyes and nose (thick yellow pus), vomiting and diarrhoea, and it can lead to central nervous system damage that is irreversible.

Canine Infectious Hepatitis is a disease that causes damage to the dog's liver. Symptoms include jaundice, vomiting and loss of appetite.

C4 Vaccination includes: Canine Parvovirus
 Canine Infectious Hepatitis
 Canine Distemper
 Canine Parainfluenza

C4 is the same as C3, but has a fourth disease added - Canine Parainfluenza - this is the viral form of Canine/Kennel Cough.

C5 Vaccination includes: Canine Parvovirus
 Canine Infectious Hepatitis
 Canine Distemper
 Canine Parainfluenza
 Bordetella Bronchiseptica

C5 is the same as C4, but has a fifth disease added - Bordetella Brochiseptica - this is the bacterial form of Canine/Kennel Cough. The Bordetella vaccine can be given either as a nasal spray dose, or mixed in with the other diseases in an injection. Some vets prefer to use the nasal spray dose as it is thought to provide immunity within 72 hours of dosing, and may give a stronger level of immunity others prefer the convenience of giving one injection. You will need to discuss your needs with your greyhound vet as they will be able to best advise which vaccine is best suited to your situation.

Although the C3 is the required minimum, it is advisable to protect your greyhounds against Canine/Kennel Cough as well. The cough is contracted when a dog inhales air containing the virus or bacteria, usually coughed out by an infected dog. The symptoms of a dry hacking cough can take even a week to develop, but in the mean time, the infected greyhound is happily spreading the disease to every other dog in the same breathing space. So as you can imagine the risk of spread within a kennel environment is very high.

Canine Cough does not kill the dog as a rule, but it can be severely debilitating, and can take a few weeks for the symptoms to resolve. In stressed (where the immune system is weak) or older dogs, it can spread to a chest infection or pneumonia. There are many different bacteria and viruses that contribute to this disease, and unfortunately we only have a vaccination against the main two causes. This explains why sometimes a trainer will have an outbreak of Canine Cough even though they have vaccinated against it. At least in these cases, not all dogs will contract the disease, and those that do, will have much shorter recovery times.



A Standard Vaccination Program:

For Puppies

The vaccination companies recommend:

1st Puppy Vaccine	6-8 weeks of age
2nd Puppy Vaccine	12-14 weeks of age
3rd Puppy Vaccine	16 weeks of age

This suggested program may vary depending on the vaccine used and the diseases that are in your area. There are some vaccines that only require two doses to be given a month apart others require three doses for puppies. There are also other diseases that can be vaccinated against, taking the vaccine to a C6 or C7. Check with your veterinarian to discuss which vaccines he/she uses.

For Adults

The vaccination companies recommend:

Yearly booster given 12 month after last puppy vaccine (usually around 15 months of age)

Yearly booster every 12 months after that

Note: there are now some vaccines that promise longer protection from one vaccine and are active for up to three years. Unfortunately the Canine Cough components do not give immunity that long, so still need to be given yearly.

Although the industry sets C3 as a minimum, if you board or train other people's greyhounds for a fee, you will need to insist on C5 to comply with the 'Code of Practice for Greyhound Establishments'. Greyhounds being submitted to the Greyhound Adoption Program also require a C5 vaccination.

It is important that any breeding stock is up to date with their vaccines, as protection of the puppies prior to the first vaccine comes from anti-bodies transferred to the pups from the mother in the first milk (the 'colostrum'). If the bitch is lacking immunity, so will the pups!

Internal Parasites

Internal parasites include the various 'worms' that can live in a dog's gastro-intestinal tract and/or blood stream. These parasites live and reproduce by 'stealing' their nutritional requirements from the dog. By doing this, they are sapping the dog of vital nutrients and energy. They can also cause damage to the various organs of the dog. Basically the money you are spending on good food and supplements goes out the window and your greyhounds will not be able to perform at their peak.

The most common group treated for are the 'intestinal' worms. This includes roundworm, hookworm, whipworm and tapeworm (flea tapeworm and hydatid tapeworm). These worms live inside or attached to the gut of the greyhound, and can damage or irritate the lining of the bowel.

Intestinal worms are controlled in most cases by dosing the greyhound with an 'All-wormer' tablet such as Drontal™, Popantel™ or Canex™. Tablets are sized according to weight, and it is necessary to weigh each dog on the day of dosing so that you can ensure they get the right dose. Worming should take place every 3-4 months for adult dogs. This keeps worm numbers to a minimum and helps prevent environmental contamination.

Beware: many worming tablets may seem cheaper, but you need to check closely which worms they will treat. Some worming products such as 3-in-1 or 4-in-1 tablets do not treat all of the different worms and may actually be a waste of money as the job is only half done. Many lesser products do not contain an active ingredient to kill the hydatid tapeworm which can cause serious disease if transmitted to humans. Hydatid tapeworm infection is usually introduced to the dogs from the eating of raw meat and offal, especially from sheep.

Some kennels choose to use worming products that are not licensed for use in dogs. This is considered 'off-label use' and should only occur after discussion with your veterinarian as using a product other than for the purpose that it was intended can be dangerous. Off-label use also means you have no legal standing if things go wrong. The main reason for using these products is to try to cut costs, but often what happens is that the dogs are either over-dosed, under-dosed, or by using the same product all the time, the parasites become resistant to the active ingredients.

Please speak to your veterinarian to discuss an appropriate worming schedule for the greyhounds in your care. Parasite resistance is a developing problem within the industry, so it is recommended that you plan a rotational program which alternates the active ingredients in the wormers used to help avoid the problem of resistance developing.

Dosing a greyhound with a tablet

Although many greyhounds can be fooled into 'eating' a tablet by smearing it with butter, wrapping it with meat, or wedging it into a piece of meat or cheese, there will eventually come a time where you will have to dose a greyhound by hand. Maybe the dog is not eating, or maybe they have become suspicious of tablet bearing food treats.

To dose a greyhound by hand, you need to first get the tablet organised in your dominant hand holding it between your thumb and forefinger. Then, standing beside the dog, place your other hand over the bridge of the dog's nose, grasping the upper jaw in your hand. If you gently lift the dog's nose upwards, you will find that the dog's mouth will open slightly. You can then use the free fingers on your tablet holding hand to push the lower jaw down, and then quickly place the tablet as far back in the mouth as you can before shutting the dog's mouth and holding it closed until the dog swallows. If you are not sure about how to this, ask your vet to demonstrate next time you are there. Dosing dogs can be quite tricky, especially if they are not cooperative, so it is a skill you will need to practice.

Heartworm

Heartworm is becoming an increasing problem in some areas of Australia. Once thought to only affect dogs in the northern states of Australia, it has slowly spread into areas of Victoria. Heartworm is different to the intestinal worms as it is spread by mosquito, meaning the dog can be infected without even having come into contact with another dog.

The immature heartworms (called 'microfilaria') travel around the body for a while before entering the blood stream and eventually moving to the heart. Symptoms of heartworm infestation include the signs of heart failure - tiredness, intolerance to exercise, moist cough, and shortness of breath.

The treatment for heartworm once the dog has caught it is quite unpleasant. So instead, a preventative treatment is given that will kill the heartworm before it gets to the heart. The preventative can be given as a daily or monthly tablet, or a once a year injection. It is probably advisable to discuss with your veterinarian the prevalence of heartworm in your local area.

External Parasites

By far the most common of the external parasites is the flea. These pesky 'hitch-hikers' jump on board the dog for a feed of blood, which is something they require to be able to lay their eggs. Most of the flea lifecycle is actually spent in the environment, with the time spent actually infesting an animal only a tiny part of their life. The fleas tend to congregate on the dog's back near the top of the tail, and their bite causes a reaction in the skin which is itchy - similar to mosquito bites in people. The affected dog will then chew and scratch at the area in an attempt to get some relief from the itching sensation, and in the process can cause quite significant damage to their skin.

Fleas can spread from dog to dog, but it is more likely that they are picked up from a contaminated environment. Fleas like warm, dark moist places, and thrive in bedding and carpets. Once a flea has had a feed of blood, they drop off into the area the dog inhabits and lay hundreds of eggs. When the weather and conditions are right, these eggs will hatch and larva will emerge. These larvae take some time to mature, but then once they turn into adult fleas they will jump onto any moving warm animal - even people!!



Cats and dogs share the same fleas, and it is not uncommon for an infection to be established by the house cat who visits many different properties during the day, bringing home adult fleas, before having them drop off in your backyard where they lay their eggs. Your greyhounds may also pick a few 'travellers' whilst off your property.

Treating for fleas can be frustrating because by treating the dog alone, you are neglecting the environment where most of the eggs and larva are. One option is to use a flea rinse (mixed according to the instructions) once each week on every greyhound you have. This will kill the adult fleas on the dog on that day, but will do nothing to stop the dog being re-infested on returning to its kennel. Washing all of the bedding and cleaning the runs at the same time will go some of the way to help reduce the environmental contamination.

There are now products that continue to have a flea killing effect even after they are applied. These Top-Spots (applied to the back of the neck/shoulder blades area) work for up to a month, and some even contain active ingredients that inhibit the hatching of any eggs in the dog's environment. The beauty of these products is that they do not require the dog to have a bath, and are far less toxic than some of the flea shampoos and rinses. Products such as Frontline™, Advantage™ are examples of this category.

There are other products which combine the treatment of intestinal worms, heartworm, fleas and even mites into a single top-spot, but the more things the product treats, the more expensive they tend to be.



Nail and Foot Care

A racing greyhound relies on good feet to propel the dog around the track. Care and attention to the feet and nails is vital to ensuring top performance. Long, untrimmed nails can lead to unusual or abnormal forces being applied to the joints and ligaments of the feet and legs. This can predispose the greyhound to injury that can in turn ruin a promising career.

Most greyhounds will wear their nails naturally, and will need little care, but if your greyhound has unusual nail wear, or is on soft surfaces most of the time, you may have to trim the dog's nails to ensure that they never get to a length that could cause problems with the greyhound's stance or gait. A good set of nail trimmers is an essential tool for anyone involved in the keep and care of greyhounds. There are different styles of trimmer, but for larger dogs, a pair of scissor action cutters is best. The smaller guillotine action trimmers are less robust, and feeding a large nail into the small hole on this style trimmer can be fiddly.

Trimming the nails of a greyhound can be tricky if the dog has black nails. Each toenail contains a 'quick' which is a fleshy core filled with blood vessels and nerves. The nail grows down over this quick and extends past it. Knowing where the quick ends is essential to ensuring that it is not cut whilst trimming the nail. If you do cut it, the dog will usually react painfully, and you may cause bleeding. The dog will remember this unpleasant experience and may become increasingly difficult to trim.

To locate the quick, have a look at the toenails and try to find a white nail. Usually the quick can be seen through the white nail as a pink area. Any trimming should be done to end at least a millimetre below the lowest point of the quick. Using sharp cutters is best as this minimises the crushing effect that some dogs find unpleasant.

If there are no white nails, the safest thing is to do is to turn the nail upside down and have a look at the underside of the nail. Usually you can see the nail extending past a central core area, and you can trim this section of the

nail away quite safely. As you approach the central core, you can nibble small amounts off at a time until you are happy you have trimmed enough. It is always better to come back in a week and trim off a little more, than to cut into the quick and have blood everywhere, along with a dog that is increasingly hard to trim.

Some people choose to use a small grinder instead of cutters - such as a Dremel™ tool. Grinding the nails back can be an alternative to using cutters, and is a quite efficient way to keep nails short. The down side to this method is that it is possible to create a lot of heat in the nail bed which can damage the sensitive tissue, and it is possible to grind the nail too far back, exposing the quick. Grinding or filing can help reshape nails that grow unevenly, or those associated with toes that have been damaged (such as 'sprung' toes) and where the nail no longer curls towards the ground.

Foot care also includes checking the area under the feet regularly, and checking between the toes and around the nail bases. Greyhounds who run on sand tracks are particularly prone to foot injuries especially to the webbing between the toes and around the nail bed.

Skin Care/Bathing

Healthy skin and a shining coat are indicators of good health and nutrition. Feeding good quality food with the correct types and balance of oils in it is the first step to maintaining coat condition. Dogs that are fed incorrect diets will be missing essential nutrients for the production of hair and skin, and as a result will have a poor coat, often with dry, flaky skin.

Control of external parasites such as fleas will also impact on skin and coat condition. The damage that can be caused from even a few flea bites can be quite significant and can lead to ongoing problems with infection and 'hot-spots'. Lack of sufficient bedding can also predispose a greyhound to skin damage, with their short coat providing little protection against hard surfaces. This is especially true where the skin over bony areas takes the weight of the resting dog.

Many greyhound owners bath their dogs regularly and use products such as flea rinses which can leave the coat dry. A dog's skin produces natural oils that help maintain normal skin health and protection. Frequent washing, especially with the wrong types of shampoos can strip these oils leaving the skin dry and the hair dull. As a guide, washing once a fortnight is plenty unless there is a specific problem that needs to be addressed. In between baths the coat can be maintained by brushing regularly to remove the dead hair from the coat. A rubber brush is often the best tool for short coats (look for a Zoom Groom™ or a soft rubber horse curry comb)

Whenever you bath your greyhounds, make sure that the products you use are designed for dogs. A dog's skin has a different pH to humans, so using human shampoo is not recommended. Ideally, use warm water, and make sure that you thoroughly rinse any shampoo from the dog's coat. If applying a flea rinse, this is applied after the shampoo has been rinsed out. A flea rinse is usually left in the coat, rather than rinsed out but check the instructions on the bottle.

Once you have finished bathing your greyhound, let it have a 'shake', then gently towel it dry. As greyhounds are fairly thin skinned, it is important that you thoroughly dry the dog after a bath to help prevent heat loss and chilling. In winter it may be necessary to dry the dog using a dryer, or make sure that the damp dog is kept in a heated room until it is fully dry.

Be careful with putting a coat on a wet dog. Sometimes this can lead to skin problems as the skin stays damp or moist for longer because the surface water cannot evaporate. The coat can also become damp and cold, like wearing a wet towel. If you are concerned that the dog will get cold after a bath, it is better to make sure the dog is completely dry, and then put the coat on to keep it warm.





7.2 – Identifying Injuries and Lameness

How can I identify that my greyhound has suffered an injury or is unwell?

The first skill in being able to tell when things might be wrong is knowing what your greyhound looks like when it is well. Once you have an appreciation of what 'normal' is, then you can become very astute in picking up the subtle changes in your greyhound's behaviour or gait that may suggest things are not normal, and that your greyhound is injured or unwell.

Some injuries are very obvious, even to someone who knows little about dogs, but some injuries can be so mild they take an experienced and watchful eye to detect. Being able to identify these more subtle changes can mean that the injury is treated early and correctly, reducing the risk of it worsening and potentially ruining a very promising career.

Spend time each day watching each of your greyhounds, you will quickly notice the quirks and peculiarities of their behaviour and gait. You will also become better at noticing the little things that may indicate your greyhound is off colour or is feeling pain – maybe he is not quite as keen to eat, maybe he is passing more urine than normal or taking longer than normal to do it, maybe he is licking or scratching at an area on his body, or maybe he is not moving about as much as he normally does.

If your greyhound is in work or training, then things such as trial times and sectional times may give a clue to a niggling injury that is affecting the dog's performance. You should have a good idea of what times to expect, and if they suddenly change, it indicates a problem that needs investigation.

Assessing Gait and Movement

If you think something is not quite right with your greyhound, the first thing is to watch it moving. Lameness may be very obvious, with the dog not wanting to put weight on one of its legs; or may be harder to see. Often the best way to assess the gait is to have someone else 'trot' the dog for you so you can watch it move. Trotting is a two-beat gait with two legs moving together at the same time. Lameness may show up as a change to the rhythm of this beat, or you may notice an increased head bob on one of the two strides. The dog's body will be trying to protect the injured leg by taking some weight off it, and this leads to the head being lifted up as the sore leg touches the ground.

Sometimes you need to also trot the dog in a circle, first to the left, then to the right. Added pressure is placed on certain areas of the dog's body when cornering, and sometimes this can help highlight where the injury may be.

Feeling for Injuries - Examining your Greyhound

Not all injuries will lead to changes in the dog's gait or movement. So you also need to get into the habit of examining your greyhound by feeling with your hands and fingers. If you follow a set procedure, you can examine the dog from head to toe in a relatively short time. By doing it in the same order each time you will find that you don't miss anything along the way.

There are suggested examination techniques in the book 'The Care of the Racing and Retired Greyhound' - both for examining for common muscle injuries (p29-31), and for a more thorough evaluation (Chapter 11). You can also ask your greyhound veterinarian to give you a demonstration of what to feel for.

When you are examining your greyhound you should be looking for soreness, heat, swelling, or changes in shape and feel. Tense tight muscles are often protecting an injury, reduced range of movement of a joint indicates pain or damage, and hot, painful areas indicate active inflammation.

You need to assess both sides of the body, and can use one to compare to the other. For example if you think there might be swelling in the right front leg - you can compare it to the left front leg.

When to get professional help

If you detect a change, it is important that you note it on the greyhound's record, and change any training program accordingly. You will probably need to have the injury examined by your greyhound vet so that they can assess the extent of the damage, and give you advice on the best way to rehabilitate the dog.

If you ignore the injury, it is likely that a minor problem may worsen very quickly into a more serious, potentially career-ending one if the dog continues to trial or race.

You may also need to pay more attention to the 'warm-up' and 'cool-down' techniques that you use. Some trainers are so busy with so many dogs that they forget that each dog needs to properly warmed-up prior to running. We would not expect a football player or other elite athlete to jump straight out of the car and go straight into hard exercise. These days a considerable amount of time is spent stretching and warming up the muscles to help prevent injuries. Once the race or game is over, a similar amount of time is spent cooling-down.

Warm-up exercises for greyhounds may include light jogging or brisk walking, rubbing or massage, and even gentle stretches. In cold weather, the dog may also wear a warm coat right up to the time of racing to keep the circulation to the muscles. (There are warm coats available for use at each of the tracks.) You should never just get the dog out of the car or float and run him, nor should you just put him back in the car straight afterwards without making sure he has cooled down - even if you have another dog to run!

Learning more about anatomy and structure

Good trainers take the time to learn about anatomy and structure as this helps them better understand what they are trying to achieve. There are numerous text books and articles that can help you learn about the important role the big muscle groups play in propelling the greyhound along the track at such high speeds.

You do not need to know the name of every muscle or tendon, but you should understand where the important ones are and what they do. You should also be aware of the common injuries seen in racing dogs and try to do everything you can to prevent your dog from getting injured. After all, every injury puts your training back, or slows the dog's times meaning that you will no longer be competitive.





Chapter 7.3 – Basic Greyhound First Aid

What should I do if my greyhound is injured?

First Aid for animals is basically the same as first aid for people. Anyone who has done a human first aid course can apply their knowledge to their greyhounds. The aim is to maintain the basic bodily functions needed for survival, whilst recognising what is injured and protecting it from further damage.

Luckily, in most cases, the injuries suffered by a greyhound will be minor, but it is important to be able to recognise which injuries you can deal with yourself, and which injuries need to be seen by a vet. Many trainers try to cut corners by treating injuries themselves, but they may be influencing the dog's future performance if they fail to do the right thing. This is especially true with injuries that may look very superficial, but may have underlying damage to the muscles.

Danger First

As with human first aid, the first thing to do prior to assisting an injured animal is to check for danger. With animals, often the biggest danger is that of getting bitten whilst trying to help. Greyhounds are generally very placid animals, but all animals can bite if they are in pain. A muzzle is often the first thing required when tending to an injured animal. Luckily, muzzles are something all greyhound owners and trainers have access to. You can even use a 'tape' muzzle to keep the dog's mouth closed if needed. A 'tape' muzzle uses a bandage, lead, or even fabric to tie the dog's mouth shut for a short period.

So the injury seems serious...

If the greyhound has broken a bone, is bleeding, or seems to be unable to stand or sit up, then you will need to take it immediately to the vet. Once a muzzle has been applied, transfer the dog to the car or trailer and head off to the vet ('Load and Go!'). If possible, pressure can be applied to any wound that is bleeding – this can be finger or hand pressure, or a pressure bandage. If you are close to a vet, do not bother to splint or bandage an injured or broken leg – this can cause a lot of pain, and will have to be removed before the vet can examine the injury. Instead, try to gently support the injured leg as you load the dog. If you are further from a vet, then splinting for the leg may be warranted.

Make sure the dog has comfortable bedding for the journey, and do not offer the dog any food or water, just in case it needs to be sedated or anaesthetised once it gets to the vets.

If you have trouble lifting the dog, it may be possible to fashion a stretcher from a heavy towel or blanket. This can be slid under the dog, and then used to lift and carry the dog to the car using two or more people.

Bite wounds, punctures, and lacerations

The biggest problem with most seemingly minor wounds is the risk of infection, especially if it gets deep into the muscle layers. Infection can take hours to become fully established after initial contamination. If wounds are seen to early on, the risk of infection is reduced. In cases of deep wounds - such as punctures from dog fights - antibiotics need to be started within the first 6 hours (the 'golden period') to have the best chance of halting infection.

Waiting until the wound 'looks' infected a day or two later before seeking veterinary assistance is not the best way to manage a wound. By the time the area around the wound is red and swollen, a lot of tissue damage has been triggered, and recovery time is much longer. The damage may lead to scar tissue which will permanently change the area and its ability to function normally.

If your greyhound has a wound, start by gently cleaning any foreign matter from the wound. Avoid using strong disinfectants, especially those that sting. If you do use a disinfectant, make sure it is diluted to the correct strength. Often good old fashioned salty water is as good as anything - and it is safe if the dog decides to lick at the wound!

If the wounds appear to be deeper than just the skin, or if there is a large tear that might require stitching, the wound should be inspected by a veterinarian. If required, the veterinarian may prescribe antibiotics or anti-inflammatory medications to assist in healing. They will also be able to give you advice about the recovery time and rehabilitation needed to ensure your greyhound returns to normal functioning.

Other Injuries

Because greyhounds tend to race around at high speed, even at home, they are prone to other injuries such as sprains, strains, and muscle tears. Maintaining your yards in a safe condition may help to prevent some of these, but it is inevitable that at some stage your greyhound will injure itself in the course of having some exercise. These types of injuries can influence a greyhound's future race career, so it is vital that they are dealt with appropriately.

Any signs of swelling or lameness should be noted and immediately examined. Knowing which injuries will respond to rest and treatment, and which need to be seen by a vet is an acquired skill. If you are not sure, it is better that the greyhound is taken to the vet for a professional opinion. All trainers should have a working relationship with a vet that specialises in the treatment of greyhounds. It may be that your local vet is also needed in emergencies.





Chapter 8

Chapter 8.1 – Breaking In your Greyhound

What is Breaking-In?

'Breaking In' is the process of teaching the greyhound the skills required to become a successful race dog. This includes teaching the dog to chase the lure, how to be loaded into the boxes, and how to make a clean start. Although the chase instinct is inherent in the greyhound, as a trainer you need to teach the dog that chasing is a desirable behaviour. How the dog is broken in can influence the dog's entire racing career, so it is important that you get off to a good start.

When does Breaking In occur?

Breaking In usually happens when the greyhound reaches 12-13 months of age, although it may be a little later. Some breakers will avoid certain times of the year for breaking in, and as a result the dogs may be anywhere from 12 months to 15 months when they start this part of their education. Sometimes a young greyhound may be very immature at 12 months and might need a little longer to mature before beginning breaking.

Most breakers will have the dog for about 4 weeks, during which they go through an intense program of training. If you are doing the breaking in yourself, you may choose to spread the lessons out over a longer period, taking your time to develop the dog's skills.

Professional Breakers vs Breaking the Greyhound In Yourself

The greyhound magazines and papers are full of advertisements for professional breakers who can do the early education of the greyhound for you. Many of these breakers offer a great service and are knowledgeable and patient with the young dogs. Others are not so skilled, and may have many, many greyhounds at the same time with little time to devote to the individual needs of each dog.

If you do choose to use a professional breaker, there are still many things you can do to help your greyhound prepare for this time in its life such as teaching the greyhound to walk nicely on a lead, travelling the greyhound in the car or trailer, teaching the dog to come when called, and playing chase games with toys that simulate the lure. **You do not simply pick the dog up from the rearer and drop it off at the breakers!**

When choosing a professional breaker, probably the best guide is 'word of mouth' as those people who have been in the industry for a while will know who gets results, and who doesn't. Once you have a few on your short list, go to the breaker's property and have a look at the condition of the kennels and the dogs - are the kennels clean? Do the dogs have fresh water? Do the dogs look in good condition, or are they underweight or overweight?

You will also want to have a look at the condition of their training track - does it look well maintained? Poor track maintenance can predispose young dogs to injury which could potentially ruin any chances they had of becoming a race dog. Finally have a look at the breaker themselves - are they well presented and professional? How do they handle the dogs - are they rough? You are looking for someone who inspires confidence in a young dog, not someone who is rough and intimidating. You will need to weigh up all of your impressions, along with the word of mouth advice before committing to sending a young greyhound to them to train.

Getting Feedback on how a Greyhound has Broken in

Most professional breakers will have supervised the beginnings of many dog's careers, so they will have a good idea of which dogs break in above average and which don't. Remember they only have the dog for 4 weeks, and will base their opinions on what they see during that time. Some dogs 'break in well' meaning they learn the required behaviours, and are chasing in good times for their level of development. Other dogs will 'break in poorly' meaning that they have struggled with some of the skills, or are not running good times for this stage.

Unfortunately, this is a time when some dogs are rejected as potential racers. If the dog does not break in well, often the owners are told that the dog will not make it as a racer, and that they are wasting their time and money. If this happens it is then up to you to decide the future of the dog. There are many examples of dogs that have not broken in well, but who have been given time to mature, and have come on. Of course there are probably just as many instances where the breakers were right in their assessment, and the dog has not improved despite everyone's best efforts.

If your dog has been sent to a professional breaker, it is up to you to assess whether or not the dog is likely to go on and show improvement. It may be the dog just needs a time to finish growing, or it may be that the breaker has not been able to teach certain parts of the racing sequence. In this case it may be that some remedial training or a different approach may make the difference. You will need to consider the breeding of the dog, along with how it has been reared and trained prior to going to the breakers, along with its level of maturity before deciding what to do.

Doing it yourself

Many trainers, especially those with only a few dogs, prefer to do the breaking in themselves so that they have control of what happens to their greyhound. If you have also reared the pup yourself, then you have the chance to really put in the ground work, well before the dog reaches breaking age.

By doing the breaking in yourself, you can also ensure that the pup pulls up well from each run and that any injuries are detected early and dealt with before they become serious threats to the dog's career.



Encouraging chasing behaviour

Greyhounds have been bred for hundreds of years for their chasing ability. This instinct is inherited, and only needs encouraging - you do not have to teach a greyhound to chase moving objects, you just have to encourage it.

From 5-6 weeks of age you can play chase games with a squeaker or toy, dragging it along the ground etc., to encourage the pups to chase and play with it. This is a training opportunity that is often lost as pups are simply moved from their breeder's property to a commercial rearing facility.

Even if you do choose to send your pups to a rearing facility, you can still take the time and effort to do regular training. Most rearing facilities have so many pups that they only have time to feed and water the pups and clean the yards. Taking time each day to actually do some training or play with the pups is not possible. That is why you should look for a rearing facility that will allow you to regularly visit your pups and start putting in the ground work.

Even if you only have weekends, this is still a time to work on handling, teaching the pups to walk on lead, and playing chase games with them. It also gives you an opportunity to tend to other husbandry issues such as brushing the pups, trimming their nails or worming them when needed.

Most trainers use a toy, squeaker, squealer, or piece of fur to encourage pups to chase and play. These can be wiggled by hand, dragged along the ground or even hung from the clothes line and moved. Professional trainers often use a 'bull ring' for this, having a lure move around a small circular track for the dogs to chase.

The idea is to encourage the dogs to chase and grab the toy and have a game of tug with it. It is important that they find this fun, and that you are not too rough, that the dog gets to 'catch' the toy, and that they are not frightened by any noise that the toy makes. If the toy does make a loud noise, it is best to introduce it at a distance, rather than close up where the volume could be unpleasant. How you play and interact also makes the game attractive to the dogs.

This training can occur at any age, and is the first step in teaching the dogs to chase the lure. With young pups you can play in small groups or with each pup individually. Playing in groups can encourage competition, but it is important that each pup gets to 'win' so that you are not just encouraging the bigger pups to play, and teaching the smaller ones they don't have a chance. For shy dogs, one on one play is probably better to encourage confidence.

Once the pups are interested in chasing the toy lure, you can begin dragging it along the ground for them to chase. You can also start teaching the dog how to 'hand-slip' by having one person hold the dog and the other drag the toy lure whilst running away calling the dog. Once the dog is showing interest and is trying to break free from your hold, they can be released to chase the lure.

Getting the Greyhound Fit

Greyhounds are the athletes of the canine world and like all athletes they need to undergo a fitness program that helps them develop the right muscles for running, along with the cardio-vascular fitness required to finish a race. Increasing fitness is achieved by giving the greyhound a chance to free-gallop each day, either in a long straight run, or paddock, or at a facility designed specially for greyhounds.

In the past, smaller trainers were restricted in this respect by the type of facility they had. Often training out of their own back yard, there were few opportunities to give their greyhounds free galloping exercise and they were instead reliant on walking their greyhounds on leash to increase and maintain their fitness. Luckily these days there are now facilities open to most trainers that offer a safe opportunity to gallop dogs. There are 'slipping tracks' all over Victoria that can be accessed either at certain times, or by payment of a membership fee.

'Slipping tracks' are a fenced straight track of either grass or sand. Being safely fenced, the greyhounds can be allowed off leash to run, often being released by one person at one end, and either being called to the other end by someone else, or being tempted by a dragged lure.

It is possible to increase the greyhound's fitness using walking exercise, but it is less likely to increase the heart rate to a level that is going to lead to the long term changes that you are seeking. It also takes a lot longer for the dog to reach race fitness with this method. This is not to say that walking is a wasted exercise, in fact it helps expose the greyhound to the wider world, teaches it lead manners, gets it used to travel, and can be a useful variation in a training program to help keep a dog mentally fresh.

Progressing a Stage at a Time

The first week of a breaking program is usually spent encouraging chase behaviours, and getting the greyhound to chase a lure that is either dragged on the ground, or moved along in a circle (such as a bull ring). As discussed earlier, a lot of this can be achieved through gradual early training prior to breaking, but it is the first step in the training process.

Once the dog is chasing the lure reliably it is time to introduce the greyhound to the trial track. On the first few occasions, this will simply be a hand slip over a short distance. This means that you will hold the greyhound as the lure approaches, and will release the dog to chase the lure over no more than 200 metres. If you have done your groundwork, the dog should be eager to chase the lure, and you will have just started the dog's track education.

Teaching the Boxes

Once the greyhound is pursuing the lure properly, and has completed a number of hand slips at the trial track without any problems, it is time to start introducing the boxes. Teaching the boxes is a very important step in the education process. A dog that learns to jump out of the boxes well has a distinct advantage, as races are often won or lost at the start.

Most trainers will start by backing their greyhound into the boxes. This is done gently so that the greyhound does not get frightened or hurt in the process. Once the dog is in the box, the front is brought down slowly and closed. Once again it is important that the dog is not frightened by the closing of the lid, so avoid banging it down. You also need to make sure that no part of the dog is caught or trapped in the door as this will certainly make the boxes an unpleasant experience.

Once the dog is loaded, and the boxes are closed, the dog's toy or lure can be used to encourage the greyhound to stay at the front of the box. The lure can then be brought around, and the dog released to chase it. By now the dog can be allowed to go about 300 m as it will have been running well over the 200 or so metres prior to starting box training.

This is then repeated, with the dog loaded from the front again the next time it runs (about 4-5 days later). Hopefully, the dog will be getting the hang of jumping out and then chasing the lure. If the dog has been good, then the next time it runs, it can be loaded from the back with the front of the boxes closed. The first few times it is loaded from the back, it is a good idea to have a second person with the dog's toy lure at the front of the box. This again encourages the dog to move to the front of the box, and ensures it does not try to turn around in the boxes - setting the dog up for success right from the start!



It is important that the greyhound views the boxes as a good thing, as an indicator that they are about to have the opportunity to have a run after the lure, rather than a negative. What you teach them at this point is really setting the dog up for its entire racing career. If the dog is not doing well with this step, or you are having trouble despite taking it in small steps, it may be that the dog needs some help from a professional breaker. It is better to address the problem early, rather than let the dog get into bad habits which can then be hard to break.

Looking Out for Injuries and Soreness

After each run, the greyhound should be thoroughly checked all over for signs of soreness or injury. Pups are often awkward at this age, and their bones have not finished developing. They are also doing exercise that they have not really done before, so it is a common time for injuries to occur. By checking the dog thoroughly after each run, you will quickly notice any soreness, and can act accordingly. It may be the dog needs to be rested until it can recover, rather than running it whilst injured. This is where a private trainer has a definite advantage over a professional breaker, as you are not committed to any time frame for the breaking in process.

During breaking in, the dogs are generally run every 4-5 days, with free-galloping at home or at a slipping track on the days in between. This is of course, dependent on the dog pulling up OK after a hard run. If the dog is at all sore, it might be best to consult your greyhound veterinarian for advice as to whether the dog needs resting or confinement.

There is a description of a quick 5-minute examination for the common injuries in the book 'Care of the Racing and Retired Greyhound'. It is a methodical check of all the sites where common injuries occur. Checking for injuries and having the ability to notice changes in gait or running action are vital skills that all trainers need to develop.

If you are not sure, always consult your greyhound veterinarian. They are the person who can give you the best advice about treatment strategies that will ensure your greyhound returns to full fitness as soon as possible. Many new and inexperienced trainers get sucked in to listening to advice from other self-proclaimed 'experts' such as track staff and other trainers etc. Although many of these people have lots of experience and will give excellent advice, any wrong advice is likely to cost you dearly with increased time off for the greyhound, poorer outcome and even increased cost to you in the long run as you have to fix both the original problem, and any other problems you may have caused by following the wrong advice.



Chapter 8.2 – Pre-Training your Greyhound

What is Pre-Training?

'Pre-Training' is the preparation of a greyhound for racing. The greyhound will have learnt the basic skills required to race during the breaking in process, but will then be turned out for a period of 4-12 weeks. Pre-Training begins when the dog is brought back into work and is prepared to the point that it is ready to run its first race.

Why are Greyhounds 'Turned Out' after Breaking In?

The breaking in process is often quite a stressful time for a young greyhound. They are very prone to injury, and most will have some kind of soreness from the introduction of a new type of exercise that puts pressure on muscles they may not have been using previously. It is also quite stressful mentally. Most greyhounds up until breaking in have not had to do very much at all, and suddenly they are forced to learn a lot of new skills.

For this reason, most trainers will give their greyhounds a 'spell' (a rest) after the four weeks of breaking in has finished. The greyhounds are returned to their yards, and will only have free-galloping exercise - no visits to the track, no loading into boxes, no hard runs. This gives the dog time to recover both physically and mentally. It also gives their body time to mature further, which usually results in better co-ordination and increased strength.

What happens when you start Pre-Training?

The first step in pre-training involves a transition from the 'paddock' to a 'racing kennel'. Racing kennels house each greyhound separately, and are smaller than the yards they will be used to. The move to a racing kennel also involves a change to the greyhound's routine, which most dogs will adjust to quickly, but can be a little upsetting if the greyhound is particularly nervous or anxious.

The greyhound is usually vet checked prior to commencing pre-training to ensure it is free from injury, and it will be treated at this time for parasites - both internal and external. The ration that the greyhound is fed will be changed to a racing type diet - usually higher in fat and energy. Any diet changes need to be taken slowly so as not to upset the dog's stomach.



The first 2 weeks

The first two weeks of Pre-training concentrate on increasing the aerobic fitness of the greyhound, so there is plenty of free galloping exercise, along with some trips to the slipping track. Many trainers use 'competition runs' which are long runs side by side which encourage the dogs to 'fence run'. This means that they chase each other along the fence up and down, which increases the amount of exercise they get.

The aim of these first two weeks is to increase their fitness and muscle tone, and to bring them down to a suitable racing weight. Knowing what weight the greyhound should be is a skill that you will develop over time. Greyhounds in work are typically quite lean and do not carry any excess fat. You can weigh the dog weekly at this stage to monitor the dog's weight, giving you a feel for what its racing weight is likely to be. The dog will be losing fat, but gaining muscle, so it is more than likely that you will have to consider the weight in conjunction with the look and feel of the dog's body.

Weeks 2-4

As long as the greyhound is progressing in terms of its fitness, now is about the time to start giving it a few short runs, usually on a straight track for the first few trials. Runs are usually scheduled about 4-5 days apart, with the greyhound getting rested in between. It will still have free-galloping exercise, but will not run any trials on its 'days off'. This gives the greyhound's body time to recover after each hard run.

The first step is to take the dog back to the track at which it was broken in, and give it a run out of the boxes again. It may also help to load the greyhound into the boxes from the front again on this occasion. The run is only a short one over about 300m. The aim of this step is to refresh the greyhound's mind and help it remember its previous education.

At its next run (4-5 days later), it is time to introduce the greyhound to a different track, where it should be able to be loaded into the boxes from behind. Once again the run is only short, over about 300m, and this is repeated again 4-5 days later, and the times compared. You should be looking for some improvement.

There are a number of registered trial tracks around Victoria, and each Race Club will offer times where you can go and trial your greyhound on their track. Trial times and tracks are listed in the Advisor (the GRV monthly magazine that you will receive with your trainer's registration fee). There is a fee paid for each trial, and you have the choice of trialling your greyhound in an 'Arm Trial', 'Pen Trial' or 'Field Trial'.

An 'Arm Trial' involves the greyhound chasing an arm instead of the race lure. Trainers usually attach the dog's toy or squeaker to the arm, and the dogs are allowed to 'catch' and bite onto the arm at the end of a run.

In a 'Pen Trial' the greyhound is not allowed to 'catch' the lure, and instead run into the catching pen, similar to a race.

'Field Trials' involve more than one greyhound trialling at the same time. They are usually half fields, but may be only 2 or 3 greyhounds at a time.

Most of the clubs run a booking system where you ring at a nominated time to book your trial. They then give you a time for your trial, so that you know when you will be scheduled to have your run. By having a set time, you are less likely to have to stand around waiting for your turn. The contact details and ticket selling times are all listed in the Advisor under each club's heading.

Remember, the greyhound should receive a thorough check over after EVERY run, both when it first comes back, and after it has had a chance to cool down. If anything unusual is noted during your examination, the dog should immediately be checked by a vet, and its training regime altered accordingly. You should also watch closely how the greyhound moves, both at the walk and at full speed. It is often possible to detect early signs of problems by detecting changes to the dog's gait - maybe it is running with its tail up in the air, maybe the movement is uneven - these are signs of underlying problems that need to be addressed.

There is no point running a dog when it is sore or injured, as you are only teaching the dog that running at the track hurts. Dogs remember falls, and painful events, and often associate them with the place they were at the time. This is how dogs get scared of the vet clinic! You want your greyhound to enjoy being at the track and to look at it as a positive thing, not a negative.

Stepping the dog up - Increasing the Workload

If, on a number of occasions, the dog has managed to run successfully over the 300m and has pulled up well after the run, you might consider increasing the distance. This is done gradually, and certainly does not happen if the dog is not showing signs of improvement at the distance it is currently running. The first step would be up to about 400-450m.

Once again you are looking for the dog to be improving with each run, and to be running 'competitive times'. What is considered competitive will depend on the distance and the track, but there are good times and average times for each one.

The dog will now be running every 4-5 days, and will be checked after each run, so you should know how well the dog is progressing. It is a good idea to record each run time, along with the sectional times so that you have a record of what the dog is doing. You can also record the date, time, and weather conditions, along with any other important information about the dog in a 'Training Record'. If the dog is sore, or is not showing improvement, there is no point in increasing the distance it runs as you are likely to injure the dog or cause undue stress on its body systems.

Racing in Company

It is not enough for a greyhound to be fast, it must also learn to run with other dogs and to compete against them. It is not always the fastest dog that wins a race, but rather the most determined dog. A dog that is keen to chase, and is determined enough to push through the pack, take any steps to get in front and get closer to the lure is the one you want.

When first introducing a greyhound to racing in company, it is important that they do not lose their confidence. They need to be competitive against the other dog (or dogs) so they are not beaten by a great margin. In fact they will gain confidence if they have a chance to beat something.

That is why you should not think about racing your young greyhound with another until such time as it is running competitive times on its own. Only then should you consider educating it with other dogs. You will also have to find another runner who is similar in speed and ability to your greyhound.

It may be that you have more than one dog yourself, and that you can race them against each other (not littermates, or dogs that run together at home), but you may be forced to find someone else's dog to run against. This is where you will have to do your homework. You do not want your dog in a trial with an experienced race-winning greyhound as your youngster will get completely demoralised when beaten a long way. So you will have to ask around, and get to know the other trainers so you can know which ones are likely to have a suitable runner.

Initially, you should plan to trial your greyhound with one other dog - a 'one-on-one'. If your dog manages a win or two, you can then consider increasing to either a 3 or 4 dog field ('half field'). It is important that all the dogs are fairly evenly matched on ability, so that you can work on teaching confidence to your greyhound. A knock or bump during a race can lead to a loss of confidence, and can predispose your greyhound to injury, so watch the trial closely.





If you do trial your dog against another greyhound and it does get beaten, you will have to choose even more carefully next time. You really do not want your greyhound losing more than once or twice - you are aiming to teach it to win! Some clubs offer graded trials so that the maiden greyhounds are only racing against other maidens and the Grade 5 or Free for All greyhounds are trialling with others of equivalent ability, not against the maidens.

Deciding when to race your Greyhound

As racing time gets closer, you may want to consider running your greyhound in Qualifying trials. These are half field races (4-6 runners) that are run under race conditions meaning the greyhounds have to formally nominate for the trial and have to run wearing the lycra racing vests. This is an opportunity to give your greyhound experience as close as possible to the events of a normal race meeting and is yet another step in its education process. Qualifying trials are similar to heats of a normal race, with winners and sometimes the placegetters (depending on the number of heats) moving on to a 'final' which is held on a normal race day. This means if your youngster wins at the qualifying trial, you will be required to return on another day to race in the final.

Eventually it will come time that your greyhound is ready to race. It should be winning its half field trials, and should be running good times (both overall and sectional) on the track that you plan to nominate it for. The greyhound should be recovering well after each run, and be totally free from injury or soreness.

You will then need to nominate the dog for a maiden race over a suitable distance. The distance is usually determined by the dog's performance during training. By keeping an eye on the sectional times, you should have a good idea of how the dog is performing over each distance that you have run it. Generally speaking young dogs are not suited to distance racing, it is something that they may move into later as they mature, but certainly is not something that you would aim for with a young dog. (There is the odd dog that is truly a distance-only dog so if your greyhound is 'slow' over the 400-500m but is running strongly at the end, it may be worth trialling it over a longer distance to check if the dog is a possible stayer.)

At this stage it is time to make sure that your promising young greyhound is named. This is a requirement prior to being able to nominate the greyhound for a race, and is often left until the trainer is sure that the greyhound is going to be a competitive race dog. The naming process can take a week or two, so make sure that all the paperwork is ready to go well in advance. Your application for naming must be accompanied by a vaccination certificate showing that the dog has been vaccinated after the age of 12 months, so you will also have to make sure that this vaccination has taken place.



Chapter 8.3 – Race training Your Greyhound

What is Race Training?

'Race Training' is the maintenance of all of the pre-training a greyhound receives. It includes maintaining the fitness required for racing, entering it in suitable races, along with keeping the sport fun and interesting for the individual greyhound.

What is a normal racing schedule for a Greyhound?

Most Greyhounds are raced approximately once a week. If free from injury and suitably conditioned, a greyhound could ideally run once every 4-5 days, similar to the frequency of training. Of course racing is a little more strenuous and has the added stresses of kennelling, travel, and racing at unusual hours of the day. All of this can affect a dog's ability to recover after a race, and hence affects the inter-race interval that is necessary to ensure the greyhound is presented in top form.

If the greyhound is racing once every 4-5 days they do not really need any other exercise apart from some free galloping in between starts to maintain condition. If the inter-race interval is longer, then it may be necessary to trial the greyhound in between race starts, but you would only give it a hard run every 4-5 days, allowing for the greyhound to rest in between.

The thing that dictates the racing frequency is often injury or illness. If the greyhound does not recover well from a race, or is unwell for other reasons, then they should be allowed to recover fully before being raced again. Any time off for injury or illness will affect their overall fitness level, and it may be necessary to bring them back into work gradually until their fitness levels return to those prior to the time off.

It is not uncommon for a racing greyhound to reach its peak form about 14-16 weeks into racing. After this some greyhounds will taper off, and you may find that they need a break from racing to restore mental freshness. Giving a racing dog 'time off' can often mean they return to racing fresh and keen rather than allowing them to sour.



Watching your Greyhound's Form

As a trainer, you need to be watching and monitoring your greyhound's performance at each race. It may be that a few minor changes need to be made to maximise the dog's chances of winning. Maybe a small change to their racing weight, or a different distance or track may suit your greyhound better and lead to race success.

You need to continually monitor your dog's performance times and sectional times. These are often an indicator that things are not right. If your dog has suddenly lost ability, then it might be time to have it checked thoroughly by your greyhound veterinarian. They may choose to do a blood test, or may detect an injury that had previously gone unnoticed, explaining why the greyhound has lost form.

If the dog checks out alright, but is not doing well, then it may be that you look for 'weaker' company - such as moving to a track where the form is not so strong, or trying the dog interstate. Victorian racing tends to be the strongest of any state in Australia, with the city tracks attracting the best performers. It is better to have your greyhound winning on a country track, rather than being regularly beaten by stronger dogs on a city track.

This is where training becomes an art. Picking the right track, distance and company to ensure the dog has the best chances of success. Making any necessary minor changes to the dog's schedule to ensure it is presented in peak condition and free from injury and soreness. Good trainers pay close attention to all of the small details, and are generally rewarded with race success. You cannot expect to train every greyhound exactly the same, and it is the small differences that can really make or break a dog's chances. This is what separates the good trainers from the average ones.





Chapter 9

9.1 – Nominating a Greyhound for a Race

Understanding the Nomination Process

Once you feel that your greyhound is ready to race it will be time to nominate the dog for its first race. It is important that considerable thought be given to the placement of your greyhound in a race. In this regard The Adviser will be your best friend. The Adviser lists all meetings and advertised events to be held at those meetings. This information can help you map out a race program and answer questions like, is there a suitable race programmed for my greyhound? Or, are heats to be held which could require my attendance the following week? Obvious consideration must also been given to the race distance suitable for your greyhound. As a trainer it is important that you understand the GRV requirements associated with nominating a greyhound. These requirements are as follows.

Clearance for racing

Before a greyhound can be nominated it must be cleared for racing. This process can only be undertaken by a marking official (details of all marking officials are published in 'The Adviser'). The marking official will ensure that your greyhound's registration papers are correct, will sign the papers and issue you with a Weight Card. Once completed the marking official will notify GRV that all is in order and your greyhound will then be cleared to race.



Kennel Return

A 'Kennel Return' is a written notification of the movement of named greyhounds in and out of your kennel. It provides GRV the opportunity to know where individual greyhounds are so they know who is responsible for their care. It also means that you will be listed as the trainer of the greyhound within the computer database, allowing you to nominate the dog for races.

You are required to notify the Board of the names of all greyhounds domiciled or removed from your kennels within 72 hours of them arriving or departing (with the exception of retired greyhounds).

Every time a greyhound enters your kennel or leaves your kennel, you are required to submit a 'Kennel Return'. The national rule GAR105(4) stipulates that this notification must be given within 3 days of the greyhound's arrival or departure. There are two ways that you can do this - a manual kennel return, or an online kennel return.

Manual Kennel Returns

Kennel Return application forms are periodically published in 'The Adviser', can be forwarded to you upon request by GRV, or can be down-loaded from the GRV website www.grv.org.au (located under the Trainer's Tab in the 'Application Forms' section).

To complete a Kennel Return application, simply fill in the required fields on the form then either post directly to GRV or fax to the number listed on the form. Kennel Returns should be completed at least 2 business days prior to you nominating the greyhound for the first time.

Online Kennel Return

For your convenience, Kennel Returns can also be lodged via GRV's web-site www.grv.org.au in an area located under the 'Trainers' tab. This process takes only a few minutes and is easy to complete. To process an electronic Kennel Return simply undertake the following steps;

1. Select 'Kennel Return' from the drop down menu on the Trainer's Tab
2. Enter your member number (located on your membership card) and password when prompted. For first time users your password will default to your six digit birth date backwards. For example if your birth date is 03/06/85 your password would be 586030.
3. To include a greyhound in your kennel, hit the 'Add Dog to Kennel' button. In the next screen you will be asked to enter the greyhound's name, ear-brand and date of arrival.
4. You will then be taken to another screen which will show the dog's current details, and you will be asked if the owner displayed is correct. If the owner of the greyhound displayed is incorrect you will need to indicate the state in which the owner resides.
5. Once all of the details are correct, hit 'Add dog to kennel' again and greyhound will be added to your file.

Note that once a dog has been added to your kennel online, it can be nominated for a race immediately as long as you use the nominations phone line. However, if you are going to nominate the greyhound using the online nomination function, you will have to wait 24 hours for the changes to take effect.

To remove a greyhound from your kennel, simply follow the same log-in procedure as above. Once logged on, a list of all of the greyhounds currently being trained by you will be displayed. In the right hand column is a check box - simply click on the box next to the greyhound you wish to be removed, and then click on the 'Remove Dog from Kennel' button. You will then be asked to confirm that you have selected the correct greyhound to remove, and will be asked to enter the date that the dog departed from your kennel. Once these details are confirmed, the greyhound will no longer appear on the list of dogs that you are currently training.

Grading Guidelines

Greyhounds are 'graded' according to their ability. Dogs that are yet to win a race are called 'Maidens'. Once a greyhound wins a race, they move up to Grade 5. Races are listed as being for greyhounds of a certain grade, so it is important that you nominate your greyhound for the correct event (both grade and distance).

- » Maiden Races - for greyhounds who have not won a race
- » Grade 5 - for greyhounds who are considered grade 5 at this distance and this track
- » Mixed Grade - races that include greyhounds of two different grades i.e. 4/5, or 3/4
- » Free For All - open to all greyhounds in grade 4,3,2,or 1

The rules relating to the grading of greyhounds

LR30 Hierarchy of Flat Events

LR31 Special Events

LR32 Advancing Grades

LR33 Events Conducted by way of Heats and Final

LR34 Re-grading

Nominating a Greyhound for a Race

LR35 Nominations

Nomination means the submission of an entry in respect of a greyhound for a meeting or an Event in accordance with a current applicable method and providing the information required by the Board.

Once you have decided on a race that you would like to enter your greyhound for, it is time to 'nominate' it for that race. Nominations can be done in one of two ways.

1. You can complete an 'online' nomination. Available 24 hours a day at www.grv.org.au.
2. You can nominate your greyhound by calling the special GRV 'Nominations' Phone number - 8329-1111 (Local Calls) or 1800 138 507 (Country). Nominations are open from 7.30am - 12 noon, Monday to Friday (unless otherwise advertised).

It is important that you are aware of the nomination deadlines for the race meeting you are interested in - these are published in the 'Advisor' and can be displayed on line by selecting 'Nomination Details' on the drop down menu on the Trainer's Tab. The deadline is the time after which no more entries will be accepted for that meeting. Occasionally the deadline will be extended, usually when not enough entries have been received. Note that standard nomination closing times can alter where they fall due on a public holiday.





Completing an Online Nomination

When nominating a greyhound using the online function you will need to complete the following steps:

1. Select 'Nominations' from the left hand side of the GRV homepage (white number 3)
2. When prompted, enter your Trainer's/Membership Number and password
3. You will now be taken to a screen that shows all of the greyhounds currently listed as being in your kennel. If the dog is engaged to race (i.e. it has been placed into a field for a race meeting) it will show in the 'Engaged' column (green writing) If the greyhound is nominated for an event that has not yet been drawn it will show in the next column (blue writing)
4. In the right hand column, you need to select the dog you would like to nominate by clicking on the box next to its name. If nominating more than one dog for the same track and distance, you can select more than one dog.
5. Under the table of dogs registered to your kennel is the choice of Vic and SA. This allows you to nominate for either a Victorian race or South Australian race. It is set as a default to Victoria.
6. Once you have selected a dog(s), you will then need to click on the 'Continue with Nomination' button at the bottom of the screen.
7. This will then take you to a screen that displays all of the meetings that are currently open for entries, listed by date. You will have to select a meeting by clicking in the box next to the name of the track on the day that you are interested in racing your dog. Once you have made your selection, again click on the 'Continue with Nomination' button at the bottom of the screen.
8. This will then open another screen that shows the advertised events for that meeting at the top of the screen. Under this is a box that will display the selected greyhound and its current grading at that track over each of the possible distances.
9. Next you will need to select a distance from the choices in the column on the left of the screen. Then you will need to select a grade from the choices directly below the distance. The grades displayed will depend on what the dog's current grade is at that track. Apart from the grade such as '4', '5', or 'M', you can also choose 'GD' (grader's discretion), HCP (for handicap events) or 'SE' (special event).
10. Underneath this you will then need to select your first choice for event. The choices given are 'Heats' if you would like to enter the heats of an event, 'no special event' if you do not want to be entered in a special event, or 'normal' if you would like to enter a normal grade race. You are then given the option of giving a second choice if you cannot be accommodated with your first choice over this distance.
11. Next you can select any conditions for your nomination, such as 'no reserve'. There is a text box area where you can type in any other special request.
12. If you would like to, you can also nominate for a different distance (done in the right hand column of this page) using the same sequence of selections.
13. Once you are happy that your nomination is correct you need to click 'Finalise Nomination' at the bottom of the screen. This will then take you to a page that shows your nomination and gives a nomination number for you to record, or you can print the page. From here you can go back and nominate more dogs, or can return to the GRV homepage.

Nominating your greyhound over the phone

When nominating your greyhound you will be asked to provide the greyhound's ear brand and your trainer's number. You will then be asked to confirm the dog's name, and will need to stipulate the meeting you are nominating for, along with the grade and distance. You also have the opportunity to put in any conditions or special requests - such as 'no special event' or 'no reserve'. These are considered by the grading staff and applied where possible.

Once all of the information has been entered, the person taking the nomination will then read all of the information back to you to ensure that it has been entered correctly.

It is important that you listen carefully to nomination staff to ensure that your nomination has been taken correctly.

Rules relating to Nominations

LR26 Requirements

LR27 Conditions of Acceptance of Nominations by the Board

LR29 Participation

Nominating from Interstate

'Interstate nominations' are for greyhounds which have not previously competed in Victoria, South Australia or Tasmania and are not owned by members of these three states. They also apply to greyhounds bred in a state other than Victoria, South Australia, or Tasmania and again are not owned by a member from these states. This is due to the current computer database system where Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania share a common host system.

There is a special 'Interstate nomination' form that can be downloaded from the GRV website by selecting Application Forms from the drop down menu on the Trainer's tab.

You will need to complete the required information, and return it to GRV at least 24 hours before the close of nominations for the meeting you are interested in. If the greyhound was bred in Queensland and has yet to have a race start, you will also have to include proof of vaccination to at least C3 level after the greyhound turned 12 months of age.

Once the greyhound has raced in Victoria, you will be able to nominate in the normal way.

Withdrawing a Nomination

If you decide that you no longer want the greyhound you have nominated to race, it is possible to withdraw the nomination up to the time that nominations close for that event. If nominations have closed but fields have yet to be finalised, you can withdraw the nomination however a ten day stand down penalty will be applied to your greyhound from the date of the race meeting.

To withdraw a nomination, you will have to phone the GRV Nominations Phone number whether you completed the nomination by phone or online. There is no online function that allows withdrawal of nominations.

Selecting the Field

Once the nominations for a meeting have closed, the graders will then look at the greyhounds nominated for each race and distance and select the fields. There are generally more greyhounds nominated than there are places, so there is a selection process to determine which dogs get a start, which are selected as reserves, and which dogs fail to get a run.

Rules relating to selection of Fields

LR28 Grading

Order of Entry

The following guidelines are used by GRV Graders for the grading of race fields at race meetings. These grading guidelines have been approved by the Board and form the basis under which GRV Graders will grade race fields. While GRV Graders are required to adhere to the grading guidelines when preparing race fields, they have also been granted flexibility and ultimate discretion with the preparation of race fields.

Such circumstances may include the overall number of nominations received for the meeting, the number of nominations received for different grades and distances for the meeting, the number of events to be conducted at the meeting for different grades and distances, the race form of greyhounds nominated for the meeting, and the events programmed by the Club for the meeting. Please note that all race fields for all race meetings shall be graded in accordance with the rules of Greyhound Racing Victoria.



The following is the order of entry GRV Graders may use for the inclusion of greyhounds in fields for events.

- » Recent last start winners at the track of nomination at the **same distance**.
- » Recent last start placegetters at the track of nomination at the **same distance**.
- » Greyhounds dropping in grade at the track of nomination from a recent win at the **same distance**.
- » Greyhounds drawn as Reserves, which had not gained a start, at the previous meeting of the same track of nomination providing the greyhound is nominated for the same grade and distance. (In the event of a reserve greyhound not being drawn for the succeeding meeting at the track, every endeavor shall be made to include the greyhound at the following meeting at the same track of nomination.)
- » Greyhounds with best recent race form from other tracks.

Note:

- » Notwithstanding the above, GRV Graders discretion is applicable at all times.
- » The word 'recent' for the purposes of these grading guidelines shall be defined as meaning 90 days.
- » Any greyhound winning or being placed in a Non-Penalty race on the country circuit will not automatically be given preference in being selected for a start at a regular TAB meeting at the same country venue.
- » A win at a country race meeting and/or a metropolitan "non penalty" race meeting does not automatically guarantee a start at a metropolitan race meeting.
- » Where a greyhound wins a Group One or Group Two event anywhere in Australia within the past 180 days from the close of nominations for a country race meeting, such greyhound shall be graded as a Grade 4 or better greyhound, subject to the greyhound having already established its grade at the particular track, provided such win in a Group One or Group Two event was of similar distance. Where a greyhound's grade is determined at grade 4 or better in accordance with this grading guideline it shall thereafter be subject to movement within the various grades in accordance with the rules of Greyhound Racing Victoria. For the purposes of this grading guideline a similar distance to which the greyhound won a Group One or Group Two event shall be defined as a distance less than 601 metres, or a distance greater than 601 metres, as the case may be.
- » The GRV Graders may where practicable and based on form and suitable races being available, separate greyhounds trained and/or owned in the same interest.

The Box Draw

Once the fields have been selected, the 'Box Draw' takes place. The Box Draw is where each dog is assigned a starting box for the race. There are eight starting boxes with the number 1 box being closest to the running rail and lure, and number 8 box being the furthest from the running rail.

Most trainers consider Box 1 to be the favoured starting box for most greyhounds, although Box 8 would be considered advantageous if the greyhound likes to race wide. The box draw is a random draw, so no particular trainer or greyhound is favoured. The greyhounds are each assigned a number randomly, and these numbers are then entered into the computer, which in turn generates a random allocation of boxes. Once the box draw has taken place, the computer program locks this function so that a second draw cannot take place. (The box draw process is regularly audited by independent auditors to ensure that it is truly random and fair.)

The field is then published listing each dog according to the starting box that it will race from, along with the two reserves for the race (if applicable). The reserves do not get to race unless one or more of the dogs selected for the race are scratched. In the case of a single scratching, the replacement is drawn from the two reserves (randomly) and the reserve dog will take the box assigned to the greyhound that has been scratched. If the race is the final of an event and the field has been selected in order of performance in heats, then the 1st reserve takes priority if a scratching occurs.

If two dogs are scratched from an event, then both reserves will get a run, and a draw will occur to determine which dog starts from which box. Reserves are allocated at 8.30am on the day of race with the exception of 'day' meetings where they are allocated at 4.00pm the day prior.

Rules relating to the Box Draw

LR36 Box Draw

Scratchings/Late Scratchings

If your greyhound is injured, becomes ill, or in the case of a bitch, comes on season, it is possible to scratch it from a race. Scratchings are accepted from the time of the box draw, right up until 8.30am on the morning of the meeting, unless the meeting is a day one, where the scratchings will be finalised the day before (4.00pm).

On week days, 'Scratchings' are available from 7.30am-4.30pm, and on weekends from 7.30am -9am. You need to call the GRV Office on 8329-1100. There is no online facility for scratchings. It is the trainer's responsibility to scratch the dog. When you call, you will be asked for the dog's ear brand and your trainer's number.

When you scratch a dog, you will receive a 'Stand Down Period' - 10 days for illness or injury, and 28 days for seasonal conditions. That is, your greyhound cannot compete during the stand down period, however you can nominate for a meeting outside the stand down time frame.

'Late Scratchings' occur after the deadline for normal scratchings, i.e after 8.30am on the day of the meeting. If you scratch a dog at this time, you will not be allowed to nominate it again until such time as a Veterinary Certificate is lodged with GRV, unless the reason is that your bitch has come on season. You will still get the 10 stand down period for illness or injury, and 28 days for being seasonal.

Prize Money and the Tax Compliance Form

Any prize money that a greyhound wins is paid to the Trainer of the dog. GRV pays all prize money once each week on a nominated day and the money is electronically transferred into the recipient's nominated bank account. GOBIS (Greyhound Owners and Breeders Incentive Scheme) money is paid directly to the Owner and Breeder of the greyhound.

It is important that a Tax Compliance Form is completed and lodged with GRV so that payments can be made in full. It is a GRV requirement that both the owner(s) or syndicate manager as well as the trainer of each greyhound have submitted a completed Tax Compliance form. Owners and Attendants are also required to submit a completed form.

It is important that you make sure all of the required people have lodged a Tax Compliance form prior to the greyhound racing, so as not to hold up the payment of any prize money, or GOBIS bonus. If you have any questions about this requirement do not hesitate to contact the GRV Office.



What Do I Need to Do Now?

Having now learned more about the intricacies of training the racing Greyhound Racing we hope that you are keen to join the ranks of trainers within the industry.

Formal completion of this Level 2 competency along with Level 1 is required before you are allowed to register as an 'Owner Trainer' (someone who trains only greyhounds they own or part-own). If this is your plan, you will need to fill out an 'Application to become a Trainer' form and submit it to GRV, along with your answers to the assessment questions for both Level 1 AND Level 2 of this competency package.

If you plan on training greyhounds that belong to other people, you will also have to complete Level 3 of the Competency Package and submit the assessment questions that relate to ALL THREE levels along with your 'Application to become a Trainer'.

Many trainers start off as Owner Trainers and then, after having some success, are approached to train other people's greyhounds. The levels can be completed at different times as your involvement develops and your skills increase, or they can be completed all at the same time. If you have any questions regarding registration or completion of the competency levels, please call our Member Services Department on (03) 8329 1100

References:

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