

WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN YOUR FOSTER GREY ARRIVES

First few hours

The first few hours anything can happen! You may have a dog that has previously been in a home or to another foster house and will settle in very easily, or on the other hand you may have a Grey that is nervy and sensitive and stands there shaking. Each Grey is an individual and how they react in one home can differ to how they react when in other surroundings.

Also some Greys, as with all dogs may be sensitive to specific things. Some dogs don't like men and may have had a bad experience; some may seem aloof and frightened. Remember the experiences that the Grey has had before he/she came to you will influence the outcome. But you can influence the outcome as well and a supportive, safe environment with lots of love and patience will go a long way towards enhancing the experience for you and the dog.

When he/she arrives at the house make sure that you have a bed ready for the Grey and keep that area specifically for them so that they know that that is their area. Don't fuss the dog too much, be gentle yet firm and make sure that any children are introduced slowly to the new member of the family.

Take the dog out and introduce them to the garden area and surroundings and then let them explore inside the house, taking care to ensure that they don't relieve themselves in the house. Greys that have been kennelled often have an area that they use to toilet themselves so don't let this be inside the house. Frequent trips outside during the first few hours and praise will assist the Grey in finding a new spot outside to use as a toilet.

If you have tiled or wooden floors be aware that the Grey may be very cautious, never having stepped on such a floor before. Some Greys will just stand still and shake and not move. If this happens, don't pull the Grey or try to move them. Leave well alone and with a little praise they will find their feet and slowly move. For some Greys this make take a long time, for others it may only take a few minutes. Some Greys remain cautious for the length of stay and never get used to the feel of the floor under their feet.

If you have stairs expect the Grey to either take to the top as soon as they get in the house or take at least a few days to master this new experience. Going up is one thing coming down may need quite a bit of coaxing. Food or a special treat may work if not its just time and patience.

Let the Grey come to you of its own accord and get the feeling of the house before all the fuss starts.

Some Greys, in fact most of the foster dogs have never been in a home so have never seen common household items such as the TV, washing machine, vacuum cleaner. All these make strange noises so be prepared for a reaction. Try to have the TV lower in volume than usual and the Grey will eventually get used to the background noise. Different Greys react to the vacuum cleaner some aren't bothered by the noise and others cower in a corner. Never point the cleaner near the dog i.e. to vacuum around it or you may have an accident as the Grey darts for

cover. Introduce slowly and if needed put the Grey out of the room initially till they get used to the noise.

Children! Never leave children unsupervised around the Grey. They are no different from other dogs in that they may snap or bite if provoked but this is rare. A new member of the family is often an exciting time for children but they need to know that the new member may be nervous and frightened and that it will take time for the dog to settle. Allow the children to stroke the Grey with assistance but do not let children be too boisterous around the grey when it has just arrived. Time for play will come later.

First night.

Don't let the grey sleep in the bedroom because you are worried about them. Take the dog out before bedtime and then show it to its bed. If he/she is restless keep taking back to the bed and leave again.

Don't relent or they will be in the bedroom every-night and then on the bed before you know it. This may not be a problem for you but may be for a new owner.

First week

As time moves along you will see great changes in your new charge this usually occurs around day two, week one and then at two weeks. After that you are likely to see the true personality of the Grey that you are fostering.

Most Greys love their walks but remember never let them off the lead. Always have the Greys Green Collar on when walking so that the dog can be identified as required. Use the time walking to interact with the surrounding, people and animals. Most important is if you see a small dog, cat or another animal running, hold onto the Grey. If the grey is staring at the animal and looking interested, say No and tap on the nose with a paper or magazine that you need to carry for such event. This will let the Grey know that this is not recommended behaviour and not acceptable.

This behaviour is sometimes difficult to stop as if the Grey has been a racer it has been trained to chase. Some dogs are never safe with small animals that run others learn very quickly that they must not chase.

The behaviour is so strong in some Greys because not only have they been trained to chase but they are sight hounds that have a genetic predisposition to chase and course.

Walking

There is a misconception that Greys need lots of exercise. This is not the case, and although they love their walks they are not long distance walkers. A walk of 30 minutes is more than adequate. Some Greys will go for longer and they love nothing better than a sprint around their own backyard or in a fenced area.

As the dog relates more to its surroundings any idiosyncrasies will be seen. Usually they are no more than general differences in temperament but it is worth noting any major issues so that if they become a problem further information and help can be provided by GAP.

Feeding

Never give your new dog tinned dog food this is not good for their digestion and there is a tendency for the dog to have loose bowel motions. Find a good butcher who will

give you chicken carcasses, chicken necks at a good rate. Try to keep the dogs diet as simple as possible when it first comes into your home so that any digestive upsets can be dealt with as soon as possible. Generally Greys are not big eaters but I have had some dogs that will eat as much as you give them. Treats are an essential part of bonding so remember to factor those into the daily diet. Try to get as much information as possible about the dog's diet prior to coming to your house so that any potential problems can be averted.

Letting go

Lots of people say they couldn't foster because they couldn't let the dog go. I have had no problem with this as I know that I will see the dog again and if the fosterers are a part of our group many good friendships and regular contact with your foster dog occurs.

In fact after spending inordinate amounts of time on your new dog with all the worry, fear and concern over whether its settling down or not you end up being stressed and anxious and the dogs quite happy. You will need a rest before the next one comes along.

In Summary

The Greyhound adoption Program deals specifically with potential adopted Greyhounds so they are a major source of advice and information for you.

The only problem with fostering is that you will want to do it again and it becomes such a regular event that you will always seem to have a dog in your house.