



Greyhound Pets of America–Atlanta/  
Southeastern Greyhound Adoption

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# GREYHOUND FOSTERING: START TO FINISH

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## Greyhound Fostering: Start to Finish

Thank you for choosing to foster a Greyhound for Southeastern Greyhound Adoption (SEGA). The following guidelines are meant to ease your foster Greyhound's transition into the home. Contained within these guidelines we have listed the requirements of the foster home, so you can understand your responsibilities. The best advice is to combine these guidelines with a dose of common sense. When in doubt, email or call and ask. In the last section, you will find a list of contacts for particular questions or concerns.

### THE PICK-UP

We try to arrange a pick up at a mutually convenient place. SEGA has a kennel area in the Lake City Animal Hospital (LCAH) building in Acworth. We can arrange to meet you there or at some other location that is convenient for everyone.

These are the items that will be given to you upon pick-up:

- The blue SEGA collar with SEGA identification tag attached
- A blue lead
- A packet of information for the future adoptee
- A muzzle
- If you mentioned at the time of scheduling that you needed to borrow a crate from SEGA, please pick that up as well.
- Heartworm medication

Before putting your foster in your vehicle, give him a chance to use the bathroom. They almost always need to go when they leave the kennel. If you are having trouble getting the Greyhound to "hop in" your vehicle, you can lift them into it. Support her chest with one arm between the front legs and put your other arm behind her legs, not under the abdomen. If your foster has recently been spayed/neutered, you will definitely need to get her/him in your car in this manner.

### THE INTRODUCTION TO YOUR HOME

Please use the muzzle provided when introducing him/her to your pets. Although every attempt is made to cat and small dog test the Greyhound, the excitement of the day may have your foster dog a bit wound up. You don't want to start off on the wrong foot.

A new Greyhound cannot be left uncrated at night, especially until housebroken. Be prepared to either crate the dog in your bedroom (if it quiets him down), or crate him in an out of the way area where he cannot awaken you or your family. Although they have been crated their entire lives, some Greyhounds seem to suddenly act as if it is torture and will bark or whine. Your sleep is vital to a fresh, positive attitude about fostering, and we don't expect you to enter this endeavor sleep-deprived. Be prepared to do whatever it takes until this initial adjustment period is over.

### DAY-TO-DAY LIVING WITH YOUR FOSTER GREYHOUND

Below are the basics:

- One of the most important rules of Greyhound ownership or fostering is to never let the Greyhound off leash when outside of a fenced-in area. This means you need to make sure doors aren't left open and that fence gates are locked.
- Muzzle ALL greyhounds when in the yard together or when loose in the house. Failure to do so could result in injury to the foster greyhound or your own. If an incident/injury occurs because either a foster or your animal is not muzzled, you will be responsible for the cost.

- If you have a cat or other small animal, even if your foster has been deemed cat-tolerant, make sure that you muzzle at all times. A dog being introduced to a cat at the kennel is a very different experience than a cat running loose in the house.
- Use a crate or ex-pen when you are not home. Be aware that Greyhounds may knock over ex-pens once you are out of sight.
- Never leave small children unattended around the new foster. Many Greyhounds have probably never experienced the quick, impulsive movements of children.
- Do not allow them on the furniture. This is a hard habit for new owners to break.
- No feeding from the table or kitchen counters. This is another hard habit to break.
- No free feeding and please feed the foster hound in their crate or x-pen. Never feed them from the same bowl as another pet. They may go to a home with a dog that doesn't care for this habit, which can lead to disaster.
- If a Greyhound is sleeping or lying on his bed, leave him be. If you must wake the Greyhound, call out his name and be sure he is alert before attempting to touch him. Some dogs become startled when awakened suddenly.
- Swimming pools and lakes are new experiences for most Greyhounds. Please be sure to use care when your Greyhound is near such areas. Teach the Greyhound that the water is not a solid surface and that they should stay away from it.
- If the dog comes with a "call" name, please stick with that name or perhaps shorten it or pick a variation of the given name. Not only can it be confusing to the dog, but it may also deter a potential adopter from taking that dog if they think you have become very attached.
- Be diligent about a potty schedule. If the dog is not ready to have the run of the house, then keep a leash on her so you can quickly grab the leash and take her outside if she appears to be looking for a potty spot. Don't let her out of your sight to roam around the house in search of a spot.

## **SEPARATION ANXIETY**

Some Greyhounds exhibit unusual behavior when they are moved from the kennel environment to a home environment. This behavior is called Separation Anxiety or "SA." Because they have spent their whole lives with many people and dogs around, a change in environment can be stressful to the hound.

The characteristics of SA may include urinating in their crate, howling, and/or destructive behavior when the dog is left alone.

Following are some ways you can comfort your foster through his transition. Throughout the first few days, allow the dog to see you walk out the door (numerous times) and return shortly after. Your foster will soon learn that when you leave, you will return. If you have other dogs in the house, have them sleep in the same room with the Greyhound. If you don't have that luxury, the foster dog should sleep in an area so that he/she can see you. This should help your foster feel secure during the night. Urinating in the crate can be corrected by frequent outings as well as the use of a belly band or diaper. They may wet their own crate as a reaction to SA, but eventually they will tire of wetting themselves and will become comfortable with their new routine.

## **PREPARING YOUR FOSTER FOR ITS NEW LIFE IN A FOREVER HOME**

### **Play!**

Please have some fun with the dog! Teach him to play with toys or play hide and seek. Teach him to sit for treats if possible.

### **Steps**

Introduce the Greyhound to steps. This can often take a lot of patience and encouragement (sometimes even some physical help) but Greyhounds are usually quick learners. If you have another dog, let the foster watch him/her go up and down steps. Often this will give her the confidence to try the steps herself. If you don't have any stairs, take the foster where there are some. Steps to a bridge on a nature walk or steps in an apartment complex will do just fine. Start simple and work up to more steps each time.

### **Housebreaking**

There are various methods and opinions on housebreaking. *The best way to prevent housebreaking accidents is to simply not let them happen.* Take the Greyhound out frequently, even hourly if needed, to establish location. Take him out within twenty minutes of eating or drinking. Take him out, take him out, take him out! It may seem overwhelming, but over a few days you can gradually cut back. Leashing the greyhound to you will help prevent any accidents, as you can catch her/him before they have an accident. Even if you have a fenced-in yard, teach your Greyhound to relieve himself on the lead. If your greyhound is marking or having accidents inside the house, you can leash him/her to your beltloop when inside the house with you to be right there to catch them if they start to potty inside and immediately take them out. Please call or email for more on this technique that can really help with housetraining. Not everyone has a fenced-in yard and this will help with his placement. Please feel free to call your fostering support person with any questions.

### **Windows**

Some initial “bumping into” is usually the best teacher. You may need to purchase some “cling” type decals for your storm or patio doors to show the dog early on that this is a barrier to the interesting things outside. Pulling down blinds, even if they are left open, is a good deterrent. Also, watch your windowsills. A Greyhound might get so interested in the exciting events outside the window that the enthusiasm might carry over to windowsill chewing. Bitter Apple products are fine.

### **Feeding**

We prefer that you feed your foster a high-quality food. Acclimate your foster Greyhound to your particular routine to make it easier for you. You will need to separate dogs at feeding time so as not to stir up any competition. It is best to feed your foster dog in his crate, as this is what he is used to. *Do not feed your foster dog people or table food and please do not allow your foster dog to get into the pantry.* The certain results are diarrhea and three giant steps backward in housebreaking.

### **Counter Surfing**

Applying gentle pressure in bare or stocking feet on the back feet of a counter surfer (while he is surfing) can break the habit over time. You can smack a rolled up magazine against the palm of your hand. You can also fill a soda can with a few pennies and tape it shut. Shaking the can will startle the greyhound from what she/he is doing. Sometimes all it takes is a gentle shove and a strong “No.” Stoves, knives and glass dishes can be dangerous, and your foster Greyhound does not yet have any “house sense.” Don’t let him learn the hard way.

### **Slick Floors**

If you have hardwood floors, be prepared for a few skids and slides until the Greyhound learns to walk on them with confidence. You can scatter a few blankets or rugs around the house so the foster has a place to catch her balance if she needs to. Eventually, you may find that she will go sliding for fun!

## **TEST YOUR GREYHOUND FOR CERTAIN BEHAVIORS AND QUIRKS**

### **Trimming Nails**

See if your foster Greyhound is “foot shy” by testing whether he will let you trim his nails, if you are comfortable doing this. Always muzzle the Greyhound, as you are not sure of his reaction to having his paws handled.

### **Petting**

Try petting her gently while she is lying down. Dogs that prefer not to be touched in a prone position are not compatible for families with children.

### **Food Aggression**

See if she shows aggression at mealtime, or even just stops eating and hovers by her bowl.

### **Brushing Teeth**

Try brushing her teeth.

### **Child Testing**

Many of our applicants will have children either living with them full-time or part-time. Even childless families are bound to encounter children either through their friends or even a walk in the park. Try to expose your foster to children. Have a well-behaved, well-supervised child over to visit. Stay calm and have the child give the dog treats while being held on the lead by you. If all goes well, praise the dog and reward him. If you have

children in your home, do not assume this Greyhound will fit in and behave towards your children as your own Greyhound does. There are many online sites and books in print that have helpful information about children and dogs. Some of these are: *Childproofing Your Dog* by Brian Kilcommons (particularly, Chapter 4) and *Retired Racing Greyhounds for Dummies* by Lee Livingood.

### **Crating**

As mentioned before, keep your foster Greyhound crated when you cannot supervise him, especially when you are not at home. It is up to the adoptive family to decide whether they want to allow their Greyhound out of his crate when they are away, so your foster needs some “crate time” each day to keep him accustomed to the crate. Remember that these Greyhounds have been crated each day as part of their working regimen, so don't let them fool you into thinking that it is torture for them to go into and stay in the crate.

## **PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE WITH YOUR PETS**

The four tools of fostering are crate, muzzle, doors, and leash. Use of these tools is imperative in the peaceful transition of the foster into your home. Muzzle the foster Greyhound as well as your other greyhound(s). This should allow them to go through the usual pack-order posturing (hackle-raising, growling, etc.) without being able to do any serious damage. When you can't supervise the interaction, crate your foster. If you discover that the Greyhound is not cat tolerant or is just too cat curious, keep a door closed between the cat and the foster, or keep the foster in a crate when the cat is in the room. Be aware that a Greyhound can grab a small animal, such as a kitten, through the muzzle.

Please correct your foster Greyhound when he or she misbehaves. Dogs are pack animals and they show love and respect to the leader of the pack. Make sure that all the people in your family (kids included) are above the dog in the pack order. For Greyhounds, a firm “No” is all the correction that should be needed.

**Most important: Do not allow your foster Greyhound to be unsupervised at any time in your home.** You may think everyone is getting along just fine, but since a new dog disrupts the pack order in your home, do not leave the dogs alone together even for a minute. They may all be sleeping one minute, and in a brawl the next. Dogs will adjust their pack order usually without aggression if they are monitored by their supreme “alpha” – you.

## **SCREENING AND PLACEMENT**

After a few days, when you have had time to somewhat evaluate your foster, you will receive an email inviting you to join the SEGA Foster Yahoo Group page. We will also email you a “Foster Dog Report Card” asking you some basic questions about your foster Greyhound's temperament and behavior in your home. Please fill the Report Card out as soon as you feel you can relay helpful information and send it back to your foster coordinator. This information will help our Screening and Placement Committee find a good match for your foster Greyhound.

Please feel free to make ample use of the SEGA Foster Yahoo Group if you have any questions or concerns. Several families have been fostering for SEGA for years and they can offer valuable insight into your experience. Also, please post to the Foster Yahoo Group page with comments on your foster and send any photos you would like to share.

Once a prospective adopter has been approved for a Greyhound, Screening and Placement will try to “match” him or her with one of the Greyhounds in foster care or in the adoption kennel. They will then call you and give you the prospective adopter's name and number. They will also let you know if these people are going to “browse” among all of the Greyhounds available or if your foster is the best possible match for them. Once they give you the name and number, please contact your prospective adopter to arrange a meeting.

There will be times when you will be asked to bring your foster Greyhound to the adoption kennel if the prospective adopter is going to meet several hounds. Please be prepared to make yourself available to answer questions about your foster, but do not hover. This may deter the potential adopter. It is important for the adopter to have alone-time with the dog in order to establish a connection. You may choose to drop off the foster at the kennel and return a short time later.

## THE MEETING

If you and the potential adopter live far from each other, please arrange for the prospective adopter to meet your foster Greyhound in a mutually convenient place of your choice.

If the potential adopter comes to your home, please don't let your own dogs take center stage. Your own Greyhounds probably look sleek and beautiful after years of home life and can make the Greyhound off the track look a little rough. Also be aware that the foster may seem a little more stand-offish than your dogs because his/her personality may not have emerged yet.

While you are "showing" your foster Greyhound, please be as candid as possible. Answer questions strictly considering your own experience with that particular Greyhound. We all have a tendency to tell stories about our pets, but all dogs are different. For example, a prospective adopter might get the impression that all Greyhounds love their crates if you explain that yours do. The opinions that you express should only be those concerning your foster dog. Help the prospective adopters learn as much as possible about the foster Greyhound and not every other Greyhound you know.

After you feel that you have answered most of the prospective adopter's questions, give him or her some time alone with the dog. We don't want anyone to feel pressured into an adoption. Each adopter has to "take ownership" of his decision – we are not there to decide for adopters. They also may want to look over the Greyhound further, without wanting to appear to be too picky. Some of the most commonly asked questions will be about the minor scrapes that are in the process of healing, happy tail, elbow calluses and "bald thigh syndrome". Answer to the best of your knowledge and feel free to ask a SEGA representative if you are unsure of an answer. Please read and follow SEGA's Guidelines for Volunteers, which is also posted to our website.

## FINALIZING THE ADOPTION

If the prospective adopter decides she wants to adopt your foster Greyhound after the visit, it is time for you to "close" the adoption. It is very important that the finalizing of the adoption in the foster home be done correctly and completely. Please read closely the Procedures for Finalizing Adoptions and follow the procedures therein faithfully in concluding the adoption. The adopter must have the adoption contract explained paragraph by paragraph to him or her, and must sign the agreement before taking the Greyhound. Also, the adopter must give you a check in the sum of \$295 made payable to SEGA. Do not allow the adopter to take the dog unless you have a signed contract and a check.

If possible, send a baggie of the food you have been feeding with the dog when it goes to its new home. If the new owners are feeding something different, they can slowly mix that in with what they use.

If your foster Greyhound is "crate-hesitant" be sure you show the prospective adopter the gentle shove behind the hind quarters it may take to get him in.

Don't be surprised if you are a little sad or if your house seems strangely quiet after your foster Greyhound is gone. It is like parenting—the real statement of the good you have done happens after your charges "leave the nest." Of course, you will have the wonderful memories and peace of mind that you have truly done something to help another creature, not to mention the limitless gratitude of a wonderful dog whose days might have been numbered if not for programs like ours.

## PROBLEMS IN THE PROCESS? WHO TO CALL!

1. Your Foster Coordinator
2. Fostering Committee Chairs

Heather Simon  
[htinwb@hotmail.com](mailto:htinwb@hotmail.com)  
678-227-1582

Tricia Wehr  
[lilroo1112@hotmail.com](mailto:lilroo1112@hotmail.com)  
404-502-3176

We prefer that you email Heather or Tricia with any questions you might have with the fostering process, acclimating your foster Greyhound, or general questions about handling the adoption, etc. This is also your “first line of defense” if you are unsure who to call.

3. Screening/Placement Chairs

Suzanne Lipson  
[fastfriendsforlife@comcast.net](mailto:fastfriendsforlife@comcast.net)  
770-222-2235

Patty Winters  
[pwinters@mindspring.com](mailto:pwinters@mindspring.com)  
404-377-7007

We prefer that you email Patty regarding any problems with the health of your foster Greyhound, such as advice on whether he needs to be seen by a vet, to obtain authorization to have the Greyhound seen at a clinic other than Acworth Animal Hospital and to ask any questions about your prospective adopter(s) (including any “red flags” you may encounter while visiting with your prospective adopter). *To get medical attention for your foster hound, you must have authorization from Patty Winters.*

**Thank you for taking the time and making the effort to offer a foster home to these loving and dignified retired racers.**