



Exercise and Your Greyhound

Spring is here, and your thoughts may turn to enjoying the outdoors with your greyhound. Your greyhound will love spending time with you, and if you need personal encouragement, consider findings from a recent study by researchers at the University of Missouri-Columbia. They found that dog walking increased people's level of physical activity, helped speed weight loss and helped lower blood pressure.

In many ways, greyhounds are very like other dogs. In others, they are unique. Here are some things to think about when considering exercise with your greyhound, according to Greyhound Adoption Center's veterinary director Candy Lewis, DVM:

- Many of the greyhounds in homes today are ex-racers, and they are no longer racing for a reason. Many will have had injuries, some as serious as a broken bone, torn tendon or ripped muscle; others, minor. This may lead to arthritic changes later, and, even at a young age, could make long walks or running on concrete or other very hard surfaces painful. Always make sure any fast pace you choose for your dog is done on a soft surface, such as dirt or grass. Your dog may not tell you he hurts, but he could pay for it later.
- Second, consider that your greyhound doesn't have shoes! He runs on the pads of his feet, which can easily be damaged, especially by hot or rough surfaces. Before taking your dog out, feel the pavement with your bare foot or the back of your hand. Hot? Stay home or walk only on grass, preferably with shade available. Does the surface feel jagged, with broken asphalt or rough stones? Avoid those areas or you could end up having to carry your greyhound home because his cut pads are bleeding.
- Third, always consider your dog's physical condition. Just because he once was an athlete doesn't mean he still is. Even a young dog may easily be out of condition, whether he actually raced or never even made it to the track. Greyhounds were bred and conditioned for sprints, not distance work. Make sure you work up pace and distances gradually. Every time you go out, give your dog a chance to warm up first and cool down afterwards.
- Remember to bring water and a portable water bowl with you. Of course, keep your dog on leash in areas that aren't safely enclosed, and make sure your GAC and personal identification tags are on your greyhound.

Keeping these precautions in mind, it's a benefit to you and your greyhound to go walking and enjoy the sights and scents. A change of scene also helps keep your dog alert and mentally stimulated. Simply put, just be careful of what you ask your dog to do. He will try to follow your lead. It's up to you to make sure he stays safe and healthy.

For more information about greyhounds as pets, please visit: www.houndsavers.org.

For more information about the University of Missouri-College of Veterinary Medicine study by the Research Center on Human-Animal Interaction, please visit:
<http://rechai.missouri.edu/rp.htm>

Note: Please follow your doctor's and veterinarian's advice regarding any exercise program.

Contact:
Roberta Diakun
619-602-7272
info@houndsavers.org