

All Shook Up

By Heidi Gehret

When a greyhound is brought into a new home, even a seemingly calm dog will be stressed. You might not be able to tell, but he will be. Most rescued greys have never been in a house. Adjusting to the new environment, new family, and dogs already living there inevitably causes stress, which can lead to dangerous, aggressive reactions from any breed, including your greyhound.

It is imperative that you take charge of your new dog and create a secure environment for him to live in, especially when your grey is joining dogs already in your home. They'll all be stressed by the change.

Yes, you're excited about bringing your new dog home, whether it's your first or fourth, but you must be prepared. Think about what you need to do to create a secure environment from the dog's perspective. You should establish rules for him, starting from the moment he enters his new home. You must communicate that you are the one in charge, something your other dogs should already know.

The best thing you can do for your new grey is remember the dog's focus should on you, not the other way around. You should be the leader -- that's what he wants and needs and that's a "normal" environment in the dog's mind. No doting, no babying, not too much affection – believe it or not, all that causes stress in a new dog who isn't used to it. There's plenty of time for affection after the adjustment period is over.

GFNJ strongly suggests that all newly adopted greyhounds and your existing dogs be crated or muzzled when left alone together. All dogs should be muzzled and supervised when they're in the yard together, because what looks like a playful run can turn into an aggressive race between retired athletes who were always muzzled when they were at the track.

One more reminder; when boarding your greyhounds or other dogs, we recommend that they be kept in separate runs to avoid any stress-induced reactions.