

# Cat Training



If you have a cat, it is important to introduce the animals to each other properly when greyhound arrives to your home.

Things you will need:

- Cat training muzzle (plastic yard muzzle). A wire muzzle is NOT SUITABLE. If you do not have an appropriate muzzle contact Nightrave to receive one. Nightrave hounds and trainer-direct adoptions receive a free muzzle from Nightrave Greyhounds (we may ask you to cover postage).
- Crate. You can get a suitable crate from K-Mart for about \$60.00. If there isn't room in your home for a crate there isn't room for a greyhound.
- Treats for the cat and for the greyhound. Choose something each really likes. Roast chicken is often a winner.
- A squirty bottle (eg a Pump water bottle).
- Collar and leash for your greyhound.

The process:

1. Just before you go to collect your new greyhound, ensure that your cat is indoors and cannot get out. The cat should be kept inside when the greyhound arrives. The purpose of this is to introduce the animals inside, on your terms, to reduce the stress on each animal. If say, you bring your new greyhound home, and offleash it in your garden, of course he will chase your cat who happens to be there! He does not know that this cat is part of the family – to him, this cat is no different from a rabbit, or possum, or a rat. He has no idea that he is not supposed to chase it. Also, if your cat really does "freak out" about sharing its house with a greyhound, it cannot go absent without leave if you carefully confine it. You do run the risk of never seeing your cat again if it is extremely unhappy about the change in circumstance at home. If the cat is confined, at least you have a chance to control the situation and do the introduction and pack management on your terms, not the cat's.
2. For the first few weeks, you need to know where the dog is every second of the day, and where the cat is, every second of the day. IF at any time you don't, for whatever reason, dog cannot be offlead ANYWHERE. The dog cannot be loose in the garden or in the house if you do not know where the cat is, as you cannot guarantee she would not pop out from somewhere. This is simply to ensure that the greyhound is not 'set up to fail' – as it would not be fair to him. If you are not

there to supervise the interaction in the first few weeks the dog may chase the cat. Chasing cats is FUN for dogs – all dogs!! And then your work will get harder again. Remember - ANY chase situation is making it harder on both animals – it undoes the work you have done till that point too, and brings you back to square one.

3. Please keep in mind cats are not pack animals – most cats will not be impressed with the arrival of a new dog (or a new cat for that matter). Accept that your cat may well be upset about sharing their home initially. In time nearly all cats learn to accept this long legged dog, many make friends with their new housemate and some are even caught curled up together with a greyhound in no time at all 😊
4. Spend some time every day (10 minutes twice a day is more than enough) actively training both animals to accept each other. Time spent managing introductions in the first few weeks will pay off in the long run.
5. First introductions should be done in a single room (a lounge for example), with all doors leading to other areas in the house closed. This is to minimize stress and avoid a situation like the cat running up and down hallways - stressing the greyhound, and the cat. ALL adults in the room, while introducing and training, must be calm and not scream, panic, etc as that stresses the animals. If children are present, they MUST sit quietly and not interfere, run around, pick up the cat, talk to the dog, or open doors.
6. **Step One: Crate the greyhound and allow the cat to roam the room.** If the cat is confident and ignores the dog, or is somewhat interested in this new beast and approaches the crate, your job will be easy. If the cat is fearful and wants to hide, your job will be harder and will take longer. This is simply how it is – rushing the process helps no one.

If the greyhound is too interested in the cat, vocalizes or jumps up when he spots the crate, sit in a chair by the crate while ignoring the greyhound. When the greyhound lies still and looks at the cat, or away from the cat, and doesn't make noise, drop a treat inside the crate. If the greyhound vocalizes anything more than a quiet whine, or jumps up quickly, squirt him in the face with your water bottle. Do NOT talk to him except when he is lying quietly. Do NOT look at him. Do NOT make sudden movements or grab at the cat, or pick the cat up.

Within a few days you should be able to relax and watch TV while the animals get used to each other in this safe, calm way.

This step will take anything from **ONE DAY** to **3-4 MONTHS**. It depends on your dog, your cat, your room setup, and the number of distractions. Do NOT rush!

**Step Two: Have the greyhound out of the crate, leashed and muzzled, and allow the cat to roam the room.** Start this when the two animals are comfortable and basically ignoring each other at Step One. Hopefully by now the cat can comfortably sit in its usual spot, be that on your lap, the back of the couch, by the fire etc. Place your chair beside the dog's bed, hold the leash, and wait for your dog to lie down. If you have done Step One properly, Step Two should go smoothly. You can still use the water bottle if needed. Do NOT use the leash to hold the dog tightly – the leash is to prevent the dog from being able to chase the cat, not to keep him in place. The leash should remain loose at all times. If you find you have to pull the leash to keep the dog in place, you need to return to Step One.

You should be able to relax and watch TV from the beginning of this step.

This step will take anything from **ONE WEEK** to **6 – 8 MONTHS**. It depends on your dog, your cat, your room setup, and the number of distractions. Do NOT rush!

**Step Three: remove the leash.** Once your dog and cat can coexist happily in the same room at Step Two allow your dog loose. Do NOT open the doors to the rest of the house (this risks a chase situation through the home). Do NOT remove the muzzle (mistakes happen!). If your dog is overly enthusiastic, annoys the cat, the cat seems fearful, or there is anything else happening you don't like, return to Step One or Step Two.

This step NEEDS to be implemented for 2-3 months to give you confidence everyone knows their place. Only open the doors and/or remove the muzzle when you're confident that your greyhound has accepted the cat as a superior pack member, and that the cat has accepted a dog as a housemate.

7. NEVER EVER, in these first weeks, carry the cat around! Everything that is in your hands is made more interesting to the dog. You give him toys from your hands etc – and you don't want, at this stage, for him to confuse those two things. Make sure your children don't carry the cat around either.
8. You want the dog to see the cat as his 'superior', higher pack member. The easiest and the fastest way to achieve this is with food (pack leader eats first, other pack members wait, and once pack leader has finished, lower pack members get leftovers). This rule is ingrained in dogs' minds – you want to tap into that. Start feeding the cat in front of the dog, and BEFORE feeding the dog. Get the smelliest fishy cat food tin –prepare it in front of the dog and put it on the floor. Call the cat to eat it. Feed the cat in front of the crate, or put the dog behind a see-through barrier, or hold him on the lead (muzzled) in a position

where he can clearly see the cat eating and smell the cat food. Use the water bottle if he decides he wants to go there and eat the food himself. The idea is that he CAN'T have the food as this food is eaten by a higher pack member –the cat! Call him to you a few times and every time he looks away, praise him. Let him watch the cat eating as long as he is polite. Once cat is finished, let the cat go (open the door, or call the cat to move from the feeding area, or jump on the kitchen bench etc), take the cat food dish, walk over to where the dog is and give him the cat food dish to lick clean while praising him. Do this every dinner time, always have a hungry dog and the cat eating dinner before him; he gets leftovers and then after that, at some point, his own dinner.

This gives a crystal clear message to the dog: this cat is ABOVE you in this pack. Dogs love getting clear messages. Furthermore, he will now look forward to seeing the cat eat – as he will know he gets leftovers. 😊 Once he looks forward to seeing the cat eat – 90% of your job is done, as dog now has RESPECT for the cat and its place in the pack.

9. Once both animals are fine inside, and comfortable sharing the space, get the cat outside in the garden and bring the greyhound out on a lead. Do the water bottle routine etc, just to remind the dog that cat outside is the same as cat inside 😊 Most dogs at this stage will know this anyway – but as we wrote before, always err on side of caution.