



## How to Introduce Your Greyhound to Cats

*(Taken in part from [www.Greyhoundcrossroads.com](http://www.Greyhoundcrossroads.com))*

### Primary Resources:

Greyhounds for Dummies – page 58-60 – How to Avoid Fighting Like Cats and Dogs

Prison Greyhounds Adoption Handbook: Bringing Home Your Retired Racing Greyhound – page 13

### Important Points to Remember:

**MUZZLE!** No cat or small dog testing should ever be done without a muzzle.

**TEST ONE DOG AT A TIME!** Never let a dog watch another dog's cat introduction/test. If one dog witnesses another dog fail a test, it will likely fail as well. Excitement is contagious.

**TEST ON LEASH WITH PROPERLY FITTED COLLAR!** The Greyhound should always be leashed during introduction/testing. Make sure the collar is tight enough that it won't slip over the dog's head. If this happens you not only have a loose dog but likely an unmuzzled one as well. Hold the leash very short.

**TEST INDOORS ONLY!** A Greyhound who has no interest in a cat indoors may exhibit a high prey outdoors. A Greyhound and a cat should NEVER be outdoors together even if they have been living together in harmony.

**NEVER HOLD THE CAT DURING THE TEST!** Holding the cat above the Greyhound multiplies the prey drive. Let the dog meet the cat on the ground as if it were another dog. This same rules applies when introducing a Greyhound to a small dog.

**TEST IN A SMALL SPACE!** Introductions/Testing should be done in a small space where the cat cannot run away. You do not want the Greyhound's first interaction with the cat resulting in it seeing the cat run – prey drive will likely kick in. Too much like a lure.

**TEST CALM DOGS!** Do not conduct introductions/tests after the Greyhound has been running or playing. The excitement will carry over and the cat might be viewed as a lure/toy.

**TEST WITH A STILL CAT FIRST!** If possible start the introduction with the cat in a crate. Let the Greyhound sniff the cat while in the crate and then let the cat out but restrict the cat's movement and let the Greyhound sniff again. If the Greyhound passes this part, let the cat move around – but no running!



## The Process: Steps to Introduce Your Greyhound to a Cat

Place the cat in a crate (if available) in small room. Take the calm, muzzled, leashed Greyhound in to sniff the cat in the crate. If the dog gets excited, allow him to calm down before letting the cat out of the crate.

Let the cat out of the crate and encourage the Greyhound to sniff the hind end of the cat just like they would another dog. Dogs sniff hind ends but they grab prey by the neck so always present the hind end of the cat first.

If the Greyhound seems overly interested in the cat even after sniffing it, let it “bother” the cat a lit bit to provoke a slap from the cat. Most want nothing to do with a cat once slapped. If the dog chooses to move away from the cat, reward that behavior and then pull the resisting dog back over toward the cat. The more the dog resists the more it is firmly ingrained in its mind that it doesn’t want to bother the cat again.

Greyhounds that are not going to be cat tolerant or even cat trainable will only get more excited by a cat slap. If they back away for a second, they will excitedly go back toward the cat right away. This is likely an indication that the Greyhound is not cat-safe.

Very high prey Greyhounds will not respond to physical or verbal corrections. They will continue to pull and/or lunge and you will not be able to get their attention away from the cat. Some may bark or lunge while other may be very still and tense, fixated on the cat. Do **NOT** mistake a tail wag of a tense dog as an indication that they like the cat. A tense dog with a wagging tail is **NOT** a good sign. Some high prey dogs will even turn their head a bit as if they aren’t watching the cat but they are watching out of the corner of their eye. Once they see the cat relax and turn away they will take that opportunity to pounce. Be prepared.

If the dog passes the initial introduction, allow the cat to move a little faster and even jump up on a chair or windowsill, which can trigger the prey drive. If the dog responds to the movement of the cat, see if the dog will respond to correction. Tug the collar, give a loud “No, leave it” to see if the Greyhound can be distracted from the cat.

## Cat Training in Foster Care and After Adoption:

Even if a Greyhound is deemed cat-safe, there will be some work to be done once in a foster care or adopted into the home. There will be an adjustment period where the Greyhound learns that the flash they see out of the corner of their eye is just the cat and not something to chase.

Adopters should be advised to supervise and use muzzle as necessary. It is often wise to separate the Greyhound and cats when not at home. Always ensure that the cat has a safe place to escape to with the use of a baby gate.



## Working With Greyhounds & Cats: A Personal Journey

By: Tracy Kiser, Steeler & Jazzy's Adopter

### Primary Resources:

Greyhounds for Dummies – page 58-60 – How to Avoid Fighting Like Cats and Dogs

Prison Greyhounds Adoption Handbook: Bringing Home Your Retired Racing Greyhound– page 13

### Additional Resources:

Tracy Kiser, Prison Greyhound Adopter (Steeler & Jazzy) 812.390.2489

### Give Them Time, A Lot of Time

Give it time - way more time than you think it should need. Way more than you've ever had to give a dog and a cat to get used to each other. Each dog is different. We had Steeler nearly 4 months and it took 3 - 3 1/2 months for him and the cats to get comfortable together. We honestly wondered if they'd ever be comfortable together, or if they'd just learn to coexist it separate parts of the house. Now we're surprised to find one of the cats and the dog nose to nose sniffing each other or a cat drinking out of the dog bowl with Steeler watching and neither of them interested in the other. Just when you think it won't happen it probably will. :)

### Create A Safe Zone

Make sure the cats have an area that they can be in away from the new dog. Our house has a basement, so that became the cats' spot. When we couldn't be devoted to watching Steeler and the cats we closed the door and the cats stayed in the basement and Steeler stayed upstairs. The cats need to know that they have a safe spot.

### Be Prepared for Multiple Introductions

Keep introducing them - as often as you can. We tried a few different things. Some worked pretty well, some didn't. Here's what we did:

- **Hold the cat on your lap and bring the dog into the room** – this didn't work well for us. The cat was so scared. He was unhappy to be with us and wanted to get away. Steeler could tell that the cat was stressed/unhappy and watched it like a hawk the entire time. When the cat sensed that he could get away he jumped down and ran which only made Steeler more interested in the cat, because, "Hey - it ran! That would be fun to chase!"
- **Take everything that belongs to the dog (bed, blankie, toys) out of the dog's crate;** put the cat in; bring the dog near the crate and let them see each other – this one worked pretty well. The cat was still upset, but couldn't get away. Steeler could walk right up to the crate and sniff. We did this a few times, and always kept Steeler on a leash and muzzled. That way we could pull his head away and tell him "No" firmly if he seemed too interested (e.g., couldn't take his eyes off the cat). We never did this for longer than 10 minutes so that it didn't stress the cat out too badly.
- **Allow the animals into each other's areas of the house** - we did this a lot and it worked pretty well for us. At first this meant that Steeler was muzzled and on a leash that was attached to a person. We did this as often as we could - sometimes (on weekdays/nights when we didn't have a ton of free time) for only 30 minutes or an hour other times (on weekends when we



could just sit around the house) for hours at a time. Anytime the cats came around we watched him; if he was too interested we'd turn his head away from them and tell him NO. If he behaved well (looked at the cat then looked away, or only raised his head to see what came in to the room than laid back down, etc.) he got lots and lots of praise and pats. Just sending the message that we really liked it when he didn't pay attention to the cats and we really didn't like it when he did. Over time we were able to just lay the leash down (not hold it) and have them in the same room together; then we were able to let Steeler be in the area with just the muzzle on (no leash); then we were able to work up to no muzzle on, but nearby in case he misbehaved and we needed it on; then, finally, no muzzle. I can't give you a timetable for that - you have to watch your dog and see how she's doing and base it on that. Just know that (back to the first point) it will feel like it's taking forever and that you're not making progress. But you are.....every day.....I promise. :)

### **Use A Squirt Bottle of Water**

This was HUGE for us and made all the difference. Steeler, it turns out really doesn't like to be wet. He hates bath time (that's how he got the name Spook while he was in the prison), only goes out in the rain if he absolutely has to, and not surprisingly cannot stand to be sprayed in the face with water. We used this in conjunction with leash and muzzle when the animals were in the same space. If Steeler went after the cat, or stared too much, or whatever we didn't want him to do, he got a firm "No!" and a spray in the face. It really only took a couple sprays (literally, only 2-3 – he hates water that much!) before he'd stop what he was doing whenever we touched the spray bottle. Not all dogs may have this strong a dislike of water, but it worked well with Steeler.

### **Praise Your Greyhound!**

Lots and lots of praise – anytime your greyhound does anything "right" around the cats love on her. Over and over and over again until you feel silly for making such a big deal out of how good she is. She just needs to know that good behavior gets a reward. Later, once everyone's living in harmony, you won't have to do it so much.

### **Find the Right Time to Trust**

Trust your greyhound to tell you when she's ready for the next step; and trust yourselves to know that you're doing a good job with her. You read/hear so much about the chase instinct and how it can be so strong in some dogs that they'll never be able to be near a cat that it's easy to start to think you've got one of those dogs. We thought maybe we did. But, greyhounds are so sweet and really want you to be pleased with them; it's not their fault they've been bred for generations to chase fuzzy things that move quickly. Steeler was tough – having grown up with cats and dogs I was more of an, "eh, put them together and they'll figure it out" kind of person when it came to introducing them. I knew that wouldn't work with a greyhound, but wasn't entirely prepared for the amount of time and effort it would take to get Steeler to realize that those cats live in our house and aren't for chasing. When we finally got it through our heads that he would (one day) be fine with the cats and we needed to relax and give it however long it took things got better.