

Cat Training In Foster Care And After Adoption

Some training will have to be done with ALL greyhounds no matter how "tolerant" they seem to be during their test. A dog has to make a split second decision not to chase when they see a flash of movement out of the corner of their eye. All dogs have to learn that that movement is just the cat, by exposure and supervision. It isn't something that happens immediately because they met one cat during a test. It is likely to take a little more time with a "cat trainable" dog than one with a very low prey drive that gets a "cat tolerant" rating, but the process is the same for all greyhounds. We also recommend this process for all adoptive homes introducing greyhounds to small dogs. This is especially true of dogs that have not been fostered in a home with cats and have only met cats once during a test.

A cat test should not be considered 100 percent accurate!!! It is just a test of how that dog was on that particular day with one cat. No matter how safe, cute and harmless they seem to be; all dogs are still predators. **They should all have supervision for weeks or months around small animals.** Always err on the side of caution and keep your new greyhound muzzled and supervised around small animals until YOU are very confident of their behavior. Some owners always separate their dogs and cats when they leave the house just to be safe.

Use Your muzzle! Greyhound adoption groups should provide kennel muzzles to ALL adopters and foster homes. If you need one, go to our [trading post](#) or see our [links](#) page to buy one. They are not cruel, and your greyhound is already used to wearing one. Since our breed is used to wearing muzzles it is a wonderful tool that we have access to that makes cat training safer. We consider a muzzle to be an insurance policy and ask all adopters and foster homes to use it until they are 100 percent confident of their dog's behavior. There is no harm in having your dog wear a muzzle too long, the only harm is if you remove it too soon.

It is very important to keep cat tolerant and cat trainable dogs ON LEASH around the cat at first until it is very used to seeing the cat or small dog running around. That allows you to correct and stop the dog if it makes a mistake and gets excited and wants to chase. Once a dog chases a cat it can be very difficult to convince him that he doesn't want to do it again, because it is fun. We have had a few dogs that seemed pretty cat tolerant, change to very unsafe, after getting to chase a cat only one time. It is very important to prevent that from happening by using the leash and crating the dog when you can't supervise it. We want to keep your cat and small animals safe as much as you do.

Outside cats and greyhounds SHOULD NEVER MIX!!! Dogs are predators and even the most cat friendly dogs will chase a squirrel or chipmunk in the yard. Dogs are also territorial and squirrels and the neighbor's cat aren't likely to be welcome in their yard. These two instincts together mean that a pretty complex thought process has to go on in the greyhound's head to prevent it from chasing your outdoor cat. A greyhound has to recognize that darting ball of fluff in the bushes is a cat and not a squirrel, rabbit or lure. Then it has to identify the cat, specifically as the cat it lives with, instead of an intruder. Finally, it has to decide to abort the chase, most likely, already in process. That is a lot of thinking for a dog so fast that can reach a cat anywhere in the yard in 2 or 3 seconds. In the house, the greyhound has to decide to get up off the couch before chasing the cat, which makes cat chasing a lot less appealing.

Reprint: Greyhound Crossroads