

In Preparation

- If possible, start off property in a neutral environment or in a very large space on property. Try to minimise external distractions (other dogs, traffic, toys, lots of people etc).
- Have high value treats ready (Chunkers, cut up dog roll etc). Also have treats available that can be fed through the muzzle for later training (baby food pouches or wet cat treat sachets)
- Two handlers – one per dog.
- Other dog can be any breed that isn't a greyhound and would need to be dog social.
- When greyhound is socialising with the other dog well, have a third person (or stationary phone) to film the dogs interacting that can be sent to GAP prior to FastTrack entry.

Stage 1 - Distance training

1. Start with a distance of 30-50m between your greyhound and the other dog, walk parallel to the other dog, each time your greyhound looks at the other dog, call its name. When your greyhound disengages and looks back at you, mark it with "YES" and give it a treat reward. Continue to do this on a couple of parallel laps. Keep the sessions short and sharp for best results. The goal here is to teach the greyhound that if you disengage from the other dog that's how you get a reward, staring, barking, or lunging at the other dog is not the behaviour that you will get rewarded for. We want to keep the training sessions short and sharp, around 5-10mins, and finish on a win (this could mean cutting the session short to ensure you finish on a positive note).
2. As your greyhound learns and begins to disengage by itself ensure you capture that behaviour and mark it with "YES" and reward. When your greyhound begins to consistently disengage by itself and is understanding the desired behaviour, we can start progressing closer.
3. Progress closer in increments of 5m and continue the parallel walks and repeat the first step. Continue to get closer as the greyhound displays that it can disengage by itself. If you move closer and the greyhound doesn't handle it well, just move back to a distance that the greyhound is comfortable and try again.
4. Once your greyhound has progressed to be within 3m of the other dog and consistently disengaged by itself, you can then progress to the dogs meeting each other.

Notes:

- If your greyhound is struggling to disengage from the other dog, increase the distance of separation and start again.
- If your greyhound is not responding to its name, end the session and give the dogs a break. Start another training session with only the greyhound and work on calling the greyhounds name and marking it with "YES" and rewarding it every time the greyhound turns towards you to reinforce the greyhound responding to its name. When the greyhound can consistently do that, then try again with the dog desensitisation. It may take a few individual sessions to achieve this.

Stage 2 - Dogs meeting each other

1. Start with the greyhound muzzled, begin with both dogs walking on lead on either side at a distance of approx. 5m. If both dogs comfortably walk next to each other, you can bring the greyhound in for a short butt sniff (3-5 secs) whilst continuing to walk forward. If that goes well continue walking and bring the other dog in for a butt sniff. If both interactions go well, you can begin circling with the dogs sniffing each other's butts and changing directions so both dogs get the opportunity.
2. If the above step went well, we can now let the dogs interact together on lead with the greyhound still muzzled. Take both dogs into a large, fenced yard. If they continue to interact well, you can drop the leads and supervise them interacting. If either dog is showing signs of fear or the dogs are getting excessively physical with each other, separate the dogs for a break and try again. Some dogs struggle to read social cues from the other dog and need help by being separated for a break and trying again.
3. When both dogs can interact politely and friendly with a dropped lead, you can remove the leads and supervise their interaction. When you are comfortable that they are interacting well, you can remove the muzzle and supervise.

Notes:

- If there is uncomfortable body language from either dog (stiffened body, growling barking, try etc) give the dogs a break before attempting to introduce them again. You want to intervene before the behaviour escalates to something more severe.
- At any point if either dog shows high levels of antisocial behaviour, e.g. snapping, the greyhound 'punching' the other dog with its muzzle or high levels of fear, cease interaction immediately. This includes if either dog is trying to get away from the interaction.
- Some greyhounds pick up social cues very quickly, and others take some time and patience. So, ending the interaction when either dog displays that behaviour, will help them learn that behaviour is not acceptable. When they display the correct behaviour, ensure that you praise them and reinforce that behaviour.