



Introducing your Italian Greyhound

Welcome to the wonderful world of Italian Greyhounds. This material was prepared by the Italian Greyhound Club of America (founded in 1954) to give you sources of information about the newest member of your family, to help you take proper care of your Italian Greyhound, and to assist you to become a responsible dog owner.

Characteristics of the Breed

The Italian Greyhound (or IG) is a true greyhound, his small size the result of selective breeding. There is some difference of opinion as to whether he was originally bred for hunting small game or was meant to be simply a pet and companion. It seems most likely that he filled both roles. For this reason he is very adaptable to both city and country living. He is rather luxury loving and enjoys the comfort of an apartment; at the same time being a true hound, he likes exercise and outdoor activities.

Perhaps the most outstanding characteristic of the Italian Greyhound is his affectionate disposition. He thrives best when this affection is returned and is happiest with his owner and immediate family. For this reason, he may sometimes seem a trifle aloof with strangers. He is sensitive, alert, and intelligent and remains playful until long past puppyhood. Due to fine bone structure and sometimes timid or sensitive personality, Italian Greyhounds in general do not make good pets for households with very young or rambunctious children or large, active dogs. IGs are brilliant at problem solving and are quick learners who don't necessarily equate obedience with love, to the chagrin of many a newcomer to the breed! Some have done well in obedience trials and many excel in the new sport of Agility.

Care of Your New Italian Greyhound

Your puppy needs exercise and attention. Sufficient exercise helps to prevent destructive behavior as well as builds physical strength and dexterity. Teach your puppy how to jump. At first concentrate on helping the puppy jump off low objects until he can safely negotiate household furniture. Italian Greyhound puppies think they can fly and will blithely leap out into space. The highest bed or table holds no terrors for the unknowing puppy. Frequent bursts of energy will be followed by periods of rest. Until your IG develops common sense you will want to be alert to situations that could lead to a leg break.

Although Italian Greyhounds need little in the way of coat

grooming, nails must be done on a regular basis: 1-3 times weekly with an electric grinder or file for conformational health and to help prevent leg breaks. Greyhounds' nails grow longer and faster than other breeds. This robust growth often includes the quick (soft interior of the nail) so you should grind nails as often as necessary to maintain nails that clear the floor on the free standing dog.

As soon as the adult teeth have come in, you can begin brushing them using an unflavored toothpaste and brush designed for canines. Brush daily for optimum oral hygiene and to prevent gum disease, which is a common problem for Italian Greyhounds that do not receive this level of care. A yearly professional dental examination is highly recommended.

While Italian Greyhounds bond strongly to their owners, they are less interested in strangers or children unless they are socialized to children, many people, and new situations early and constantly. Take your puppy with you as often as you can and for walks around the neighborhood. Teach your dog where he lives.

Puppies need to be fed three times a day, usually until the age of at least 6 months. An Italian Greyhound's stomach capacity is too small to obtain the necessary nutrition it needs from a low quality dog food. He just cannot eat enough to meet his own high energy requirements. Feed a premium puppy food. After the age of 6 months, some puppies will let you know they can do without the noon time meal. Others will need three meals a day for months longer. An adult should be fed twice a day with fresh water always available. Italian Greyhounds should be fed a quality, premium food.

Destructive behavior is sure to occur if your puppy is left unattended and unrestricted in the house for long periods of time. The puppy will find something to occupy his time and most certainly it will not be what you would suggest. If you must leave the puppy alone, it should be crated (for not more than 2-3 hours) or safe in an exercise pen with lid with papers on the floor and toys and chew bones to help pass the time. Crating puppies for extended periods of time will lead to elimination in the crate—a very difficult habit to break and no help in house-training.

Italian Greyhound puppies do not have the ability to go without eliminating for long periods of time. They must be taken outside for house training very often or reminded to go on their papers for paper training. As a consequence, house training can be very difficult if there is no one home during the day. For the first couple of years it will be your task to make sure the puppy does not eliminate in the wrong place and gets praise for going where you choose. Do not expect a very young pup to be reliable about holding "it" or getting to the papers in time. Between 14 - 16 weeks, the Italian Greyhound puppy begins to develop true bladder control but mental maturity factors can undermine your house-training program. Diligent attention to house training for the first couple of years of your pet's life will result in a clean companion that you will enjoy for many, many years.

A puppy that is not a show and breeding prospect should be spay/neutered to prevent accidental breeding. Italian Greyhounds are, as a rule, quite healthy but do maintain a good relationship with your vet and schedule yearly wellness visits for your dog. Vaccinate and use other preventative treatments as advised by your veterinarian for your locale.

The adolescent Italian Greyhound is active and energetic and needs continuing attention and exercise. Long walks on

a martingale collar and lead and free play in a safely fenced area will be greatly enjoyed by both owner and puppy. Italian Greyhounds have not lost their hunting instinct. They will chase anything that moves, and that includes cars. Be very careful with your puppy and even grown dog anywhere there is traffic. An Italian Greyhound can dart out into the road, even pulling the leash out of your hand, to chase the cat or squirrel it has seen on the other side of the street.

Since the Italian Greyhound is a very short-coated canine, it does react negatively to extremely cold temperatures and rain. IGs do not seem to mind cavorting in the snow but they dislike rain in

their faces. However, brief periods of exercise are enjoyed even in bad weather. They are not kennel, backyard or basement dogs.

While in the house, on cool, nasty days, your Italian Greyhound will want to snuggle under the covers on the bed or the family room sofa. On the whole, the breed would much rather be in your lap or bed than on the floor.

It is not unusual for an Italian Greyhound to live until 14 or 15 years and many times a longer life can be expected. The time and attention you lavish on your puppy will be rewarded by many years of cherished companionship from your devoted Italian Greyhound.

The Official Breed Standard of the Italian Greyhound

The American Kennel Club approved standard is the official description of the ideal adult Italian Greyhound. Judges at dog shows use this standard to evaluate entries, and conscientious breeders strive to produce specimens that fit this description.

Description: The Italian Greyhound is very similar to the Greyhound, but much smaller and more slender in all proportions and of ideal elegance and grace.

Head: Narrow and long, tapering to the nose, with a slight suggestions of stop.

Skull: Rather long, almost flat.

Muzzle: long and fine.

Nose: Dark. It may be black or brown or in keeping with the color of the dog. A lightly or partly pigmented nose is a fault.

Teeth: Scissors bite. A badly undershot or overshot mouth is a fault.

Eyes: Dark, bright, intelligent, medium in size. Very light eyes are a fault.

Ears: Small, fine in texture; thrown back and folded except when alerted, then carried folded at right angles to the head. Erect or button ears severely penalized.

Neck: Long, slender and gracefully arched.

Body: Of medium length, short coupled; high at withers, back curved and drooping at hindquarters, the highest point of curve at start of loin, creating a definite tuck-up at flanks.

Shoulders: Long and sloping.

Chest: Deep and narrow.

Forelegs: Long, straight, set well under shoulder; strong pasterns, fine bone.

Hindquarters: Long, well-muscled thigh; hind legs parallel when viewed from behind, hocks well let down, well-bent stifle.

Feet: Hare foot with well arched toes. Removal of dew claws optional.

Tail: Slender and tapering to a curve end, long enough to reach



the hock; set low, carried low. Ring tail a serious fault, gay tail a fault.

Coat: Skin fine and supple, hair short, glossy like satin and soft to the touch.

Color: Any color and markings are acceptable except that a dog with brindle markings and a dog with the tan markings normally found on black-and-tan dogs of other breeds must be disqualified.

Action: High stepping and free, front and hind legs to move forward in a straight line.

Size: Height at withers, ideally 13"-15"

Disqualifications: A dog with brindle markings or a dog with the tan markings normally found on black-and-tan dogs of other breeds.

Resources

Breed Magazine

The Italian Greyhound

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National Club

Italian Greyhound Club of America

For further information about Italian Greyhound care, training, breeding, health issues/testing, member breeders and mentors in your area and IG Rescue, please visit the National breed club's website:

www.italiangreyhound.org

For contact information for IGCA member breeders in your area, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to:

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