

# HELP SHEET: ALONE TIME MANAGEMENT

Leaving your new greyhound home on his own for the first time can be scary both for you and your new best friend. A common mistake made by new owners is that they do not slowly introduce the greyhound to being alone for brief periods. So, when they then go back to work again, the Greyhound is suddenly left on his own all day which can cause considerable distress.

Practicing alone time is a great way to get your new greyhound used to being alone in a controlled and stress-free way. This should be done at the dog's own pace, ensuring that their time alone is only increased when he/she is calm and in a positive emotional state. So, every adopter should tailor their alone time plan to their dog as an individual. An example of an alone time plan is featured below.

## FIRST 10 DAYS ALONE TIME PLAN

DAY 1: Stay home with your dog and get him used to his new home

DAY 2: leave	5 ins	DAY 7: leave	30 ins
DAY 3: leave	10 ins	DAY 8: leave	45 ins
DAY 4: leave	15 ins	DAY 9: leave	60 ins
DAY 5: leave	20 ins	DAY 10: leave	90 ins
DAY 6: leave	25 ins		

In this way, an alone time plan allows a dog to learn that being by themselves can be a good thing as it is done in a way to minimise distress and therefore maximise the dog's ability to learn.



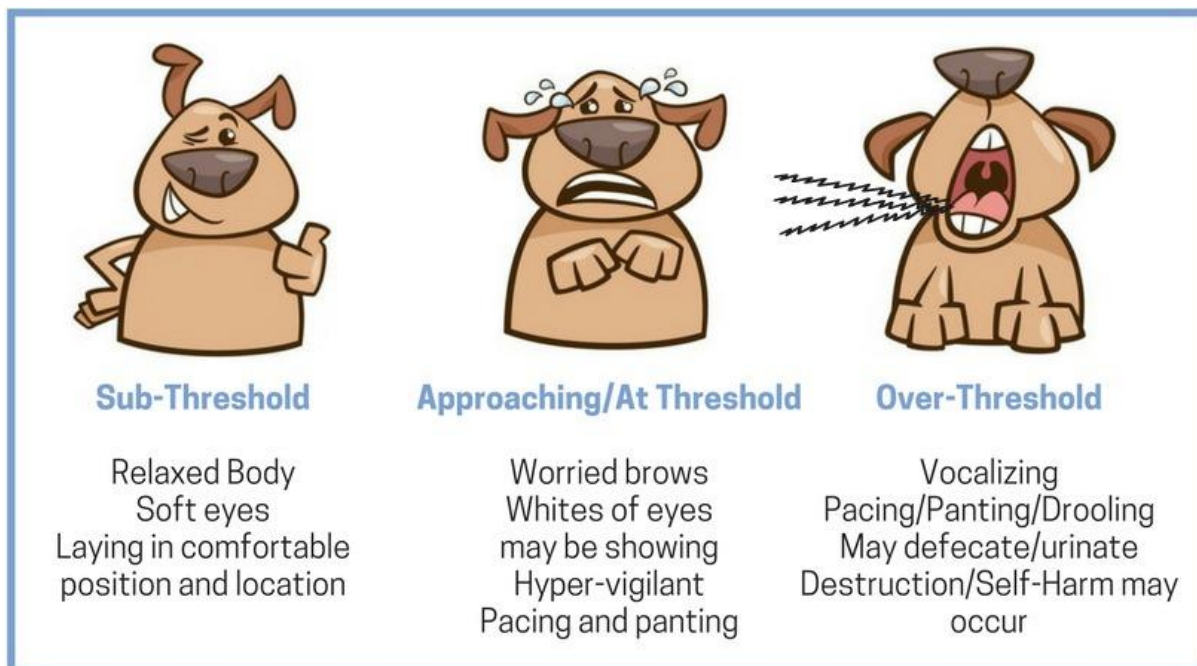
Greyhounds as Pets

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From Malena DeMartini's 2018 Separation Anxiety Mission: Possible course resources

Some dogs may require a more gradual plan and in those cases the owners may need to prioritise getting the dog used to being in a different room of the house before leaving them completely alone.

### Tips for success

- When practicing alone time, ensure your Greyhound cannot see or hear you as this will cause frustration and is not a true reflection of what it will be like when you are back at work.
- There is an outdated adage that distressed dogs should 'cry it out' and 'get over it', ignoring a dog barking and whining does not address the animal's needs and should not be done.
- If a greyhound is showing signs of distress, go to them calmly, call them onto their bed and then give them some treats. This is not rewarding the barking/whining but is instead providing a positive association to an alternative behaviour (going to his/her bed).



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- Leave him with something engaging – e.g. food dispensing toys, chew treats, paddling pool with water or sand and a variety of toys.
- If at any stage your Greyhound seems stressed, reduce the time you are away and increase alone time slowly again. Be patient and remember to go at your Greyhound's own pace.

### What is Isolation Distress?

This refers to a dog displaying significant signs of fear/anxiety when alone, but not with some kind of social support present. This social support can often be human or canine, although sometimes it does need to be an individual that the greyhound is familiar with. The exact cause of isolation distress or separation-related distress is unknown. However, by following the above guidelines you can maximise the chances of your dog successfully adjusting to their forever home.

Please contact GAPNSW for further information.



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