



# Dog Talk Weekly

Where we talk about dogs, share stories, solve problems

Issue 10.9.1 – September 4, 2010

**DO** pass this newsletter around to your friends and anyone who you feel will enjoy it. Better yet, show them where they can get their own weekly subscription: <http://www.dogtalkweekly.com> – it's **FREE!**

**Welcome back to another issue of Dog Talk Weekly.** Tyler and I have enjoyed some great fun this summer. In this issue, I share with you a little about what we did this past week. One of our readers sent an article about the retired greyhound she adopted. I've added a piece on Greyhounds with links to two sites that will help you if you're interested in this wonderful breed.

**I'm always looking for ideas for the newsletter.**

Would you let me know what breed of dog you have, or will be getting? I'd like to focus some articles on specific breeds so that they are more relevant to what you need.

**And...** if you have any questions about dogs that you'd like me to answer, simply send them to me via my contact form here:

<http://sylviadickens.com/contactform/contactus.php>

Enjoy the issue.

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## **Feature Article: The Plight of the Greyhound**

My goal for Dog Talk Weekly was to provide happy and fun content, but every now and then I come across something that bears special attention.

This week, one of our readers submitted her personal story about the Greyhound she adopted and the great time she has with it. While looking for some resources for you, should you think you might be interested in getting one, I came across a site that gives the negative side to greyhound racing.

You can read more at the National Greyhound Adoption Program's site:  
<http://www.ngap.org/greyhound-racing-advocates-perspective-y415.html>

Greyhounds are born and raised within the compound where they are trained to race. They have no contact with the outside world, although they do have plenty of opportunity to socialize with other greyhounds and the humans who control them.

The greyhound is a beautiful animal, both inside and out. It is extremely intelligent and gets along very well with people. They are chosen for the racing circuit because they are built for running at high speeds.

According to the National Greyhound Adoption Program:

"Greyhounds are born to run and to make money for a dog owner, a kennel operator and a track owner. They are only worthwhile and worth keeping if either they have the potential of making money or they are already making money. When those options are gone for whatever reason, the greyhound is gone."

In many cases, they are not just moved on to private homes. They often are euthanized. In just one utility in Florida, U.S.A., the doctor put down 800 greyhounds in one year alone. The less fortunate are shot, donated to research labs, caged as blood donors, and you can be sure other means are used to dispose of the dogs.

If they do make it into the adoption circle, the greyhound needs time to adjust to living with you. They have never been introduced to the sights and sounds in a typical home, such as vacuums, stairs, televisions, car rides, and various noises both inside and outside the home. However, "with a little understanding and love, they adjust and blossom very quickly into loving and well-mannered pets."

While I do have my favorite breeds, I love them all and highly recommend that you investigate the possibility of adopting a retired greyhound racer.

Begin your search on the National Greyhound Adoption Program site where you will find some good articles as well as fun and pleasing photos to whet your appetite. They have a good selection of photos to help you identify the coloring that you like. I had no idea there were so many varieties.

You can gather a great deal of information from the Internet. Just enter "rescue greyhounds" into your favorite search site (Google, Bing, Yahoo, etc.). You will get a list of sites in various areas across the United States and in the United Kingdom. I haven't examined every return I got, but the results looked very promising, regardless of where you are.

Now, go ahead and read this article that was submitted by one of our readers. You'll see just how satisfying it can be to own a Greyhound. They are surprisingly clean and easy to care for.

**Reader Submission:**

## **Misty, the Retired Racing Greyhound**

*Submitted by D. Whale, UK*

When my hubby and I were looking to home another dog, we searched the internet for ideas and came across hundreds of retired racing greyhounds, looking for homes. We hadn't really thought about taking in a rescue dog, but when we went along to some local kennels to meet some of the greyhounds waiting for new homes, our life changed forever.



Misty is a large, beautiful white and fawn greyhound bitch, with a calm, gentle disposition. When we gave her a new home two years ago, she was just over five years old. We marvelled at just how quickly she settled in to a domestic environment, considering all she had ever known was her racing kennels and the track. Everything was new

to her, vacuums, washing machines, stairs, furniture, televisions, traffic, in fact anything you can think of. Amazingly, she took it all in her stride and soon learnt to adapt.

On our first tentative walks she met a variety of dogs, large and small and some of these have now become her doggy friends. Misty is always very gentle and loves to play with her friends. It can be quite comical to watch as some of her dog mates are smaller breeds, such as Jack Russell terriers and Misty is rather large for a female greyhound, weighing in at around 30kg.

At our home, Misty had to master the stairs, as she clearly wanted to explore the upstairs part of the house, and find out where we disappeared off to on a night. Hubby, daughter and I would carefully escort her up the steps lifting each paw to help her get the knack. In no time at all she was climbing the steps herself, and these days she bounds up and down them as if she has been doing it all of her life.

We were also very nervous the first time we left her at home alone. We gradually left her longer and longer to get her used to it. Very often, if she is too cosy in her bed upstairs, she doesn't even know we have been out. On our return she will come racing downstairs and give us a lovely welcome, and of course there is usually some dog treats involved in this.

We have found that greyhounds are very intelligent and learn quite quickly. If she has dirty paws, she will now offer them for cleaning, sometimes with no prompting. We achieved this by offering her small rewards when she gave us her paws, and as with other situations she picked this up fairly quickly.

Before we took on Misty we didn't really know very much about Greyhounds as a breed. In common with a lot of people, we wrongly assumed that because they are big powerful dogs they will require massive amounts of exercise. This is a myth, they are actually couch potatoes. A short sharp burst of energy and they are more than happy to collapse in to a soft, cosy dog bed and indulge their favourite pastime – sleeping. They don't lose a massive amount of hair and are very clean around the house.

Retired racers are very dependent on people giving them a home, as sadly not all of them are fortunate enough to be homed when they finish their racing careers. It is a cruel and sad fact that some of them will never know what it is like to have a family home - many of them will just disappear or be found dead somewhere. These wonderful, loving dogs deserve better than this, for their loyalty and hard work.

As for us, we wouldn't be without Misty. She is precious and we are so grateful that we found her and that she came to live with us, as our much loved pet.

## **My Story: Tyler and the Soccer Ball**



There is something about a soccer ball that is more appealing to Tyler than any other ball. He does enjoy playing with tennis balls, rubber balls and any other kind of ball, but when he hears and sees a soccer ball, he goes nuts. In fact, recently the boys out back gifted him with their beat up soccer ball last time we visited.

For the first time since I've had Tyler (about 4 years), I saw him being possessive. He was never that way with any of his other toys. It's just something special about soccer balls that appeal to him more.

I'm extremely confident that he would not bite me (on purpose) if I try to take it away from him, but you never really know, do you? We always have to bear in mind that dogs

are really wild animals that we have domesticated. Those wild urges can emerge at any time when we least expect it.

The thing is, Tyler also likes to play games, which he can't do if he doesn't share his newfound toy. When he's good and ready, he will put it down for me to kick.

Interestingly, he loves to maul this soccer ball, like a baby biting down on a teething ring. He puts his mouth around the ball (remember, it's a big 'soccer ball') and clamps down on it, rests, and releases. He repeats this biting action for some time before he lets it go. I believe it must have some soothing qualities.

Only one other time did I see a dog do this. It, too, was a Shepherd. It was fascinating to see the other dog lying in the yard with this huge semi-deflated basketball in his mouth biting down on it as Tyler did. Both dogs seem to go into some sort of trance while they do this.

Who would have thought that a dog would take such pleasure in soothing himself like that?

### **Regular Sections:**

#### **- Dog Nutrition**

**Dog Food Recall!** Hartz Mountain has recalled its Real Beef Treats product because of possible salmonella health risk to dogs. Here is the press release the company has issued on the subject:

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** -- SECAUCUS, N.J. - September 3, 2010 - The Hartz Mountain Corporation is voluntarily recalling one specific lot of Hartz Naturals Real Beef Treats for Dogs due to concerns that one or more bags within the lot may have been potentially contaminated with *Salmonella*. Hartz is fully cooperating with the US Food and Drug Administration in this voluntary recall.

*Salmonella* is an organism which can cause serious infections in young children, frail or elderly people, and others with weakened immune systems, all of whom are at particular risk from exposure and should avoid handling these products.

*Salmonella* symptoms may include fever, diarrhea, abdominal pain, and nausea in both dogs and humans. Anyone experiencing the symptoms of *Salmonella* infection should seek immediate medical attention. Owners of dogs exhibiting these symptoms should also seek veterinary assistance.

Hartz Mountain Corporation is recalling 74,700 8-oz bags of Hartz Naturals Real Beef Treats for Dogs, lot code **BZ0969101E**, UPC number 32700-11519, which were imported by Hartz from a Brazilian supplier, Bertin S.A., and which were distributed to a number of customers in the United States. While regular testing conducted by Bertin (prior to shipment to the US) did not detect the presence of *Salmonella* in any packages of this product, random sample testing conducted by FDA did indicate the presence of *Salmonella*. Hartz is aggressively investigating the source of the problem.

Although Hartz has not received any reports of animals or humans becoming ill as a result of coming into contact with this product, Hartz is taking immediate steps to remove the product from all retail stores and distribution centers. Dog owners having purchased this product should check the lot code on their bag, and, if the code is not visible, or if the bag has lot code **BZ0969101E** imprinted thereon, they should immediately discontinue use of the product and discard it in a proper manner.

Consumers can contact Hartz at 1-800-275-1414 at any time with any questions they may have and for information on how to obtain reimbursement for purchased product.

You can see more on food recalls here:

<http://www.fda.gov/Safety/Recalls/ucm224987.htm>

## **- Dog Care**

Exercising with your dog can be rewarding for both of you, provided you take care not to overdo it. It is especially important to avoid exercising on extremely hot, humid days. Remember, it doesn't have to be terribly warm to affect a dog, so 75 degrees can be hot to a dog.

There are a few things to watch before you venture out.

1) Do not give your dog a huge meal just before you go. In some breeds, this can cause a very serious health risk called twisted bowel. It is especially common in dogs with deep chests, like Shepherds. If you provide too much exercise on a full stomach, the bowel can twist. Immediate vet care is essential to save your dog's life if this happens.

2) Do not give your dog a lot of water either immediately before or after your trip. Take water with you, but only provide small drinks each time. When your dog finishes exercise, allow him or her to cool down before providing a drink.

3) Consider the time of day and the temperature. The best times to exercise your dog in warm weather are early in the morning or at dusk to avoid heat and humidity. When she cools down, give her a moderate amount of water. Going during these hours will help prevent heatstroke, heat exhaustion and damage to the dog's foot pads.

Believe it or not, hot pavement can burn your dog's feet. In winter, the road salt can burn, too. Plus, if she licks her feet after the salt gets on her feet, the salt can burn her mouth. Be careful if your dog has floppy-haired feet that collect clumps of snow. In these conditions, wipe your dog down with a towel after the walk to remove the salt and snow. Don't allow her to remove it herself.

In clean snow, beware of frostbite. The cold can cause cracks and tiny cuts on her pads especially if they become dry in winter, like our skin dries.

## **- Dog Training**

Dog training can easily be incorporated into games. In fact, games can make training fun for you and your dog. Here are some games that you can try. Many dogs love them, especially sporting dogs. I've played them with my non-sporting dogs and they love them.

### Chasing Games

Attach a small dog toy to a fishing line or other cord. Place the toy on the ground and walk off about 5 feet or more with the line. Entice the dog by causing the toy to move. As she goes for it, use the line to move the toy around out of her reach. Gradually increase the speed that you pull the toy. Run around with the toy in tow if you have room.

### Retrieving Games

Have you ever met a dog that doesn't like to chase, catch and return things? I haven't. Well, except Kobe, but that's because he never learned how to interact with people before I adopted him. It took time, but even he learned out to retrieve eventually.

For this exercise, you can use balls, Frisbees, sticks or retriever dummies that are used to train retrievers to fetch their master's prey. The training can include having her return with the item, place it in front of you, and sit beside you in wait for further instructions. Tyler loves this game and has learned to put the ball within 6 inches of my toe.

### Hide and Seek

This can be a lot of fun. Have your dog "Stay" while you go out of sight and hide. When you are ready, call her and see how long it takes her to find you. It's surprising how quickly your dog will find you.

Another version of this is to hide toys or treats around your yard and have your dog find them. Tyler is too good at this game. The most it's taken him to find an object is about 15 seconds, but he usually finds them within 5 seconds.

But here's a secret. If you are hiding a toy or treat, choose ones that do not have a high scent. I noticed that Tyler took longer to find toys that had less odor, while he quickly located the rubbery Kong toys.

### **- Dog Trivia**

**Greyhounds also must NEVER BE TIED UP. They can reach speeds of up to 40 mph in their third stride and could easily break their neck if they decide to bolt or run.**

### **- Resources**

If you're interested in learning more about the Greyhound, here are a couple of sites I found that offer good information:

<http://www.adopt-a-greyhound.org/index.shtml>

### **- Dog Talk Weekly News**

Due to the fact that I expect to add more photos in future issues of Dog Talk Weekly, I will no longer be sending the entire newsletter via email. You will receive notices when the next issue is ready. Then, you can read the newsletter in PDF format online in the archives: <http://www.dogtalkweekly.com/archives.htm>

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### **IMPORTANT NOTE:**

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That's it for this issue. I hope you enjoyed it.

Until next week...

Get out there and have fun with your dog. Take some great photos.  
Collect wonderful memories.

Sylvia

P.S.: Don't forget to send me your stories and ideas for upcoming issues of Dog Talk Weekly. Just send them to me through my contact form here:

<http://sylviadickens.com/contactform/contactus.php>

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<http://dogtalkweekly.com/dogblog/>

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You can access the archives here:

<http://www.dogtalkweekly.com/archives.htm>

**Dog Nutrition** is vital to your dog's life expectancy and quality of life. I've written a book on how to make sure your dog gets a healthy, nutritious diet and avoids many of the dangers that come with certain foods. Find out more at

<http://healthdognutritionsecrets.com/healthydogPP1.htm>

**Puppy Parenting Course:** Are you drowning in a sea of questions about raising your puppy the right way? This 24-week course feeds you all the information you need in bite-size portions that you can use during your puppy's early years. Get a free trial today.

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