



CAT TRAINING YOUR GREYHOUND

Depending on how keen your greyhound is to chase, training him to happily and safely coexist with a cat can take a couple of days or a few weeks. Until you have completed the entire training process, you will need to keep your greyhound and cat separated.

There are two distinct processes involved in cat training: teaching the "NO" command and the "Introduction". Make sure you have fully achieved each step in the process before moving on to the next, otherwise you can easily make your dog *more* keen to chase your cat!

The NO Command

The goal of "NO" command training is that your greyhound will stop whatever it may be doing (or even thinking of doing) and look at you.

1. In a room away from the greyhound, place a favorite treat on the floor leaving enough space to walk to the treat and around it.
2. Leash your greyhound and casually walk him into the room with the treat. Keep the greyhound close to your side on a short leash so he can see the treat but cannot reach it.
3. As soon as he looks at the dog biscuit, firmly say "NO". If after your command he stops looking at the treat and looks at you, praise him. Repeat this several times until you are confident he understands. If the firm command itself is not enough to make him look away from the treat walk him past the treat again and this time say "NO" while checking his collar by quickly tugging with the lead. As he feels the tug on his collar he will turn to see where it came from. As soon as he looks at you, praise him. He will briefly enjoy the praise and then return to the more interesting sight of the food again! As soon as his gaze starts to go back to the food repeat the NO command and the praise when he looks at you again.
4. It is imperative that your dog looks away from the food and at you as soon as you say NO and check him. As in all training situations, you must be assertive so that your greyhound does not gain control and understands that you really mean business! It is also essential that praise is given when your dog looks away from the food – this is an important first step in learning the difference between right and wrong in his new 'no chase' world.
5. Once you feel confident that your greyhound understands the NO command, substitute other distractions for the treat. Balls, toys, open garbage cans all make great training tools in teaching that NO means "stop whatever you are doing and look at me."
6. Your greyhound will learn to anticipate what is going to happen when he sees a distraction and will start to look to you for praise even before the NO command is used.

This command is usually *learned* in a matter of minutes BUT it is repetitive reinforcement over a few days that will enable the greyhound to *remember* the command. Before moving on to the Introduction, it is essential that the greyhound is remembering the NO command.

The Introduction

Now, once your greyhound has learned, and remembers the NO command you can start the Introduction to the cat. You will need a helper who knows the cat and can hold it safely.

1. Leash and muzzle your greyhound then settle with him in your living room.
 2. Once the greyhound is settled, have your helper come in without the cat, greet the dog, get sniffed and then sit down somewhere. Repeat this without the greeting until your dog loses interest in your helper coming into the room.
 3. Then have the helper go out and come back in holding the cat. Make sure the cat is held firmly enough so that she doesn't bother struggling to escape.
 4. As soon as the greyhound looks at the cat, say "No" so that he stops looking at it and looks at you. Praise him as usual, but only while he's looking at you. Do **NOT** praise him while he's looking at your
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cat, or he'll take that as encouragement. If necessary use a quick tug on the leash to make him stop looking at the cat.

5. At this point you have a choice of technique, depending on the situation and how your cat is coping.

Either...

Repeat the entry until your Greyhound has learned not to look at your cat and the cat has got used to the dog enough so that when your helper lets go of her, she won't immediately run. Depending on your dog's nature and how thoroughly you did the "No" training, this stage may take an hour, a few days, or even longer.

OR

Keep your Greyhound and cat in the room until your Greyhound loses interest in your cat. You have to prevent your dog looking at your cat throughout the session, so end each session while you're winning.

6. Once the situation is calm you can let your cat free, and then train your dog to ignore the moving cat.
7. Once you have both animals relaxed in the same room and ignoring each other, you can take the lead off your dog, but leave the muzzle on.

Now the dog and the cat tend to go through a period of ignoring each other, to the extent of passing each other in a narrow passage as if the other was not there! The next stage is touching noses and becoming friends, although sometimes they just continue to ignore each other.

Some dogs may need additional training reinforcements. If your greyhound does not respond to the training then fill a water spray bottle, and as you issue the command NO spray his rump with water. Usually the unpleasant wet sensation of the water is enough to distract him from the cat and switch his gaze to you.

The Early Days

Don't take chances in the early days.

- Never leave your dog and cat together unsupervised.
- Don't force them to be together, if your cat is struggling to get out of a tight hold this will make your dog more anxious.
- A hiss or swipe from your cat is acceptable, but never allow your cat to attack your dog.
- Never feed the two together, and don't let your greyhound eat your cat's food
- Make sure that your cat has a place to escape. If necessary, put a baby gate at the bottom of the stairs or in the doorway of a room, so that your cat can get through but your greyhound can't.
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Even when you have a greyhound trained to coexist with your housecat, to greyhounds outdoor cats are a whole different species. Take the time to ensure that your cat is inside and there are no stray cats in your yard before turning your greyhound out. Also bear in mind that your dog and your own cat may become great friends, but he may need more supervision with other people's cats.
