

introducing stairs

getting to grips with stairs

If your home has stairs, they may pose a challenge for your greyhound. Many greyhounds have never seen stairs before and have no idea of how to negotiate them.

This can be a daunting experience, and it can take a while for your hound to become confident enough to safely walk up and down them.

Each dog is an individual and you will find that some dogs like to go up the stairs and some dogs like to go down. Some dogs may go halfway up or down the stairs and then freeze, and refuse to move in either direction, and some dogs simply won't attempt the stairs.

Whatever your dog's response to the stairs, you can help them adjust to the challenge, with the right approach.



setting the scene for success

Before you start introducing your dog to the stairs, it is important to plan your training sessions and set the scene for success. You can do this by:

- ✓ Keeping training sessions brief (under 5 minutes)
- ✓ Remaining calm
- ✓ Being patient
- ✓ Ending the training session on a positive note

Remember: It may take more than one day for your dog to become accustomed to going up and down stairs!

what to avoid

For training success it is important to know what to avoid, as well as what to do to help your dog. You can help yourself and your dog by:

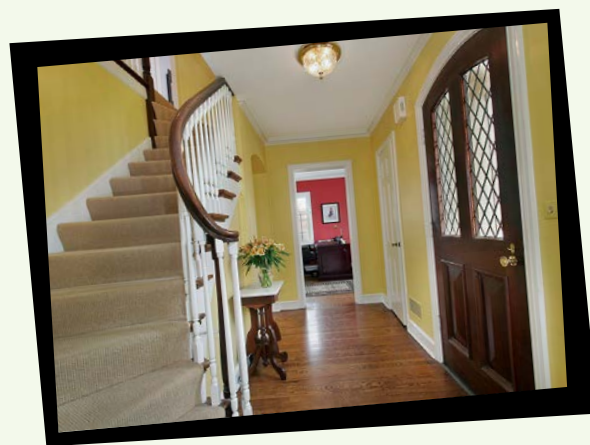
- ✗ Not forcing your dog to go up or down stairs
- ✗ Not dragging your dog by their collar
- ✓ Taking a break from training:
 - Especially if you start to lose patience or become frustrated, and/or
 - Your dog begins to show any signs of distress or fear

Remember: Using force or any training methods that your dog finds stressful, will undermine your relationship and bond with your dog and affect other areas of training.

safety considerations

If your stairs are very steep, it may not be appropriate for your greyhound to learn how to tackle them, due to the risk of injury.

If your dog is on restricted exercise or has other health issues, stairs may have to remain off limits. If this is the case, it is a good idea to install a baby/stair gate to prevent your dog from climbing the stairs.



before you start training

Before you start each training session, make sure that:

- ✔ You have some high value food rewards
 - Little pieces of chopped chicken, cheese, ham, & sausage work well
- ✔ Your greyhound is wearing a well-fitted, padded harness (not an anti-pull harness)

You may also find it useful to have a second helper, and to have your dog's lead nearby.

going up the stairs

- ✔ Put a treat on the first stair and encourage your dog to eat it. Repeat this several times.
- ✔ Put a treat on the second stair and encourage your dog to eat it. Repeat this several times
- ✔ Put a treat on the next stair, slightly out of reach for your dog.
- ✔ Ensure that your helper is on the stairs in front of your dog and the treat, and that you are behind them to provide security that they will not fall backwards
- ✔ At this stage, your dog should be confident enough to put a paw (or two) on the stairs to reach the treat
- ✔ Praise your dog when they reach for the treat
- ✔ Ask your helper to encourage the dog to continue up the stairs, by luring them with treats
- ✔ Remain behind your dog, following them up the stairs
- ✔ Ensure that your helper feeds them treats while they move up the stairs and that you praise them

If your dog feels insecure at any time, you can gently hold their harness or attach a lead to the back of the harness to help increase their sense of security.

type of stairs and flooring

If your hallway or landing is not carpeted and is a wooden, laminate or tiled floor, there is an increased risk of your dog slipping and injuring themselves when they go up or down the stairs. To prevent this, use non-slip runners or rugs to provide suitable traction.

If your stairs are wooden or have open treads, your greyhound will struggle to grip the stairs and may be worried by the openings between steps. To help your dog, you will need to add some treads/carpet to provide grip.

coming down the stairs

Going down stairs can present more of a risk of injury, as your dog may attempt to jump several stairs at once or run down too quickly and lose grip.

You will need to supervise your dog and ensure that you do not let them attempt to go up and down the stairs by themselves, until you are sure that they understand the concept of taking one step at a time.

- ✔ Attach your lead to the back attachment on your dog's harness and shorten the lead, so that your dog can't race in front of you
- ✔ Holding the lead in your hand closest to your dog, encourage your dog to take one step at a time, as you walk down by them
- ✔ Take things slowly and remember to praise and reward your dog on each step
- ✔ Repeat this exercise and **always** accompany your dog when they go down stairs, until you are sure that they are confident enough to do so safely