

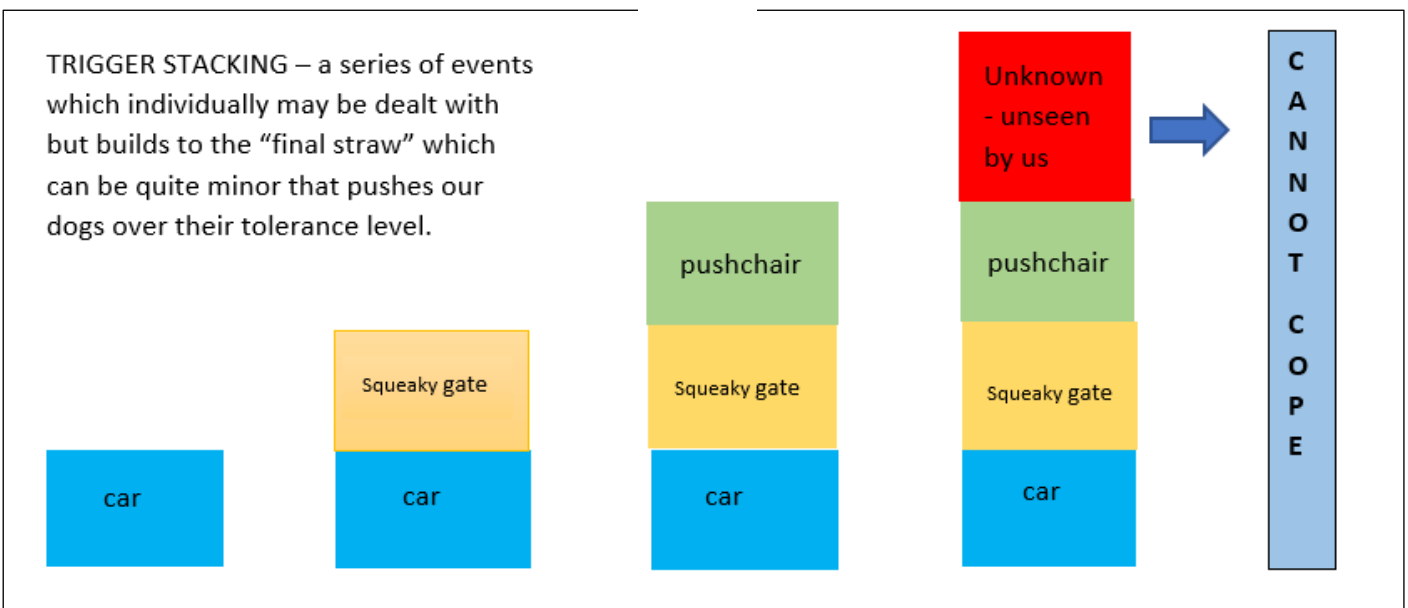
WHY DOES MY GREYHOUND FREEZE ON WALKS?

One of the reasons we get a dog is to enjoy going out for walks together. What happens if your newly homed greyhound refuses to go for walks altogether or goes out for a walk and the freezes and won't go any further?



It's tempting to think your dog is being "stubborn" when in fact they are feeling scared and overwhelmed.

When dogs feel stressed, they have four options: flight, flight, freeze, and fool around. On lead, the flight response is taken away from them (although owners often describe the dog turning around and wanting to go home), so they put the brakes on and freeze to the spot. They are telling you, "I'm not coping." Sometimes it's easy to pinpoint the trigger such as a noisy motorbike raced past, but more often than not, it's just a stacking up of everyday sights and sounds that all gets too much (trigger stacking in training speak).



HOW TO HELP - You will need high value treats – chicken, cheese, liver treats, sausages which are more attractive than store-bought treats. Only small pieces are needed as you will be giving LOTS of these.

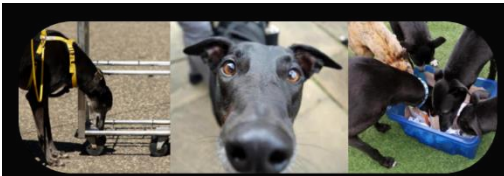
PREVENTION IS BETTER THAN CURE

Time and patience, and easy does it. In all the excitement of getting a new dog, it's easy to inadvertently overwhelm him or her. Keep visitors and walks to a minimum to start.

Short, happy walks when you first get home are much better than long stressful ones so resist the temptation to go for long strolls. You don't even actually have to walk at all for the first few days! Give your dog space to stand and watch cars, buses, other dogs, children etc. all new things for your greyhound.

Concentrate on the garden being a pleasant and fun place. Google "DIY canine enrichment games" but keep it easy so he or she doesn't give up. A VERY simple game is to take a couple of fists full of their kibble and scatter it around the garden for your dog to sniff out. Use a filled Kong, put treats in a closed egg carton box, toilet roll with pinched down edges, etc.





Sniffing on walks is one thing our dogs live to do. It enriches their lives greatly and it doesn't cost a thing.

A 20 minute sniff walk is better for a dog's psychological wellbeing than an hour's speed march.

-canineprinciples.com-

GO ON A SNIFFARI - Once you do get out the door, keep to the same, short route for the first week or so. It may be boring for you, but for your dog, the routine will be welcomed. Each day brings new smells so it's not boring for them.

Allow your dog time to sniff – it helps keep them calm and they learn lots about their doggy neighbours through “reading the pee-mails”.

SHHH...QUIET PLEASE - Depending on where you live, road-walking is often better at this stage than going to the park but pick a quiet time with less traffic. You are less likely to encounter off-

lead dogs and children running, ball games etc walking on the road than in a busy park.

If you do go to the park, pick a quiet time or a quiet area without too much going on. If you live on a busy road, you might want to take your dog to a quiet park in the car to start rather than walk on the roadside.

Another “preventative” tool in your toolkit is the “take it game”. Throw a treat about 2m away from your dog and say, “take it” then throw it in a different direction, repeating, “take it.” Continue throwing in different directions repeating the command. Practise this game in the house and garden when the dog is calm so he or she knows that this command results in yummy treats – you may need this when out and about!

Teach the “Lets Go” command by saying it just before your dog is about to walk anyway. Praise and reward with treats. Another one that can be practised in the garden.

HINTS AND TIPS

One of our foster carers who was helping a dog who froze on walks said, “it’s as if he can walk or he can process information...but he can’t do both at the same time!” Sometimes it is as simple as just stopping and waiting until your dog is ready to move on with some encouragement from you, but that doesn’t

always work. The key thing to remember is: forcing a dog to walk is counterproductive as it will make the dog **MORE** scared of going on walks.

TAKE A BREAK - Going out into the scary world can cause stress levels to rise, so insisting a scared dog goes for walks can cause a stress and fear yo-yo response in the dog’s body. Having a break allows the stress hormones to subside (empties their stress bucket) Once they are feeling more secure, they are more likely to want to walk.

AND RELAX - Consider using calming aids such as Adaptil collars and herbal remedies such as Valerian and Skullcap, Bach Rescue Remedy, Calmex, Yucalm etc to be given about 30 minutes before a walk to take the edge off the fear.

PHONE A FRIEND - Can you walk with another greyhound? They like being with their own kind and sometimes this helps.

Is your dog overwhelmed?

Imagine your new dog to be like a bucket filling with water. A stimulus, whether it be sight, smell, sound or any sensory experience, makes up the water. The more the dog experiences, the more their bucket fills with water. Your dog can cope with small, short bursts of experiences safely without the bucket overflowing. They can go home with a bit of water in their bucket and sleep, **process and** empty some of the water out of their bucket. Taking it slow allows your dog to stay below “threshold” and learn. If you encourage

your dog to experience too much too quickly, they will be unable to empty their emotional bucket fast enough to cope with all the heavy water. This is when their bucket overflows and they start to display anxious behaviours such as reactivity, separation anxiety and lead pulling that they may not have displayed previously. You may think that your dog is initially coping because they haven't shown any signs at first. This is a coping mechanism during the initial settling period. Remember to take things slow, see your world through your dog's eyes, and **give them time to empty their emotional bucket.**

Hounds First
Sighthound Rescue
<http://houndsfirst.co.uk>

WHAT TO DO IF YOUR ALREADY OUT AND ABOUT?

Different techniques work for different dogs so it's trial and error. If a dog will take treats when out that is a good sign but often, they are even too stressed to eat. You may want to consider using a harness so if you do end up tugging a bit you aren't pulling on his or her neck. We recommend and sell at our kennels, the brand, Perfect Fit, as each of the three sections can be bought separately and are adjustable to get a

"perfect fit." <https://www.dog-games-shop.co.uk/perfect-fit-fleece-dog-harness.html>. It also has a front ring. You can attach

a double ended training lead to it which helps turn a dog to go in the opposite direction which often helps get a frozen dog moving again.

Pulling them doesn't work, it stresses a dog and they plant their feet even harder onto the spot and they could slip out of their collar or even a harness.



1. As mentioned above, sometimes just pausing and giving the dog time to process what's going on is enough to get him or her moving again. Give him or her a little pep talk for reassurance.
2. Play the "take it game" which the dog will have practised at home. If you can get the dog moving, lots of praise in a fun voice will encourage your dog to KEEP moving. If they freeze again. Pause a moment and try the take it game again. Taking the treat from the ground rather than your hand can distract a dog and help him or her refocus their attention.
3. Turn around and walk the other way, cross the road, or walk in circles. This also can help the dog refocus. Remember, a fun, happy voice will help. Some owners say they start singing to their dogs – it's about distraction and refocusing. You can also try jogging with your dog while you sing!
4. Go the end of the lead facing your dog and kneel down with a treat, call their name and if the dog moves forward give them a treat. Repeat, moving backwards, Keep repeating but kneel sideways and slowly start walking instead.

EMERGENCY MANEUVRRES

1. If you've been stuck on the spot for awhile, pushing gently from behind (but holding onto the lead) can get them moving. Gently walk/shuffle into your dog's backside with using your legs to push them along. This is particularly useful if they stop somewhere dangerous like in the middle of the road. Remember your happy fun voice to encourage the dog to move.
2. In an absolute emergency more drastic action may be needed if it's unsafe to stop and wait. You may have to pick up your dog and cross the road, but if the dog is too heavy, you can pick up their two back legs and "wheelbarrow" them to safety. This is a last resort and preferably done with a muzzled dog.



If things don't improve as the dog gains confidence (and this could take some time) please get in touch and we'll put you in touch with our qualified behaviourist.



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