

4 The starting line

At the two minute call, the greyhounds approach the starting traps and, at the one minute call, are carefully placed in them. The trap allocation for each dog is decided by the racing office before the race meeting as an extra safeguard to minimise any jockeying for position – the trap number reflects each greyhound's favoured running position on the track.



5 During the race

The race starter checks that all the greyhounds are ready and waves their flag to start the race. The mechanical lure is then set in motion and triggers the traps to open, allowing the greyhounds to burst forth and showcase their incredible acceleration. Depending on the race distance, the dogs can run for anything between 15 and 60 seconds, reaching speeds of 43mph in just a few seconds. But for that short time, the greyhounds harness their natural instinct and relish the thrill of the chase.

At the end of the race, the lure disappears under a cover and the dogs can be seen excitedly trying to find it, with their noses to the ground and tails wagging high in the air.

To maximise safety for the canine athletes, the track has been ergonomically designed and the sand surface is regularly watered and levelled by an expert team of maintenance staff.

6 After the race

Once all the dogs are back on their leads, they return to the paddock area to have the sand washed off their feet and any other needs attended to. The track vet is present to observe every dog after they have raced.

The greyhounds can then relax in their kennels before being collected by their trainer, ready to head home for a nutritious meal.

Most greyhounds will have at least five days' interval before their next appearance on the track during which they relax and play with their kennelmates, run on the gallops and go for walks with their trainers and owners. Like any professional athlete, racing greyhounds' exercise and nutrition is carefully planned to ensure they are in the best condition for their racing career and beyond.

A long and happy retirement

Retirement is an important stage in a greyhound's life. GBGB's Greyhound Commitment states that every dog should enjoy a long and happy retirement at the end of their racing career. GBGB supports this by investing in homing schemes and working in partnership with organisations and charities, all of which promote what brilliant pets greyhounds make.

If you are interested in finding out more about adopting a greyhound please contact the track's racing manager or visit www.gbgb.org.uk

Produced by the Greyhound Ambassadors in partnership with the Greyhound Board of Great Britain. GBGB is the regulator for licensed greyhound racing in this country. To find out more about its high welfare and integrity standards and to read the Greyhound Commitment, please visit www.gbgb.org.uk

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Photos by Steve Nash



A Greyhound's Race Day



Anyone who has ever visited a greyhound track will have witnessed the speed and athleticism of racing greyhounds. But what goes on behind the scenes on race day?

Behind every racing greyhound is a team of committed, caring and hard-working owners, kennel hands and trainers who love and nurture their dogs ensuring they are well cared for, fit and content. A happy, healthy greyhound is a happy, healthy athlete.

On race day a varied and experienced team of people such as vets, kennel hands, racing managers, stewards and track maintenance staff all help to facilitate the greyhound's passion for the thrill of competitive chase.

A greyhound's race day looks like this...

1 The journey here

Most greyhounds don't live at the track but travel to and from their kennels in temperature-controlled vehicles that have been adapted to ensure maximum comfort and safety for their elite passengers.

All the dogs in the kennel know when it's race day – like any dog, they recognise the routine and get excited when it's their turn to go racing. It's not unusual for dogs to jump in the van to go racing even when it's not 'their' day. Even retired greyhounds will do this, wanting another go at catching that lure!



2 Welcome checks

When they arrive, the greyhounds go for a walk to stretch their legs and enjoy a comfort break. Next, they visit the track's kennelling area where they undergo a number of checks by licensed staff.

This includes:

- Weigh-in with the racing steward
- Unique microchip and ear mark identity checks
- Thorough inspection by the track vet

Every GBGB registered track is required to have a vet on site for every race and trial. Their job is to oversee the health of the greyhounds and to check them both before and after each race. The vet has the authority to withdraw a greyhound from a race if it is in the best interests of the dog.

After their checks, the paddock steward settles the greyhound into their assigned kennel with a bowl of fresh water to relax until race time.



3 Getting ready to race

15 minutes before their race, the steward and kennel hands accompany the six greyhounds that are about to race to the track's coating-up area to get their racing jackets on and winter coats if the weather is colder. Greyhounds also wear muzzles whilst they race for their own safety in case the excitement of chasing the lure as a pack sparks a petty squabble.

To guarantee there is no room for error, the greyhounds' microchips and earmarks are checked one last time by the racing steward.

Anticipation builds and the dogs can often be seen eagerly pulling their paraders onto the track. After a last comfort break, the dogs are lined up and the racing steward announces their names and weights to the spectators.

