

Is an Italian Greyhound right for you?

What size is an Italian Greyhound?

An Italian Greyhound averages 13-15 inches tall at the shoulder, though they may be as small as 11 inches and as large as 18 inches. They can weigh as little as seven pounds or as much as 18 or 20 pounds. The Italian Greyhound is registered with the American Kennel Club as a member of the Toy dog group. The breed is believed to have originated over 2000 years ago.

The Italian Greyhound personality

Italian Greyhounds are active, inquisitive little animals who enjoy giving and receiving love immensely. Being people oriented, they require the stimulation of quality human companionship. They are **not** just miniature Greyhounds or couch potatoes. Being a “toy” breed, they are much more active and demanding than a full-size Greyhound. Due to their fine bone structure and sometimes timid or sensitive personality, they do not make good pets for households with very young or rambunctious children or very large, active dogs.

The Italian Greyhound coat is short, sleek and carries no odor. Because of their short hair, they do like to stay warm by lying in the sun, sleeping in your bed – under the covers! – and wearing coats or sweaters when temperatures dip. **Italian Greyhounds are not outdoor dogs.** They cannot tolerate cold weather and would prefer to be with their owner even on the warmest of days. They also do not like getting wet, and many owners have built shelter areas to protect their dog from the elements when going outside for potty on cold or wet days, or instead use indoor potty pads on bad-weather days. As creatures of comfort, IGs do not like to put their feet on wet grass and will often utilize the sidewalk instead.

Italian Greyhounds love other dogs, and usually cats too. However, care must be taken when introducing the dog to a larger breed. The activity level of an Italian Greyhound varies but most are pretty active until about two years old, often having only two speeds – high and low.



Italian Greyhounds are very people-oriented and enjoy your company more than anything else. They are not independent dogs and will often follow you everywhere. They crave attention and do not do well when left alone or ignored for many hours a day. Their greatest joy is to be with you. Once you adopt an Italian Greyhound you will never be alone again. If you like your privacy, the Italian Greyhound may not be the breed for you. This breed is not content to lie at your feet – they **demand** your attention! Please make sure you are willing to give it before you consider adoption! They have been bred only to be companions to people for more than 2000 years, and they take their “job” of companionship very seriously.

IGs are also creatures of comfort and take being warm and dry very seriously – even if it means occasional housetraining infractions, sneaking into your bed or choosing to disobey commands. If you are not a person that will let a dog kiss you on the lips, lick your ear, or share your bed, then an Iggy is probably not for you. They do require patience and consistent, positive training and reinforcement. They are very intelligent and can be mischievous. **They are true sighthounds and must be leashed or in a securely fenced area at all times.**

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Fences and leashes

Italian Greyhounds are classified as sighthounds because they have keen eyesight. Combined with their incredible speed, this can be deadly. Therefore, **an IG must always be on a leash when not in a fenced area. No amount of obedience training can overcome what has been bred in the breed for thousands of years, so there are no exceptions.** Your fence must be “Iggy proof” – this means no small areas that an IG can squeeze through.

Although we feel strongly that a fenced yard is essential for security and exercise, we will occasionally approve a home that is planning to potty train entirely indoors, using newspapers or a dog litter box. However, most IG Rescue reps will not approve homes that intend to walk the dog on a leash for pottying. It is too rarely successful; the dog will just stare up at you with pleading eyes, and shiver if the weather is bad.

We do not recommend invisible fencing for your IG. First, it is not as secure as a traditional fence; a sighthound will sometimes endure the “zap” if he is in strong pursuit of a squirrel on the other side of the invisible fence. Second, the invisible fence cannot keep other animals, such as rabid wildlife or larger dogs, out of your yard, and these animals could enter your yard and cause harm to your IG.

Housetraining

Some rescue dogs are already housebroken, but we do not assume it and neither should you. If this is an important issue to you, please make sure to discuss it with your rep. Any dog coming into a new environment should be treated as if he/she is **not** housebroken. Also remember that housetraining is a 365 day a year job with this breed. You should take the dog out often, watch closely, and limit freedom initially until the dog is familiar with your environment and schedule. The use of a crate is recommended. If the dog cannot be crated (for example, due to a prior bad experience with crating), a small, “dog-proofed” room can be used as a substitute for the crate when the dog needs to be confined.

Like many toy breeds, the Italian Greyhound can be a little more difficult to housetrain, and a large percentage of IGs that wind up in Rescue were given up by owners who were unable to meet this challenge. IGs find cold, wet and windy weather to be very offensive, and with good reason – they have no protection from it. IGs have very little body fat and poor circulation to the legs, so they freeze easily.

Housetraining your IG will take patience, praise and consistency. Often they will not go to the door when they need to go out. It will be up to you to put the dog on a schedule and take him/her out for regular potty breaks. In order to keep the dog’s system on a good schedule, open feeding is not recommended. Supervision during potty outside is a good idea; many IGs do not like to go out alone. If an accident occurs, please remember that harsh punishment does **not** work for Italian Greyhounds; they are much too sensitive for that. Sighthounds respond almost exclusively to positive training, and negatives just make them more stubborn. A firm voice is a sufficient reprimand. If an occasional potty accident (especially on very cold or wet days) is unacceptable, this may not be the breed for you.

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“Off the furniture?”



Italian Greyhounds, especially young ones, are curious and can be susceptible to broken legs, so care should be taken. These little dogs are very cat-like in that they love to jump and climb on furniture. They also like nothing better than to sit by you on the couch or sleep with you. If you are opposed to dogs on your furniture or bed, an Italian Greyhound is not the breed for you. It is very difficult to teach this loving, affectionate breed to stay off of the furniture because of their strong desire to be with you.

Health and medical information

The Italian Greyhound is a very old and fairly hardy breed. However, like any breed today, there are potential health problems. Epilepsy/seizures, luxated patellas, and thyroid conditions are the most common ailments we see in the breed, and many of these conditions do not show up in a young pup. Although one can never predict what the future will bring, by adopting a rescue that has a full medical exam and sometimes a record of its history, we can be aware of the medical needs of the dog.

The cost of a broken leg



If your IG breaks a leg – and about 20% of them will – it will typically need to be surgically plated, which can cost \$1500 to \$2000. Do you have the resources to invest \$1500 in your dog tomorrow if this happens?

This is also why we don't recommend IGs for households with small children or large dogs, unless you are able and willing to supervise very closely. Accidents can occur simply due to the laws of physics, with no intent to cause harm. For example: a big dog trips and falls on the little dog while they are playing and the little dog gets hurt, or a child squeezes the little dog in a tight hug and breaks a rib.

You must be sure that furniture is arranged so that there are no launching ramps, such as a sofa in the middle of the room. Chairs must always be pushed under the kitchen and dining room tables, so that your IG doesn't climb up onto the table and jump off.

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Dental care

All Italian Greyhounds need dental care. Most should have their teeth brushed at least once a week, and should have their teeth evaluated for professional cleaning annually by a veterinarian. They have large teeth in a small, tight mouth, and are prone to tooth and gum diseases. Many begin to lose teeth while still very young.

Check out Littleluv Italian Greyhounds' website at <http://www.littleluvigs.com/dental.html> for step-by-step instructions and pictures on how to brush your Iggy's teeth!



Anesthesia

If your IG needs to be put under anesthesia for a surgical procedure or dental cleaning, it is highly recommended that the vet use **isoflurine**, sevoflurine or another anesthetic which is not barbiturate-based. Many anesthetics (such as biotal, surital or pentothol) contain thiobarbiturates, which cannot be easily absorbed by a sighthound since they have very little body fat.

Using the wrong anesthesia can result in **serious medical complications or even death** for your IG, so be sure to discuss this thoroughly with your vet before your IG goes under anesthesia for any reason.

Helpful information for living with your IG

What is Italian Greyhound Rescue?

Italian Greyhound Rescue is a non-profit organization made up entirely of volunteers. The group dedicates its time and energy to finding homes for homeless dogs. This effort is overseen by the Italian Greyhound Club of America.

Where do the Rescue dogs come from?

The dogs that enter our program come to us in a number of ways. Often the dogs are given up due to no fault of the dog, but because an owner has moved, died, divorced or is unable to keep the dog for other reasons. Others come to us from shelters. Because the breed is now being sold in pet stores, many of our rescues are impulse buys from a pet store that did not work out. A quick purchase is made, giving little thought to the time and dedication it takes to raise that cute little puppy in the window.

By rescuing an Italian Greyhound, you will give a much-needed home to a dog that, without your help, may have led a life of discomfort and fear, or may even have met with an untimely death. If an Italian Greyhound is the right breed of dog for you and your lifestyle, it will certainly repay you for your kindness with affection for years to come. There is no more loving breed, no more faithful companion. The relationship you will build with an IG is as strong as the bond you have with most people.



What ages/sex are the Rescue dogs?

We get a variety of ages in the program. Most are young adults, under one or two years of age. Sometimes we get puppies. Older dogs also come into the program. With a lifespan of 14 to 16 years, all of these dogs can make wonderful pets. Males outnumber females. All dogs are spayed or neutered prior to placement. Occasionally people contact us who have very strong preferences about age, sex and color of the dog. Because we can not control what people abandon, the more open you are about sex, age and coat color, the more likely we are to find a suitable dog for you. If you do have very strong preferences, a rescue dog may not be for you.

Some things to consider

Have you researched the breed and spent time with an Italian Greyhound to determine if this is the breed for you? Are all members of our household interested in getting a dog? Do you have a fenced yard, or are you willing to indoor potty train and/or take the dog on a number of walks each day, **always** with a leash? How many hours per day will the dog be alone? Do you have time to interact, train and play with a dog? Do you have the necessary finances to care for the dog medically?

We are looking for “forever homes” – homes that are absolutely permanent. It is like adopting a child; you cannot simply get rid of the child because he is not behaving as you expected, you must be willing to make the commitment to making it work.

A dog is a lifetime responsibility. Please remember this before adopting!!

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Why shouldn't I adopt from a pet store or hobby breeder?



Whatever you decide, **please** do not purchase an Italian Greyhound from a pet store, puppy mill or backyard breeder. None of these people do the research needed to produce dogs that improve the breed, which is the goal of a responsible breeder, and they seldom do the necessary legwork and testing to prevent passing on physical and temperament problems that may not be noticed for several years.

There are many internet sites which will educate you on backyard breeders, pet stores, and puppy mills. If you have any question about whether an advertiser is a responsible breeder, and not a puppy mill or backyard breeder, look for these things. An **irresponsible** breeder:

- Accepts credit cards, because ensuring that you can pay for the dog is more important to them than ensuring that the dog is being placed in a loving, forever home.
 - Will ship a dog to you without meeting you first.
 - Will not ask you for any references.
 - Breeds more than one or two litters per year.
 - Is not a member in good standing of the IGCA.
- Is not willing to take the dog back – at any time during his lifetime – if you cannot keep him.
 - Does not guarantee the health of the dog for his lifetime.

On the other hand, a **responsible** breeder will ask you for references, interview you, assess your appropriateness for this breed, give you a guarantee and take the dog back at any time during his life. She will probably be an IGCA member. She will **not** have a USDA license, because she doesn't sell to pet stores, and she will not have a website showing page after page of "happy puppies" in their new homes, because a responsible breeder does only limited, educated breeding. She won't take charge cards, and will certainly not ship a dog to you sight unseen. Remember, if rescue has had to rehome any of his or her dogs, that person is **not** a responsible breeder.

There are also "show mills" out there. These are people who actively compete with their dogs and pay big money for advertising, but they are still over-breeding and selling puppies as a business, rather than doing limited, educated, hobby breeding. They make up a large percentage of the dogs we see in Rescue, and these dogs can have genetic health or temperament problems, so buyer beware!

For more information, here are some of the informative sites. You may want to have your tissues handy:

<http://www.nopupmills.com>

<http://www.pupmillerescue.com>



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How can I adopt an IG through Rescue?

Step 1 – Research!

First and foremost, familiarize yourself with the breed. The best place to do this is the Internet and talking to “neutral” people who own the breed (i.e. not those that are making a profit on it). Most books give you generalized and limited information. Many of the dogs in our program have been turned in because their previous owners did not do their research. **This breed is not for everyone**, and therefore we take great care where these dogs are placed. The number one reason they are turned in is for difficulty in housetraining. It can be done but does take work and patience. If an occasional accident (especially in cold or rainy weather) bothers you, then this is **not** the breed for you. Many also consider this breed to be demanding, as their greatest joy is to be with their person and they don't do well alone for long periods. Because of their bone structure and personality, they do not make a good companion for small children. Every breed has a “price”... some are barkers, some are diggers, etc.. the “price” of this breed is the difficulty in housetraining and the intense need for lots of attention. On the upside, they are the most loving and affectionate dogs you will come across. There is more information on our adoption program and the breed under “All About Italian Greyhounds” on the Midwest IG Rescue Website: www.midwestigrescue.org

Step 2 – Complete the application

Fill out an application **completely**. Applications are available at the above site under “All About Adoption,” and all areas should be completed.

Step 3 – Mail or e-mail the application

Send your application to your local representative, and retain a copy for your records in case the foster home or another rep requests the information.



Step 4 – Follow up!

Follow up on your application, as we are volunteers and get many inquiries each day. Feel free to call and/or e-mail these parties. It is like applying for a job, the person who gets the job is the one who is not only qualified, but also follows up. We get lots of applications, so **if you are qualified and meet the requirements, please don't be shy about following up!!!** The responsibility for following up is with you, the person looking for just one dog, as our busy volunteers are working to help many dogs. Thank you for your efforts and understanding in this area!

Note: Again, it is best to fill out an application. This is how we follow up, match dogs with homes, etc. Writing to see “what we have available” is not the way to get started. What we have available changes

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constantly and many dogs are never even listed on a website. Many go straight to approved homes with applications on file, so if you are interested in a dog, please fill out an application.

How will I be matched with a Rescue dog?

A Rescue representative will review your completed application. If he or she determines that you meet the requirements, you will go through an interview process, including a home check.

If all goes well, the rep will begin searching for a suitable Rescue dog for you. IG Rescue reps network with one another to find the best possible match for you and the dog. Your new Rescue dog may be residing in another state with his or her foster person; if this is the case, transportation of the dog will be worked out between you, your Rescue representative, and the person who is fostering the dog. Some reps require you to travel to the dog's current location; others are willing to meet you halfway or arrange for volunteers to help with the transport after you have been approved by your local rep.

When you adopt a Rescue dog, you will be required to sign a simple adoption agreement. This agreement indicates that you plan to keep the dog as a pet, will care for the dog properly, and agree to contact IGCA Rescue if any situation develops which would require you to find a new home for your IG.



Donation

Italian Greyhound Rescue does not sell dogs. We do, however, ask for a donation which helps to fund our program.

All IG Rescue dogs are taken to a veterinarian for a complete health work-up when they enter the program. They are spayed or neutered, brought up-to-date on vaccinations, and given a dental cleaning if necessary. Depending on the location where the dog currently resides, he or she may be put on heartworm preventative medication. Your adoption fee, a minimum of \$200, helps to cover these expenses and continue our work in saving other Italian Greyhounds.

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Making the adoption work



We try to make the best possible match to ensure a successful adoption. One thing you can do in preparation for your rescue's arrival is purchase a high quality dog food from a pet supply store, such as Nutro, Innova or Natural Choice. **Grocery store pet food, such as Purina or Alpo, is not recommended;** IGs require a diet that is higher in protein and fat than grocery store brands can provide. Make sure that you have supplies such as bowls, leashes, safe toys and a crate.

It is a good idea to select a veterinarian prior to your dog's arrival. Although the rescue dog has been vet checked, we do recommend taking the dog to your own veterinarian after adopting the dog.

It is also good idea to take your newly adopted dog to obedience classes. Any dog (and owner) can benefit from such a class. It improves communication between dog and owner, gives the dog a chance to socialize and strengthens the bond between owner and dog.

Above all, **be patient and give it time.** It takes love, patience and time for a dog to adjust to his/her new home and lifestyle. Giving the dog a few days is not enough. These dogs deserve a fair chance and your commitment to time and making it work.

Correcting your dog

Italian Greyhounds do not respond well to harsh punishment. They should **never** be hit or corrected with a newspaper. These actions will only teach them to fear you and your hand. Because of their sensitive personality, a verbal correction is more than sufficient.

Recommended resources

Italian Greyhound Club of America (IGCA) official website:

<http://www.italiangreyhound.org>

A great Italian Greyhound website, with lots of information:

<http://members.aol.com/KARENKATO/index.html>

IG Safehouse Alliance

An organization dedicated to rescuing IGs who have survived life as breeding dogs in the mills.

<http://www.igsafehouse.org>



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Italian Greyhound e-mail list:

Send a message to: Listserv@apple.ease.com

Leave the subject blank.

In the message, type: SUBSCRIBE ITALGREY-L (YOUR NAME)

Breed magazines:

The Italian Greyhound

Joan and William Cooper, Editors and Publishers
8410 Kingsgate Road, Potomac MD 20854-1740
301-299-6269. \$28 yearly/7issues

IG Times

PMS Productions, LLC
PO Box 927, Olney MD 20830
igtimes@igtimes.com. \$24 yearly/4 issues

Breed books

The New Complete Italian Greyhound

by Lilian Barber (hardcover, 250+ photos).

<http://igrescueitems.tripod.com/rescueitemsindex.html>

(Item #212). Also available from: Italian Greyhound Productions, 8410 Kingsgate Road, Potomac MD 20854-1740.

Indicate that you are making your purchase through the IG Rescue site, and a portion of your purchase will be donated to IG Rescue! \$25.95 (includes S&H).

The Nuts and Bolts Book for all IG Lovers

by Patricia Kelly (large softcover)

<http://igrescueitems.tripod.com/rescueitemsindex.html>

(Item #192) Also available from: Patricia Kelly, P.O. Box 927, Olney MD 20830.

The author will donate \$2 from your purchase to your choice of the IG Safehouse Alliance, Addie's Safehouse, Midwest IG Rescue or IGRF. \$16 plus \$3.85 priority shipping; MD residents add 5% tax..

Other recommended reading:

- *Second-Hand Dog: How to Turn Yours Into a First Rate Pet* by Carol Lea Benjamin
- *Save that Dog!* by Liz Palika
- *The Adoption Option* by Shari Kalina
- *Choosing a Shelter Dog: A Complete Guide to Help You Rehome a Dog* by Bob Christiansen

Contact information

Western Pennsylvania and Cleveland/Akron area

Italian Greyhound Rescue of Western Pennsylvania

Angela Carducci, Rescue Representative. Phone: 412 881-1283. E-mail: IGRescuePA@aol.com

Website: <http://www.geocities.com/IGRescuePA/>

Shirley Searles, Rescue Volunteer. Phone: 440 774-5656. E-mail: cabin@eriecoast.com

Melissa Incorvia, Rescue Volunteer. Phone: 440-446-0103. E-mail: MelissaInc@aol.com

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Midwest

Italian Greyhound Rescue of Wisconsin and Illinois

Carol Sumbry, Rescue Representative

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E-mail: star279@juno.com

Website: <http://www.midwestigrescue.org>

(A special thank you to Carol for creating much of the content of this excellent document!)

Main

Italian Greyhound Club of America Rescue

Mary Hudson, Rescue Committee Chairman

Phone: 607 257-4389

E-mail: bellacani@aol.com

Website: <http://www.italiangreyhound.org/rescue.html>

Getting involved in IG Rescue

Because we are a non-profit organization run strictly by volunteers, we can always use help with our efforts. Foster homes to care for the dogs before they are placed are needed. Transportation of rescues between cities and states is helpful when moving a rescue to their new home. You can hand out IG Rescue brochures at your local shelters, vet offices, and groomers. Offer to donate an ad in your local newspaper to inform readers about IG Rescue. Go to www.italiangreyhound.org and click the Merchandise link to purchase great items that benefit IG Rescue. Donations of pet supplies and money are always welcome. Remember IG Rescue during the holidays and throughout the year with a donation. Thank your for help and interest in IG Rescue!

