



## Identifying Racing Greyhound Ear Tattoos

Greyhound ear tattoos are used to identify greyhound racing dogs. Each country has its own system of identification, but in general, if a dog has ear tattoos, he is either currently racing or is a retired racer.



A greyhound puppy is tattooed.

All racing countries have implemented a localized code to be used in ear tattooing, sometimes with letters and sometimes a combination of letters and numbers. For example, Ireland uses [three letters in the left ear and two in the right](#), which denote the size of the litter and [approximate age](#). The [United States utilizes a combination of letters and numbers](#), and in Great Britain, a single ear is tattooed with both. In the last few years in New South Wales, Australia, greyhounds have been using a combination of [a tattoo on one ear and a microchip under the skin of the neck](#). Though Ireland has also instituted a microchipping law, [they will continue to use the ear tattoos at the same time](#).

	Left Ear Example	Right Ear Example	Explanation	Microchipping
Australia	Q2831	70D	The left ear's letter refers to the registering Australian state. The right ear's sequence is the month, year, and the order in which the dog was tattooed in his litter.	YES. The left ear will continue to be tattooed. The microchip will eventually supplant all right ear tattoos.
Great Britain	[blank]	VPR9	The right ear's first letter gives an approximate birth year. The digit represents the litter size.	YES. This is done alongside the ear tattoos.
Ireland	YKH	MM	The right ear's first letter is the year of birth. The second letter refers to the tattooing steward.	YES. This is done alongside the ear tattoos.
United States	46496	48A	The left ear's number is the litter registration number. The right ear's sequence is month, year, then the order in which the dog was tattooed in his litter.	NO. No requirement at this time.

Using this string of letters and numbers (as well as an official name and physical characteristics), greyhound owners, trainers, and handlers can keep track of their dogs. On the industry website Greyhound Data, there is [a search function](#) which allows users to enter a dog's right and left ear tattoos to see their lineage and race history.

Finding the tattoos is a simple matter of flipping the ears inside out. In cases where the ink has faded, [shining a flashlight behind the ear can help with identification](#). In most cases, a greyhound's ear tattoo can be easily observed.



Left ear of an Irish greyhound



Right ear of an Irish greyhound