

# ADOPTING A HOUND OR BEAGLE

## CHARACTERISTICS

All dogs love to use their noses, but hounds and beagles are the best sniffers around! A dog's sense of smell is 40 times better than that of a human, and hounds have the strongest sense of smell of all breeds. Hounds naturally enjoy sniffing and will often become so absorbed in a trail that they pay no attention to anything else around them.

Every dog is different, and there is no way for us to know the entire history of a dog brought into the care of the Richmond SPCA. Some hounds and beagles in our care have been former hunting dogs who became lost or were discarded by their prior owners. Others spent much of their lives in outdoor pens. And some were companions who were surrendered by their guardians.

Please be patient with your newly adopted hound. It is possible he may never have lived inside a home before or been socialized to lots of different people, settings or experiences.

## TRANSITIONING TO HOME LIFE

To help your new companion get acclimated to his new life in your home, please go slowly. Keep him or her in a single room for about three days, or longer as needed. Then, as your dog becomes comfortable, slowly give him access to more and more areas of your home. Give him plenty of walks and time outside as this is likely what he is most used to. If you have a fenced yard, be careful to supervise closely at first to make sure your new dog doesn't jump over or dig under your fence. Fearful hounds may panic and bolt from an unfamiliar noise, and they are known for getting absorbed with smells and wandering. Pheromone products such as those found at [adaptil.com](http://adaptil.com) can be helpful as nervous and shy dogs adjust to a new environment.

Immediately introduce your dog to his potty area. Pick an identifiable spot and take him to this spot at regular intervals, such as every hour. Be patient and wait. When your dog potties in this spot, give him an extra special reward followed by a walk. Many hounds have never been crated, and while some take to their new "den" readily, be prepared to slowly crate train a dog who isn't used to this type of confinement. Supervise closely when your dog is in the house with you, even tying his leash to your belt as needed. Many of these dogs need patience with housetraining as it is a new idea for them. Many hounds have never pottied on leash before. If your new dog seems hesitant to potty on leash, and you don't have a fenced yard, try using a long line in a safe area. Simulate the feeling of being off leash, and as your dog is learning his potty spot, start slowly shortening the amount of line he is given until he is used to being on a regular leash.

Provide your new dog with lots of chews, such as hooves, marrow bones, and antlers, as recommended by your veterinarian. Edible chews such as bully sticks are also nice options. Always supervise a dog when giving a new chew to make sure he uses it safely. You can make an activity out of mealtimes and help your dog learn what to chew on by mixing his kibble with a bit of canned food and

stuffing the sticky mixture into Kongs and hollow chews. Pack it loosely at first, then as your dog improves at getting the food out, pack it more tightly. You can even freeze it overnight.

Introduce alone time slowly. Practice leaving for 10 minutes, then 30 minutes, then an hour, and so on. Leave your dog with lots of fun things to do, especially a meal stuffed into chews so that he can learn that alone time is a good thing. Give your dog time to transition before leaving for an entire workday.

## **TRAINING**

Sign up for a good reward-based basic manners class soon after bringing home your new dog. While hounds love to learn, many benefit from sit and recall training with a professional trainer. Sit seems to be an uncomfortable position for many hounds, and they get so absorbed in scents that they don't always realize you are calling them. A tip that can help snap them out of it when absorbed in a scent is to teach "come" to the sound of a whistle, versus just your voice. A whistle is less likely to blend in with other sounds outdoors.

An odd behavior that many new hound guardians report is their dogs randomly stop and refuse to walk. This may be related to many hounds not having spent much time on leash. If your dog does this, carry some extra yummy treats with you. Reward your dog while in motion when he is near your side. If he starts to slow or stop, pick up your pace to a good trot and reward your dog when he catches up to you. Do not pull out the food when your dog stops to try and bribe him to move. You don't want to accidentally teach that food shows up when he applies the breaks!

## **BONDING**

Playing with your dog is a great way to help him bond with you. Reward-based training is a big, fun game, and we highly recommend teaching any age and breed of dog manners and tricks. While many hounds don't enjoy fetch and tug the way that a lab or terrier might, there are lots of games they do enjoy. Make scent trails through your house and yard with a great reward at the end. Scatter your dog's kibble through your house and yard so your dog must use his or her nose to find his meal. Many hounds may not retrieve, but they still enjoy chasing items thrown by their guardians. Get creative, and you will find lots of fun activities to do with your new dog!