Congratulations on adopting a basset hound from BROOD. You have adopted a warm and loving friend whose unique personality and interesting character will enrich your life. Here are tips to make the transition for yourself and your basset a little easier.

It will take anywhere from a few days to a few weeks or even months for your basset to settle into his new life with you. During these days of discovery, be patient with him. He will be watching you closely to “figure you out.” The following tips are provided to help you recognize problems early and know what to do about them. Please call us if you have any questions or concerns.

We invite you to become an active participant in our organization and its activities. Every year we hold our major Ramble event in September where we get together for contests/games, raffles and auctions to support our rescue efforts. It’s a great chance to meet other basset lovers and raise money for our rescue efforts.

To become a member of BROOD and help support basset rescue, fill-out the online membership form on our website at www.brood-va.org. Dues are only $20 a year and membership entitles you to vote for the BROOD Board of Directors, run for office and receive the Daily Rambler email newsletter. The newsletter is the best way to keep up with BROOD activities, and it contains dog health and training information and articles.
Feeding

We suggest a high quality/low fat diet for your adult Basset. Puppy food need only be fed 10-12 months, at the most, for Basset Hounds. Most hounds over the age of 7 should be transitioned to a diet formulated for seniors. Check with your vet if you have any concerns/questions. Your high quality kibble can be supplemented with cooked brown rice, no-sodium green beans, non-fat plain yogurt and/or canned pure pumpkin (NOT pumpkin pie mix). Fresh water should always be available.

BROOD recommends feeding your basset twice a day. Check with your vet about how much he should weigh. The ideal weight of bassets can vary between 40-65 pounds (or more). Do not allow your dog to become obese; it can lead to heart problems, breathing difficulties, arthritis, and diabetes.

Grooming and Hygiene

Some bassets develop a “hound odor” as they age. Some people like this smell, comparing it to popcorn or Fritos. Others bathe their hounds regularly with a mild shampoo. It is not harmful to bathe a dog frequently. We suggest a non-detergent shampoo formulated for dogs.

Shedding can be handled best with proper grooming. Use a comb or brush or even a good full body rub on your basset 2 to 3 times weekly to control shedding.

Bassets have long floppy ears that can be prone to yeast or bacterial infections. Cleaning ears once a week with a mild commercial ear wash solution made for dogs will keep the ears clean and smelling sweet. Red, sore, or foul-smelling ears, as well as head-shaking indicate an infection and a vet trip is in order.

Bassets should have their thick nails trimmed regularly. When the nails get too long they become painful and can cause your hound to walk off balance. If you are uncertain how to trim nails, ask your veterinarian or groomer to show you. Some basset owners use a dremel tool for keeping nails trim. If your basset can deal with the noise and vibration, it’s a quick, painless way to trim nails, with practically no danger of bleeding. Keep treats on hand to reward good behavior while you trim nails.

If you notice any “scooting” on the floor or biting at the rear, the anal sacs may need to be “expressed.” Most people leave this messy task for the vet, but you can learn how to do it yourself as part of your routine grooming.
The Marking Basset

The marking basset is driven not by a need to eliminate but by the desire to establish territory. Females and males can both mark, but it is most commonly seen in the un-neutered or a recently neutered male. It can also appear when a dog enters a new home. If other dogs in the house have marked or had accidents, the new hound may want to make a “statement.” If necessary, for several days, attach the dog to you with a leash so that the second he attempts to mark you can catch him at it and correct. The behavior should subside as he gets more comfortable with your household and he learns that marking isn’t desirable. Remember he won’t necessarily generalize and correcting for eliminating does not always mean he’ll understand that he’s not supposed to mark either!

Consult your veterinarian for a possible health problem if house soiling persists. Unintentional soiling may occur if your dog has a urinary tract infection or worms. You should rule these out before embarking on a housetraining campaign.

If there is an accident, the best treatment is to clean it up with an enzyme product such as Nature’s Miracle to destroy the urine odor. A “home grown” treatment is a solution of white vinegar and water (1:3 ratio). First soak up as much of the urine as possible, and then soak the spot with cleaning solution. Repeat if necessary.

Housetraining

Housetraining  When your new pet arrives, immediately take him to the area where you want him to eliminate. Always take him to this spot. It helps to go with your dog – don’t just turn him out in the yard alone. Praise him when he complies. Even if your adopted basset was “housetrained,” he can have accidents due to anxiety. Also, your dog may be housetrained in one household but not in another. Therefore, be prepared. Do not let your new friend have full run of the house until you know he is housetrained. Keep him confined to an area where you can monitor his behavior, and should he have an accident, correct it immediately, not after the infraction. DO NOT HIT OR STRIKE. Distract by sharply saying NO, shaking a can with pennies in it, or clapping your hands. Then get him immediately outside. If you can’t monitor the dog, confine him to a small area where accidents won’t matter. Establishing an eating, sleeping and exercising schedule will help get your new basset on the right track and get his inner clock on a timetable that coincides with yours. If you are having problem housetraining your dog, contact us for some tips.
**Aggression**

Aggression is most commonly caused by stress or fear, and may occur in rescue dogs. The dog may be afraid of something, or he may feel as if the household has no leader, in which case he may think that it’s his job to take command. Owners who establish themselves as firm, fair leaders seldom have problems with aggression. However, even a sweet, submissive dog is capable of biting if he is fearful and cannot escape the situation that is causing his fear. All aggressive behavior is serious and can escalate. If you believe your basset is behaving in an aggressive manner, contact us immediately. We know trained people who can help you with the problem before it gets out of hand. Unless you are familiar with aggression in dogs, treat any growling, snarling, snapping or biting incident as a serious problem and seek competent help immediately. Do not try to “handle” aggressive behavior yourself. Call us.

**Aggression to Humans**

Growling, snapping, and biting are unacceptable behaviors. Dogs can exhibit aggression for many reasons, but it must be addressed immediately, or it may get worse. First check with your veterinarian for a possible health related problem. The aggression may be related to a health problem such as thyroid problem, tumors, or infection.

**Barking**

Barking is common for a new dog that is unsure and bewildered by what has been happening to him. When they want something, dogs will experiment with various behaviors to see if any of them work. They quickly discover that barking works very well with humans. Paying attention to barking is rewarding it. If your dog is barking too much, please call us to talk with our training consultant.

**Dog-Dog Aggression**

Do not be overly alarmed if your new basset has a few “encounters” with your other dogs. It may take a week or longer before the pack sorts itself out. As long as all the dogs recognize YOU as their leader, there are seldom serious fights. Watch him carefully around other dogs. If you see signs of aggression (growling or the hair rising up on the back), distract him and break his eye contact with the other dog. A distraction with a squirt of plain water from a squirt bottle can also be helpful. Then get him away. Don’t try to “calm” him by petting him or talking to him in a soothing tone of voice. Just move him away. By trying to calm him or soothe him by petting, you are inadvertently rewarding him for the aggression by giving him attention. However, if a serious problem seems to be developing, please call us.
Exercise and Handling

Of course you should take your new friend for walks. Even if you have a large yard, bassets appreciate new places to investigate. Bassets do not “self-exercise.” You need to encourage them. Exercise is good for his health and will help the bonding process.

Never strike a basset hound. They are sensitive souls, and respond well to gentle correction. In addition, many rescue bassets have been mistreated in the past. Any corporal punishment (even with a rolled up newspaper) may increase the risk of fear aggression. Use positive reinforcements such as small treats or praise to encourage compliance.

Basset hounds were bred for trailing game. They expect you to follow them, not the other way around! Although they are perceived to be slow-moving (for a dog), they can move out quite briskly when you least expect it and can penetrate the thickest brush with ease and get away from their human companions. Your basset will follow his nose wherever it takes him. His hunting heritage makes it imperative that you keep your basset confined to a leash or in a well-fenced yard. Check your fence frequently – bassets are very good at finding “holes.” Being independent thinkers, they may NOT return at your command. It only takes one squirrel, cat, or rabbit to cause him to take off. Remember, many bassets end up in rescue because they were strays. Keep your basset away from swimming pools unless he is under your direct supervision. They are really bad swimmers. We strongly recommend keeping a buckle (not choke) collar with ID tags on your dog at all times. BROOD has micro-chipped its bassets, and this will be indicated on his paperwork. Never let him run up to children or let children play with him without your supervision. Be careful especially with children grabbing the dog’s neck or ears or trying to kiss it on the face. Dogs may interpret this as aggression, and react.

Separation Anxiety

This is a common problem with newly adopted dogs, especially those who came from a shelter. They can be confused, frightened, and insecure. Coming into a new home means trying to regain their equilibrium and understand the “new” rules. This often leads to the “Velcro” dog syndrome. The minute you go out of sight he begins to whine, cry, or bark. In severe cases, the dog eliminates or becomes destructive. In most cases, time and patience resolve the problem. Here are some things you can do to allay the anxiety:

If he feels comfortable, secure and safe in a crate, you can crate him when you leave. Try putting something that smells like you in the crate with him along with chew toys. If, however, he panics in close quarters, then crating can make matters worse.

Most bassets respond well to a four-legged pal as a companion and playmate. Make his environment more stimulating or entertaining. To help engage his mind and body, frequently change the toys you leave out.
Separation Anxiety (Continued)

Totally withdraw attention from him 15 minutes before leaving and 15 minutes after you come home. Reason: the minutes preceding a departure and those following a return home are emotional catalysts for dogs with separation anxiety. The more fuss you make about coming and going, the more anxiety you instill in the dog. Practice several brief absences every day. Go out and come back in after a few seconds over and over again to desensitize him to your departures. Do it in a matter-of-fact way, ignoring the dog whatever he does. Use a routine phrase every time you leave such as “See you later,” or “Puppy stay home.” This is a good way to teach him that you’ll be returning. Then do outings of 10 seconds, 30 seconds, 1 minute, 10 minutes etc. Mix it up.

Dogs need abundant proof that your departure does not predict a traumatically long period of isolation. Keep all your departures and arrivals low key. Never make an entrance when the dog is barking. Wait for a 30 second lull. Increase mental stimulation by leaving him toys to play with (chew toys are the best because stress normally can be relieved by chewing).

Obedience Training

BROOD strongly recommends you take your new basset through a basic obedience course. The course will help you to bond to your new friend and give him confidence in you as the “leader” of the pack. Also, if you have any behavior problems, you can get expert advice on how to correct them.

Have a question?

Call us at
866-760-9476 (toll free)