

BASIC HOUND TRAINING

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HOUSE MANNERS

New experiences

Many rescue hounds have never been housedogs. Many common household appliances or sounds will frighten or startle them. Ceiling fans, dishwashers, washing machines, even televisions may be viewed as scary monsters! It is important to introduce a rescue hound to these things carefully. A ceiling fan on high may be terrifying while on low it may be tolerable.

Concentrate on rewarding brave behavior, not soothing fearful behavior. A mild fear reaction or startle reaction should be completely ignored. Praise the dog when his natural curiosity causes him to tentatively check out the object that scared him. If, on the other hand, your hound panics over something, calmly stop the sound or motion that is causing the panic and begin a slow desensitization program.

House training

Many rescue hounds have been housed outdoors. They may have no concept of waiting to go to the bathroom!. You must start from scratch, training your hound as if he were a puppy. The three keys to successful house training are consistency, confinement and reward.

Consistency:

Feed your hound at the same times during the day. Take him outside immediately upon waking (that means from naps too), after meals, after play sessions and any time he appears restless. Initially you will want to take your dog out every couple hours.

Confinement:

When you cannot supervise your hound use a crate to safely confine him. Do not allow yourself to get distracted and allow your hound to wander out of your sight and go to the bathroom somewhere inappropriate.

Reward:

Always go outside with your dog during the training process. You need to reward your dog when he goes to the bathroom in the yard. A treat reward

will help speed the training process! Do not punish your hound if he goes to the bathroom in the house. Simply remove him from the area and clean it thoroughly.

You may want to have a urinalysis run by your veterinarian to rule out a bladder infection if you are having a really hard time house training (particularly if you feel that your hound urinates an excessive amount).

Food/garbage stealing

Many hounds are very food oriented. Do not leave food items within reach. Dogs learn through experience. If food is found on the counters or in the waste pail your hound will become a champion food thief in no time.

Crate training

A crate offers security for your dog and peace of mind for you! Crating your dog eliminates inappropriate chewing in your absence and helps with housetraining. Most dogs accept a crate readily but introducing your dog properly will insure that things go smoothly.

Set the crate up with a blanket and a couple toys. If your dog goes into the crate on his own to investigate, praise him and give him a treat. Otherwise, toss a treat into the crate and praise your dog when he goes in after it. Feed your dog in his crate. After several repetitions of these steps try closing your dog in the crate for a minute or so. (A chew bone or dinner to distract him will help). Gradually build up the amount of time your dog spends in his crate. Often if the crate is in your bedroom your dog will be content to sleep in the crate all night because you are close by. This will go a long way in acclimating him to being crated.

- Never leave a collar on your dog when he is crated unsupervised.
- Provide a food-stuffed toy to keep your dog occupied when he is left alone in his crate.
- An adult dog should not be crated for longer than 8 hours, ideally no longer than 6 hours.

BASIC TRAINING

Sit

Hold a yummy treat close to your dog's nose. Draw it slowly up and back over his head. As his head goes up to follow the treat his backend will go down into a

sitting position. Say "Good or Yes!" the moment his back end hits the floor and give him the treat.

Do not attempt to ask your dog to sit ahead of time. Concentrate on getting him really good at following the treat. After lots of practice you can begin to insert the word "Sit" just as he begins to move into a sitting position. "Good or Yes!" when his butt hits the floor. Reward him with the treat. Eventually your dog will understand that "Sit" means put your back end on the floor and you can simply ask him to do so.

Down

Draw a treat slowly from your dog's nose to his chest and then to the floor between his paws. Hold the treat there until he lowers his body into a down position. Say "Good Yes!" and reward with the treat.

Again, after you are confident that your dog will follow the treat to the floor you can begin to say "Down" as he starts to lie down. "Good!" when he hits the floor. Give him the treat. Soon you will only need to say "Down" and point to the floor and your dog will lie down.

INTRODUCING YOUR RESCUE HOUND TO OTHER HOUSEHOLD DOGS

Thankfully, most hounds are social with other dogs, but your hound may be scared or confused so introductions should always be done carefully.

If possible introduce the newcomer to your resident dog away from home where territorial aggression will be at its lowest. Have both dogs on leash with two people holding the leashes. Keep the leashes as slack as possible and try to relax yourself. Tension travels right down the leash to your dogs! It is generally helpful to let them sniff and say hello, then walk the dogs away from each other circling back to let them greet again several times.

Watch both dogs' body language carefully. Ears back, tail tucked and a body leaning backward may mean submission or possibly fear. A dog that is up on his toes, ears forward, tail erect is acting confidently or possibly aggressively. Ideally you like to see a dog whose posture is somewhere in between! You will need to watch the extremes of these postures to keep both dogs safe.

If the on-leash introduction goes well, it is best to find a secure area to let the dogs interact without your interference. For safety reasons the dogs can be allowed to drag their leashes as they circle around each other, sniff and/or play. If it gets out of control, you can easily grab the leashes to separate the dogs.

FOOD AGGRESSION

Many hounds will act quite ferociously if they feel their food is in danger of being stolen. Always feed dogs separately and watch all interaction that involves chew bones very carefully. Keep in mind that in the dog world possession is 9/10ths of the law as they say!

It is not wrong for a dog to growl at another dog approaching his food or bone. The trouble comes if the approaching dog does not get the hint and back off! It is best to avoid these situations whenever possible by feeding in crates or different rooms.

If you have a rescue hound who you feel is not safe around other dogs contact a reputable trainer or certified animal behaviorist.

HOUNDS AND CATS

Being rabbit hunting dogs, many hounds have the tendency to chase little furry things! Most are just curious, not dangerous, but there is the occasional hound who thinks cats are dinner. Initial introductions should be done with the dog on leash to minimize the chance of scaring the cat. Discourage any attempts to chase immediately. Encourage any friendly interaction. Never leave your rescue hound alone with your cats.

INTRODUCING YOUR HOUND TO NEW PEOPLE

Hounds are generally friendly but often histories are unknown and the dogs may be very frightened at first, so introductions should be done carefully.

When introducing a rescue hound to his new family (especially if the family includes children) all family members should sit down in chairs and the dog should be allowed to approach them, as he feels comfortable doing so. People should not reach out to the dog or try to force him to come to them (this is often hard for children). Having each person feed him a little treat when he approaches will go a long way toward cementing the friendship!

If your hound is happily wagging its way around the house—great! If your hound is shyer—that's OK too! Let him figure out that this is a safe place by rewarding bravery with praise/ treats and by acting in a calm, non-threatening manner around him at all times.