



Apartment Living with a Basset or Basset Plus: Some Tips and Considerations

It is possible to have a Basset or Basset Plus in a high rise! Bassets can be great apartment companions because of their gentle and loving nature, as well their usually average to low energy levels. However, as with any dog in an apartment, there are a few extra considerations you can take to ensure a happy situation for both you and your hound. Here are some things to keep in mind:

House Training

- Since you don't have a yard, house training can be trickier for your hound, especially when you live on a high floor. Some of the approaches you can try are crate training, baby gating, and tethering the hound to you when you are home. You can even try a combination of these approaches. Of these, crate training is probably the best way to go if your hound can handle being crated.
- Expect accidents and be prepared – Nature's Miracle is your friend during this training period.
- Keep a steady routine. Dogs do a lot better when they know their schedule. A potty break first thing in the morning, once in the middle of the day, once after work, and right before bed (four times a day) at a minimum works best.
- A dog walker is highly recommended if you are gone for 8+ hours a day. A 15-20 minute potty break gives your hound a greater chance of success with house training and a break from being alone all day. As your hound becomes trained, it may be possible to leave them for the whole day, but remember that if you can't hold it for 8+ hours, your hound may not be able to, either.
- The hound will only understand that going inside is a bad thing if you catch them right in the act, stop them, and immediately take them outside. Once you've discovered an accident that's already happened, it's too late to let the dog know that they shouldn't do that. One way to catch them is to have them leashed/tethered to you when you're home so they don't wander off and have an accident when you aren't looking.
- Use a key phrase or word every time you take the dog outside, such as "Potty outside" or "Go potty" and always take them to the same spot and wait until they go before the rest of the walk.
- Remember, positive reinforcement is key! Heap praise and give a treat every time your hound goes outside.

Separation Anxiety

- One of the challenges of apartment living is being in close quarters with your neighbors. Depending on how thick your walls are, a vocal hound (particularly when you aren't home) can be a problem. This is something you should discuss with your adoption coordinator—as we know, hounds can be a talkative breed, but most are not disruptively loud.
- To see if your hound will have separation anxiety when you're gone, leave the house as you normally would, and wait outside your door for a few minutes. You'll know pretty much right away if you hear a mournful howl—test how long it will last. Some hounds will howl for a few minutes and stop. Some will howl the whole time you are gone for hours on end.
- To help alleviate the anxiety, leave for short periods of time while you're home – start with 5 minutes, then go to 15, 30, etc. The hound may take some time to learn that you will always be back. Give a treat before you go. As you are gone for longer periods, you can move to a Kong or dental chew so your hound has something to do the first few minutes you're gone. (Avoid bones or anything that might be a choke hazard.)
- Don't make a fuss when you're leaving. The more anxious you are about leaving, the more anxious your hound may be. Go about your normal routine and don't give extra attention when you go. Act as though it's no big deal, and eventually it won't be a big deal.
- As your hound is adjusting, it may be helpful to leave a note for your neighbors explaining the situation and leaving your contact information. Often, neighbors are gone the same times you are and it may not be a huge issue.

Reactivity

- This can be a tough one. Ultimately, as an apartment dweller, it is best to avoid adopting or fostering a reactive hound altogether. Hounds that are reactive to other dogs just aren't ideal in an environment where they are constantly in close proximity (think elevators and hallways) to new dogs.
- A head halter, such as the Gentle Leader® Headcollar, is ideal for managing leash-reactive dogs. Just wearing one is enough to calm some reactive dogs. Another great thing about head halters is that they allow you to gently redirect your dog's gaze so that he can't stare at other dogs. If a dog has been staring at something for two seconds or more, he's very likely deciding whether or not to lunge, growl or bark. If you interrupt a stare before your dog reacts, you have a much better chance of persuading him to do something more appropriate, such as sitting or looking at you.
- Teach your dog that seeing other dogs means he's going to get delicious treats. Changing the way your dog feels will go a long way in changing his behavior.
- With reactive dogs, working with a trainer or a group training workshop is highly recommended.

Some Other Tips

- To acquaint your hound with a crate, take baby steps. Positive association is the key to success. Start feeding your hound in the crate, giving treats or a Kong filled with peanut butter when in the crate, and leave the crate door open when you're home so they can go in and out. Make the crate comfortable with a blanket. Try it over short period of time and gradually go longer, if you can (sometimes schedules don't easily allow this). Over time, your hound will think of their crate as a safe haven where good things happen.
- Never let your hound go unleashed unless you're in an enclosed area. A hound will follow their nose right on to a freeway if they get a good scent. In a city environment, this is especially dangerous. For off-leash pay, hit up the local dog park.
- A tired dog is a good dog! Since you're living in a smaller space, make sure that your hound gets daily walks, dog park time, doggy daycare time, and playdates with other dogs.