

# ***Your New Basenji Comes Home***

## **Things to take when you pick up your new Basenji**

When the big day arrives for you to pick up your Basenji you will need to take the following items with you in the car:

- ➔ A collar (a collar for a cat is a good size for a pup) and lead
- ➔ A crate with a sheet or blanket inside
- ➔ Extra bedding
- ➔ A container of water and a bowl if it is a long drive
- ➔ Paper towels
- ➔ A spray cleaner
- ➔ Several plastic bags in case bedding gets soiled
- ➔ A toy



You should know what kind of food your Basenji has been eating, the amount and his current schedule. This will make his transition to his new home easier. If the food that your Basenji is used to eating is not available in your area, ask for a small amount that you may mix with his new food to make the adjustment gradually. Ask for the breeder's recommendations about food and supplements before you go to pick up your puppy so you can be prepared for his homecoming.

## Settling Your Basenji in Its New Home

Below are tips to help your Basenji adjust to its new home. No matter how wonderful a home you have for your hound, it is a traumatic experience for him/her to leave familiar surroundings and littermates.

### ➤ ***Don't have unrealistic expectations.***

Don't expect your puppy or dog to "know" what to do once you get it home. Your Basenji will be lonely the first few days and nights that it is separated from its littermates and familiar routine. Each puppy is different in the amount of time needed to adjust to being an only dog. Like children, puppies need to be taught what is expected of them. Even adult Basenjies will have to adjust and learn the particular rules and routines of your home.



### ➤ ***One of the biggest mistakes that people make with a new Basenji is to spoil him, allowing behaviors (just for today) and granting too much freedom too soon.***

When you correct your hound for an improper behavior, don't apologize when he gives you one of those true Basenji looks or yodels to say, "I didn't mean to, I'm sorry, don't you love me?" Don't dwell on the error. Be firm and brief in any correction. Your hound will appreciate clear boundaries and knowing how to please you. Lavishly praise good behavior.

### ➤ ***Decide ahead of time who will be responsible for caring for your Basenji.***

If you have children, it is best to divide the duties among them. Don't assume that the children are doing their assigned chores. It is an adult's responsibility to make sure that proper care including food, water, exercise, clean bedding and a clean exercise area has been provided.

➔ **Crate training should begin as soon as you bring your new Basenji home.**



*You must close the door to the crate for the pup to learn. Eventually your Basenji will be using the crate as a den for naps and quiet time.*

It is important to understand that crating a Basenji is not cruel. Dogs have a nesting instinct and the desire to find a protected spot of their own. The crate becomes your puppy's special "room" or den where he can feel protected and sleep or relax.

Crating will help your dog adjust to its new home, keep him safe when you are away for short periods and help in the housebreaking process, since dogs, by nature, do not like to eliminate in their dens. You should feed and water your new Basenji in his crate, as well as provide comfortable bedding and something safe to chew. Be sure that the water bowl is securely attached to the crate to avoid it spilling. These things will help him adjust.

Teach your puppy to sleep in its crate the first night you bring him home. It is not unusual for a puppy, or even an adult to cry or whimper during the night when it gets lonely. Think of your new dog as a baby learning to sleep on its own. A day or two of steeling yourself against the whimpering will pay off handsomely in the form of a secure and well-adjusted dog. **Don't give in** and take your puppy to bed with you unless you are willing to sleep with your dog in the bed for the next 15 years!

➔ **The first few days and nights will have a big impact on your Basenji's adjustment to his new home.**

Inconsistency and carelessness on your part may result in an undependable confused pet. Be diligent and you will have a wonderful, loyal and well-trained Basenji.

➔ **Set up a "dog area"**

Young puppies and adult dogs need their own space where they can get away from children and the hubbub of a busy family. In addition to crate training your hound, you may also designate an area such as a laundry room or other room preferably with a tiled floor which can be sectioned off with a baby gate. If you find the puppy is being destructive in his room, consider getting an exercise pen with a lid where he can spend his time. These pens are to a puppy what a play pen is to a child.



➔ ***If you have questions, don't hesitate to contact your breeder or rescue group.***

Many a puppy has gotten the upper paw as soon as it walked into its new home. Be consistent with your training and you will be rewarded with many good years with your faithful new companion.

➔ ***Don't allow your puppy to be out of your sight until it is fully housetrained.***

If you aren't available to watch your puppy with your full attention, let him rest in its crate until you are able to devote your time to the puppy. It may take time for your puppy to learn to let you know when he needs to go out to potty. This takes time and patience. *If your puppy has an accident because you were not watching him, it does no good to punish him "after the fact."* He won't be able to make the connection that he did something wrong. If, despite the fact that you are watching closely, your puppy starts to go potty, immediately take the puppy to its potty area. Wait until it goes there and then reward him with praise.



➔ ***Allow your puppy or adult dog an adjustment period before introducing it to your extended family members and friends.***

You should allow your puppy time to settle into its new home for a week before bringing too many visitors (both human and canine) in to visit. It is natural to want to introduce your new Basenji to your family and friends, however, too much activity can be a bit overwhelming.



***In the beginning, let things be as quiet and undisturbed as possible.***



### ➔ **Introduce your Basenji to the other animals in your household.**



If you have other dogs in your home, introduce your new Basenji in neutral territory. Keep all the dogs on a leash, and fully supervise them at the beginning. Your small puppy can be accidentally injured by a large dog, even during play. Make sure you feed your pets separately. Your Basenji should always eat undisturbed in its crate.

Make introductions to cats slowly while keeping your dog on a leash, and allowing the cat to warm up to the dog. Let the cat wander near your dog while he is in his crate. They usually learn to get along.

Your hound's **diet should not include your cat's food or droppings from your cat's litter box.** Keep cat food and the litter box away from your Basenji.

### ➔ **Introduce your Basenji to the world.**

Start teaching your puppy to walk on a leash (see "Training") so he will be ready to go out into the world as soon as possible. You can start introductions to some of the potential situations, people and things to interact with at home.

At this same age, your puppy should learn to be handled by various people. He will need to understand that it is okay for his feet to be handled and his toenails trimmed. He needs to have his teeth examined and be used to hands all over his body.

Socializing your puppy outside your home grounds should start as soon as he is settled and has sufficient vaccinations to be safe from communicable diseases. Discuss the timing with your veterinarian. Plan how you will teach your puppy to interact with the world. If there are puppy kindergarten classes nearby, plan to attend. Introduce your puppy to a large variety of friendly people, children, adults and people in wheelchairs, and well mannered friendly dogs. Introduce him to all sorts of walking surfaces such as rugs, slippery floors, grass, paving, sand, stone, etc. Pups need to learn about noises of all types, stationary and moving objects and a variety of locations. Always be sure that you can control the situation and the pup isn't over whelmed but has an opportunity to watch and decide to approach when he is ready.



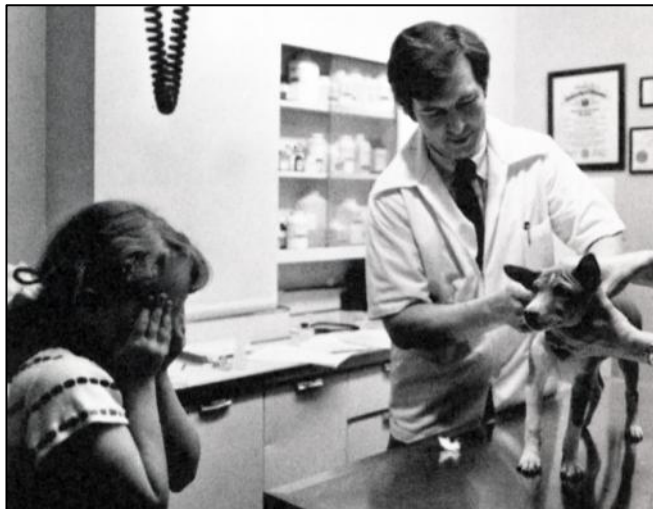


*The Basenji April 1983*

### ➔ **Puppies first visit to the Vet's Office**

The first visit to the veterinarian's office can set the pup's attitude towards vets for life. Be sure it is a good visit. The visit can benefit both child and dog, especially if an understanding veterinarian takes the time to make it a learning experience for all.

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## Lifting Your Basenji

It is very important to pick up any dog (puppy or adult) carefully. Small children should never pick up a puppy as they can easily squirm out of the child's arms injuring himself when he falls. Lifting a dog by his front legs or shoulders can cause injury.

In the unfortunate event that your hound is severely injured, make a stretcher from a crate pan or towel so that you may bring your Basenji to the vet without further injuring him.

## The Aggressive Basenji

Basenjjs are quite clever about getting the upper hand and if the situation is right, this kind of thing



can turn into a problem with dominance and aggression. You should try to kindly keep control and if you do not understand how to do that you should get help promptly via your breeder, rescue group or a good obedience class.

Puppies will sometimes get carried away and play a little too roughly with their companions or you.

Any nipping, possessive or aggressive behavior toward people should be dealt with immediately. Again, if you do not understand the psychological interactions of dogs and people, find more information on the subject and learn how things should be done. There are books and websites with this type of information. Help finding trainers can be found in the section [#104 Books To Read](#) where some breeders have offered links that may be useful. A local puppy kindergarten class may help you learn to control your puppy as well as helping with socialization.



*Your Basenji should be relaxed about how people handle him.*

## Consistency is the Key!

- ➔ The minute you arrive home with your puppy take him outside to a spot so he can eliminate (use the same spot each time). Do this before bringing him in the house.
- ➔ Literally keep an eye on your puppy at all times indoors and outdoors when you first bring him home. You may have to do this for a couple of weeks or months until he is housebroken.
- ➔ When you are not able to watch him, confine him to a crate. Confine him to a crate at night. At night, take him out one last time as late as you can and wake up as early as possible to let him out in the morning. Until he is housebroken, be sure his crate is not too big or he may be tempted to eliminate in a corner of the crate. Limit water after 8 pm.
- ➔ Take a 2 or 3 month old puppy outside to eliminate every 3 or 4 hours. The more consistently you follow a schedule the better.
- ➔ Key times to take him out are first thing in the morning, after waking up from a nap, 15 to 20 minutes after eating and after playtime. Do not play with your puppy before he has eliminated.
- ➔ Watch for your puppy's signals that he needs to eliminate; the most common are sniffing, circling or going to the door. Take him out the same door each time and to the same elimination space outdoors. Some people hang a bell low at the door for the puppy to ring when it needs to go outside. If you do this be sure to have his paw ring the bell before you take him outside each time.
- ➔ Allow plenty of time for elimination. Use a short key phrase to signal elimination such as "Do your business!" Some puppies need 20 minutes or more.
- ➔ Walking your puppy on a lead can help stimulate a bowel movement.
- ➔ When your puppy eliminates reward him immediately with a treat, affection or playtime.
- ➔ Only reprimand your puppy if you catch him in the act of soiling in the house. Thoroughly clean the soiled area to remove any odor.

***Eight to twelve week old puppies do not have the colon or bladder control to go more than 3 or 4 hours without eliminating.***



*If you work, you can try one of several alternatives.*

## Housebreaking When Owners Work

- Install a doggy door which goes out to a secure fenced area or arrange for someone to let your puppy out every 4 hours.
- If the above arrangement is not possible, set up an elimination area in a confined area, room or exercise pen in your home. Thick pads of newspaper may be used for this purpose.
- At the age of 8 or 9 months a puppy has more bladder and bowel control and at this time the indoor elimination area can be progressively made smaller until it is eliminated altogether.
- When you are using the inside elimination area as part of training, remove this area when you are at home and can supervise the puppy. You should encourage elimination outside.
- As your puppy progresses, teach him to eliminate while on a leash and on different types of surfaces. This will help avoid problems if you and your dog are in unfamiliar surroundings or another house.



*A smaller pen with a lid would be better  
as even very young pups sometimes climb well*

## Exercising Your Basenji



A Basenji is a sturdy breed but puppies can still over do exercise or be injured by excessively rough play. Basenji puppies need exercise but should not be forced to do more than is natural for them. Daily access to a fenced yard, play in the house and a walk on a lead are a good regime. Don't over-exercise a young Basenji while their muscles and bones are still forming by jogging with them, rough play with much larger dogs or rowdy children. It is important that puppies be allowed to sleep after their play period.

## Providing for Your Basenji in the Event of a Caregiver's Death

Just as you might provide for your family in the event of your death, you should make arrangements for the care of your pet. Although difficult to think about, making these arrangements eases the burden for your family and assures a good future for your Basenji.

## Identification and a Lost Dog

Aside from a clip on or buckle on collar with tags, there are several additional methods you may wish to use to identify your dog. Micro-chipping and registration with a pet registry is the best method. Many humane shelters, veterinarians, and other agencies have scanners to read microchips and will be able to contact you in the unfortunate event that your dog becomes lost.



***Although you take preventative measures, dogs do occasionally escape from their fenced yard or slip through an open door.***

In the event that your dog becomes lost:

- ➔ Contact neighbors
- ➔ Alert local law enforcement
- ➔ Alert your mail man, they often return many lost dogs
- ➔ Post flyers with photos at stores, schools and other public places
- ➔ Contact local shelters **daily**
- ➔ Contact your breeder or rescue group
- ➔ Contact veterinarians and dog clubs in your area
- ➔ Advertise in the newspaper and on local radio

***You might be interested in participating in a program offered by the American Kennel Club called CAR, Canine Animal Recovery. Information about CAR is available on the AKC website at [www.akc.org](http://www.akc.org).***