

# Beagle User Guide

## **Congratulations on your new Beagle/ Beagle mix.**

This Beagle User Guide has been developed to assist you in transitioning your new member into the family and assisting with developing a healthy, well behaved dog.

The Beagle is a gentle, sweet, lively, and curious dog that just loves everyone. A happy little tail-wagger. Social, brave, and intelligent. Calm and loving. However, they do have minds of their own and are determined. They require consistent, gentle training or you can break their spirit. Beagles have a distinctive bark/howl that is considered harmonious. If not left alone outdoors, they do not bark any more than other dogs do. Energetic and possessing great stamina, the Beagle needs plenty of exercise but a reasonably sized fenced yard with a daily brisk walk should do. They will follow their nose, and therefore cannot be trusted off leash in an unsafe area. Being an average shedder, an occasional brushing will suffice. Give proper attention to the ears because they are prone to infections. Keep their nails trimmed. Do not let them become overweight. The average lifespan is 15-18 years.

Your new dog will need some time to adjust to your family. Do not expect him/her to be completely comfortable immediately. Most adopted dogs go through some standard developmental stages. The timeline varies depending upon the dog, but typically spans a period of 3-4 months.

*Stage 1:* A little shy or unsure. New environment, new people, not sure of what's expected, etc.

*Stage 2:* A little more outgoing, feeling more comfortable. Personality starts to come out more. Starts investigating more and getting into trouble (learning the house rules). Is starting to bond.

*Stage 3 :* Velcro stage – follows you everywhere as if afraid you might leave. May start barking or whining when you leave. Appears a little anxious.

After this period, they typically settle down and start feeling more secure.

## **Dog Basics:**

- Dogs need rules. They are pack animals and are more comfortable when they know what their role is. If you do not take the role of leader, the dog will – and that will result in behavioral issues.
- Dogs don't speak English. They need to be taught what a command means.
- Be consistent – both in commands and in the rules.. Since dogs don't speak English, they don't understand variations on a command. "Lie Down" is different than "Down" to them. So you must be sure to use the same command each time to eliminate confusion. Likewise, if you don't want them on the bed, NEVER let them

get up on the bed. They don't know the difference between when they can and when they can't.

- When a dog does what you want it to - reward it, either with a treat, or praise, or toy, or combination.
- A dog learns by making mistakes, just like we do. Once a dog knows what is expected, and does not do it, you can correct verbally
- When you call your dog and it comes to you, ALWAYS praise/reward it. NEVER correct/yell/punish a dog when it has come to you. Coming to you should always be a good experience, even if you are mad or frustrated.

### **Beagle Basics:**

- Backward sneeze: This is peculiar to hounds. The dog makes snorting/wheezing sounds, and appears to not be able to breathe, almost like an asthma attack. It usually only lasts a few seconds and is nothing to be alarmed about.
- Pack behavior: beagles are pack animals and have been bred to work well with other beagles while hunting. As a result, beagles like company and do not like to be left alone. If kept outside, a beagle will bark to come in – which is where they get the reputation of being noisy dogs. Ideally, a beagle should have another beagle for company, but at the very least should be kept indoors with the rest of the family.
- Nose trouble: Beagles have been bred to use their nose for hunting. As a result, once they catch a scent, they are hard-wired to follow it. This is why so many beagles go missing, they wander off while following a scent. As a result, beagles should NEVER be let off leash unless they are in a secure, fenced in area.
- Beagles are ALWAYS hungry, and will eat as much as you will give them, and will look at you with those big brown eyes if you don't give it to them. Resist – it is your responsibility to keep your dog at a healthy weight. Refer to the “Feeding your dog” section.

**Housebreaking:** Even if your dog comes housebroken, you may experience a few accidents due to nervousness and a new environment. Get him on a schedule. The following schedule is recommended:

- First thing in the morning,
- After breakfast
- before you leave for work (depending upon how long that has been since breakfast
- Mid-day (if someone is home) or when you get home from work
- after supper and
- before bed.
- and right after anyone comes home or to visit.

If he doesn't go within a reasonable period of time, bring him in and keep him close by where you can watch him or in a crate. In about 15 minutes, take him out and try again. Keep doing this until he goes. Some dogs may need to sniff around a good bit before they go to the bathroom. Using the 15 minute schedule can help teach them to go quickly. Little boys typically like to “piddle” more than once. Little girls typically only need to piddle once per outing. Dogs will usually poop twice a day.

Note: If your new dog is a male, introduce him to your home by putting him on a leash and taking him from room to room. Allow him to sniff furniture, etc. If he starts to lift his leg, give a tug on the leash and say “NO” very sternly, then proceed to the next item/piece of furniture. Most times, you will only need to do this for a day or two before he learns not to mark the house. Do not let him have the run of the house until he no longer wants to mark the furniture.

To establish control, make your dog sit when you put the leash on and when you take it off. This helps to eliminate the dog bouncing all over the place when he sees the leash.

**Feeding your dog:** typically, 1 – 1 ½ cups per day is plenty for a beagle, but a lot will depend upon how much exercise your dog will get. Beagles tend to put on weight quickly. When determining how much to feed, don't forget to factor in how many treats/dog bones the dog also gets during the day.

Puppies should be fed three times a day. Adult dogs can be fed either once a day or twice a day, whichever works better for your schedule. To begin with, you might want to hand feed your new dog for a few days to a week as that will help speed up the bonding process, and establish you as the pack leader. You may want to teach him to sit and then “Wait” until you put his food down. Then tell him “OK” for him to begin eating. Feeding your dog at a given time each day will usually put your dog on a regular schedule as far as relieving himself. It takes the average dog 12 to 16 hours to complete the digestive cycle. Leaving food in the dish all day is not recommended. It usually results in too much food being consumed, but can also create a food possession behavior problem.

The dog food you feed is a personal choice, there are a lot of very good choices available on the market. However, some dogs may experience digestive upset if you switch foods too quickly. Check your cover sheet for the type of food your dog is currently being fed. To transition the food, feed a mixture of 75% old, 25% new for a few days, then 50/50, then 25/75 and then 100%.

Beagle911 also recommends the following:

Family dinner leftovers (vegetables, pasta, rice, gravy, meat, etc.) can be put in a pot and simmered to extract minerals and vitamins. If there isn't enough meat, you can use a cheap cut of chicken (such as drumsticks). The broth can then be strained and frozen in containers. For each meal, ladle a spoonful of broth on the dog's dry food. As the ingredients vary from batch to batch, depending upon your leftovers, the broth provides a variety of nutrients and trace elements to your dog's diet.

Clean, fresh water should be available at all times.

**Beagle Housing:** Dogs should have a place to call their own, whether it's a crate, a rug, or a box. Dogs need security and a place to “get away” if they feel overwhelmed. Keep his space clean and dry, and check regularly for fleas, ticks, etc.

Crates are very useful items for the dog owner to have, and can be a big help with housebreaking, especially with young dogs.

The crate should be high enough for the dog to sit, and wide and long enough for your dog to lie down. The two most common types of crates are the metal wire and the plastic/fiberglass igloo-type. Some dogs have a preference for one over the other. You may want to borrow one to see which works best for your dog before investing in a new one.

Dogs should not be left outdoors, either kenneled or staked out, unattended.

**Fencing:** Beagles require sturdy fencing that should be at least 4 feet high. If it is a board fence, make sure that the spacing between the boards is small enough that your dog can't slip out or get it's head or feet caught. For chain or wire fencing, make sure that the bottom edge of the fencing is secured in the ground so the dog cannot slip under it and get caught or get out. Invisible fencing does not typically work on beagles. They are very pain tolerant, and given a choice between a rabbit/squirrel and an electric shock, the rabbit will win out.

Never leave your dog unattended outside, even in a fenced yard, as they can still dig their way out.

**Training:** Beagle911 recommends taking your dog to a basic Obedience Class to ensure that you and your new dog get started off right. In the State College area, Beagle911 recommends the Mt. Nittany Dog Training Club. The club offers classes each fall and spring, along with a rebate program for students who have adopted dogs from a shelter or rescue group and who complete the class. You can check their website [www.mndtc.org](http://www.mndtc.org) for class schedules. If you are not in the State College area, your vet may be able to recommend a reputable trainer.

**Grooming:** All dogs need grooming. For beagles, it is simply a matter of combing/brushing the dog's coat . The ideal is to comb and brush your dog everyday, but weekly is sufficient. Even if you don't take a comb and brush to your dog everyday, just petting the dog and running your fingers through the coat removes shedding hair. Also, checking for parasites is all part of grooming.

Combs help to remove dirt particles and fine combs even bring out fleas. Regular combing and brushing help to distribute oils and makes the healthy coat glisten.

Bathe the dog when needed. Baby shampoos are excellent for the dog's face and there are a variety of commercially prepared dog shampoos, some of which contain chemicals to kill fleas. Be very careful when bathing puppies, and don't let any dog, young or old, get chilled after bathing.

## GENERAL GROOMING CHECKLIST

### A. HEAD

1. Remove any matter from the corners of the dog's eyes everyday.
2. Check the mouth for any abnormalities.
3. In puppies - be aware of dentition and when they are losing teeth (4 - 6 months).
4. Look for tartar buildup on the teeth and if it is heavy ask your veterinarian's advice.
5. Beagles especially are prone to ear infections due to their floppy ears. Clean the ears once a month with cotton swabs or wet wipes. Inspect for foul odors, excessive wax, etc.

#### B. BODY

1. Comb and brush the coat regularly. This will help reduce shedding, and keep the coat healthy.
2. Check the skin for parasites or other irritations.
3. Keep the anal opening clean and free of dried feces.

#### C. LEGS AND FEET

1. Check pads of feet for cuts, irritations.
2. Trim toenails regularly, don't forget dewclaws.

**Trimming toenails:** Dogs kept indoors need toenails trimmed at least once a month, preferably every two weeks. Taking a small amount off the nail every two weeks is easier than cutting half the nail off twice a year. The longer you let the nail grow, the longer the quick inside the nail grows. (Think how often you trim your own fingernails and toenails).

If your dog is walked regularly on sidewalks or pavement, their nails may not need to be trimmed as frequently, but they should be checked regularly to make sure.

- Toenails are too long if they click on the floor when the dog walks.
- Most dogs object to the foot being held during the toenail trimming and not the actual cutting of the nail. Get your dog used to having his feet touched by fondling them when you pet your dog.
- Toenail clippers should have sharp blades so as not to splinter the nail when you cut it, or you can use a small, handheld grinder such as a dremel tool.

If you have never cut toenails before, ask your vet or a groomer to show you how.

## **DOG IDENTIFICATION**

All dogs should have identification on them at all times. Identification can be:

1. ID Tag – available at pet stores, internet, vets, etc. The tag should include, at minimum, your phone number and/or cell phone number. The dog's name and your address are also often used. You can also state "REWARD IF FOUND" on the tag.
2. Dog license – required in Pennsylvania.
3. Microchip and registration – a microchip is a small capsule the size of a grain of rice implanted under the dog's skin. If the dog is found, it can be scanned and the information retrieved.
4. Tattoo/permanent license

It is helpful to create a Lost Dog poster on your computer to have ready in the event that your dog ever gets lost. At the very least, have a good picture readily available so you won't waste precious time trying to find a picture to put on a poster. The poster should include:

- pet's picture, name, size and sex
- date it became missing, location where it was last seen and when
- your phone number (land line or cell) and a note to call ASAP, ANYTIME
- a note stating "REWARD" (but do not specify what or how much)
- any other information you think would be helpful, such as whether the dog is friendly, that it may be cold and hungry, etc. and asking people to check their backyards and neighborhood

The poster should not be crowded, and should be easily read from a distance. Make sure the pet photo is clear and large enough.

## **WHAT TO DO IF YOU LOSE YOUR DOG**

1. Call all surrounding town police departments and alert them. Give them the breed, size, sex, color, name, and location where it was lost/last seen. Give your name and phone number. Check back periodically to find out updates. They will not LOOK for your pet, but they may pick it up if they see it.
2. Notify friends, neighbors, especially children, and provide them with the above information.
3. Notify the local animal shelters to alert them. You might want to notify all the shelters as you won't know where your dog might be taken.
4. Make/print a Lost Pet flyer – see above.
  - Make 500 copies to start
  - Post flyers in grocery stores, post offices, in doors of houses in the neighborhood where dog was lost, by roadside, bus stops, store windows, laundromats, etc. wherever people congregate.
  - If you receive calls of sightings, post flyers in that area as well.
  - Give posters to postal workers, UPS drivers, construction workers, children and teenagers in the area.
5. Make sure you have an answering machine or service AVAILABLE AND ON AT ALL TIMES. Respond immediately to any calls regarding sightings and check that area immediately.
6. Put an announcement in the local paper
7. Drive your car around looking for your dog. Walk around, use the dog's favorite squeaky toy or treat. Best time is early morning. Bring your friends and relatives to help search.
8. Keep pictures of your dog with you at all times to help people identify it.

**DON'T GIVE UP!**