



*An American Original*  
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## **Adopting Senior Coonhounds** *When Older is Best*



*Miss Scarlett is the best greeter dog in Ohio!*

*Puppies are undeniably cute, but an adult hound may be the best match for your family, especially if you've never owned a hound before. Coonhounds and foxhounds are large, athletic dogs and they take a long time to grow up. Many hounds are still teenagers at two, and can try anyone's patience. At least consider adopting a grown-up hound. Here are some of the benefits:*

1. **No baby teeth.** When a pup still has those needle-like baby teeth, it is going to teethe and chew up your prized possessions. In a typical hound, teething continues until all adult teeth are in, somewhere between six and eight months. An adult dog may still need to learn about the house rules at your

place, but at least it isn't driven to mouth everything in sight. You will lose far fewer gloves, shoes, remote controls and eyeglasses to an adult than a puppy! A dog with some respect for chair legs may save your household from considerable heartbreak and expense.

2. **No teenage rebellion.** A coonhound may be almost physically mature by six months, but still a mental midget until somewhere between two and four years old. Until emotionally mature, any dog will periodically test its place within the family pack. An emotionally-sound adult dog will size up the situation in her new family, accept her rank in the pack, and fit in quickly.

3. **Easier housebreaking.** Older dogs, especially those that have been fostered out by rescue groups, are likely to come already house-trained. Even if they're not, they have the physical and mental ability to pick it up really fast (unlike puppies). If housetraining is needed, an older dog can "hold it." Puppies take longer to housebreak than adults do because they don't have fully developed bowel and bladder control. With an older dog, you can get a full night's sleep, and you won't have to replace all the carpeting or live with the old stains.

4. **Mellow voice.** Adult coonhounds have musical voices, a joy to listen to. Puppies have an insistent screech. They're just as loud as adults, but they're a lot harder to tolerate hearing. You—and your neighbors—will prefer the sound of an adult hound.

5. **Longer attention span.** Older dogs are calmer and better able to focus for longer lengths of time, making them easier to train than puppies with five-second attention spans. Those years of experience reading humans can help them quickly figure out what you're asking of them.



*Lucy enjoys watching the world go by.*

6. **Not a 24/7 job.** Grown up dogs rarely require the constant monitoring puppies do, leaving you with more freedom. If you have other commitments—kids, a job, errands, or just a minimally flexible routine—you probably can't afford to keep one eye on the pup constantly. If you envision a companion to curl up at your feet when you feel like checking your email, vegging out in front of the TV, or reading quietly, you want an adult dog, not a puppy tugging at your pants leg.

7. **Predictability.** You can get to know an older hound before you introduce him to your family. Right from the start, you'll know how big the dog is going to get, what its energy-level will be like, how loud its voice will be, and what its personality is like, making it easier to pick the right dog. If you're not into unpleasant surprises, an older dog is for you! What you see is what you get.



*Jack and Jill are living the dream!  
They are old enough to appreciate the good life.*

8. **Shorter-term commitment.** Yearn for a canine friend, but worry what might happen in your future? Your life plan not set yet? A puppy or young dog requires an 8- to 20-year commitment. If you are a student or in the military, have dreams of extended travel, have health issues, are older and considering moving to an adult community, a senior dog is a better choice than a puppy. Providing a loving home for a senior dog is not a less serious commitment, but it can be a shorter one.

9. **They enjoy easy livin'.** Couch potato, know thyself! Please consider a canine retiree rather than a high-energy young hound who will run you ragged. Not that older hounds don't require any exercise—they do—but they're not going to need, or want, to run a marathon every day.

10. **Easier for beginners.** Older hounds are an ideal choice for someone who has never had a hound before. For all of the reasons listed above, they are less of a challenge to a beginner, and may actually teach YOU. My first hound taught me to hunt!

11. **Save a life; be a hero.** At shelters, older hounds are often the last to be adopted and the first to be euthanized. Saving an animal's life offers an unparalleled emotional return on your investment, and you'll feel the rewards every day you spend together.

12. **Help fight puppy mills.** You will not be patronizing a puppy mill, which is a "factory" for dogs and cats. Typically these facilities do not uphold baseline humane standards for animal care.

13. **More choice.** There are more adult hounds in shelters and rescues than puppies. You'll have a far bigger pool of dogs to choose from if you don't insist on a puppy.

14. **Those pleading eyes!** The breed standard for most hounds describes the ideal as having a "pleading expression." It's very hard to look at an adult hound without feeling the effects of that eager-to-please look. Puppies are cute, but adults are seductive!

15. **Seniors are loving.** One cool part of our volunteer effort is reading stories from people just like you who have opted to adopt. The emails we get from pet parents with senior dogs almost always contain heartfelt descriptions of the love these dogs give. Especially those of you who adopted dogs already in their golden years have told us how devoted and grateful they are.

Emily S. Plishner, December, 2011