



Gidget: What to Expect

Gidget is a graduate of our Behavior Modification Program and needs a special home. Gidget is an incredibly sweet and loving girl, with a shy and sensitive nature, but who loves to crash her way through life once she's comfortable with her surroundings. At first Gidget is apprehensive and cautious of her surroundings, but once she has time to gain her confidence, she comes out of her shell.

Gidget came to us from a hoarding situation. Prior to her time at OHS, her world was very small. The unknown can be intimidating, scary, and overwhelming for Gidget. With patience, some dog friends, and high value treats, Gidget was able to come out of her shell at OHS and turned into a curious playful little dog. She would love to live with a confident dog or dogs, someone she can look to when she's unsure about new things, and someone who matches her play style. However, she'd also enjoy being spoiled by her new owner and have a monopoly on the lap.

Gidget has proven herself to be quite the escape artist! Her curiosity has led to her finding gaps in fencing that are just big enough for her to squeeze through and will take any opportunity to bolt away from you. Off leash adventures might not be the best thing for Gidget, and any fences will need to be fortified so she can't wiggle her way out of there.

We expect that Gidget will be overwhelmed by everything she encounters at first. In her previous home, her world was quite small, however, during her time in the shelter she was able to learn to walk on a leash, enjoyed meeting new dog friends, and built trust in new people. During the critical first months in a new home, her safety will depend on your good judgment and forethought. **A frightened dog will look for any occasion to bolt when startled: out of vehicles, out the front door, or slipping out of the leash. Keep a very tight grip of that leash!**

Here's how to help Gidget settle in during your first months together:

Let her drag a leash attached to her collar; for the first week or two, both inside the home and in fenced in yards. Fast movements tend to startle her, and it will take time for her to be okay with you approaching her and removing her leash. If you go slow at the beginning, you'll build a trusting, long lasting relationship. If Gidget is uncomfortable, she will growl and back away from an interaction, giving you clear signals that she is nervous. Once she trusts you, she will leap into your lap and allow all handling.

Designate a "safe spot" in your home. You can use an exercise pen to confine her to a smaller area where she can have access to water, beds, and toys (see picture). If you're unable to supervise, she should be confined to the x-pen. This "safe spot" will also be a great place to put her when you have visitors to your home, so she doesn't have to worry about interacting with everyone.



A "safe spot" when no one is home.

Allow for time to build trust. Always let Gidget decide if she wants to come closer to you. Don't force interactions. As she grows more comfortable, you will see her decide that she enjoys spending time with you by coming closer for pets, jumping into your lap to cuddle, and bringing you her favorite toy to play fetch.

Supervise her outside. Even if you have a fenced yard, please do not let Gidget out alone. She is so small, can jump very high, and will look for any way to escape an uncomfortable situation. She could easily hide under your deck or a bush -

or slip through a small gap in your fence! She does like to go for short walks and go outside to potty but needs some time to build confidence before going on longer excursions.

Wait to take walks. Gidget will need time to bond with you before you start taking her for long walks. Give her a couple of weeks to get to know you and her new home, then practice walking around your yard or street before trying a walk around the block. She will do best walking alongside a confident canine companion. When taking Gidget out, make sure you keep a tight grip on her leash! Gidget tends to pull hard and if leashes get dropped, she'll take it as an opportunity to bolt.

Be your dog's advocate. It's okay to ask someone to stop or prevent a person from coming up to say hi to your dog. When you are on a walk, and someone asks to pet Gidget, just explain that she is shy and prefers not to be pet by strangers or to say hello to other dogs on leash.

No dog parks! Playing in controlled settings - like play dates at home with dogs you know - will work better. It is best to go slow with introductions to other dogs. Don't try introducing her to strange dogs on a walk. She could easily startle, pull away from you and then be very hard to catch. She will jump and pull away if she feels cornered in any way, give lots of space while out on a walk from people, dogs, and busy streets.

If you're having people over, put Gidget on leash so she learns to not dart out the front door. Once everyone is sitting down, calm, and the door is tightly closed, you can drop her leash and allow her to decide if she wants to go say hi to your company. Let your company know, they'll win Gidget over fastest if they ignore her and let her come to them when she's ready.

Don't take her to busy places where she will have lots of uncontrolled interactions with people/dogs (such as Saturday Market, off-leash dog parks, coffee shops, walks down Hawthorne St., etc.). This could overwhelm her, and she could slip out of her collar/harness and be put in a very dangerous situation.

Try using **Adaptil (Dog Appeasing Pheromone)** or **Rescue Remedy by Bach Flower Essences**. These products can help dogs settle in new environments by easing the stress associated with change.

Visiting the vet: Unless it's an emergency, give Gidget plenty of time to bond with you before taking her to your vet. Start with positive visits just for treats. Vet visits will more than likely be scary but if she already trusts you, your presence may help her feel more comfortable.

Patience will come in handy for you. Gidget is sensitive and responds best to positive reinforcement and reward-based training. She will need an understanding, calm owner who has the time and desire to work on helping her learn to live in a home. She will pay you back by supplying love and enthusiasm!

We're here to help!

We want Gidget to be successful in her new home. We're available to answer questions via phone and email. Call our Pet Behavior Helpline at (503)416-2983 or email Annika at AnnikaH@oregonhumane.org to connect with a trainer. One-on-one consultations are available.

Please keep in touch so we can continue to help you now and in the future. Please reach out if you have any questions or concerns – or just to give an update. We love to see photos and hear how our friends are doing!

Thank you for adopting from the Oregon Humane Society. Congratulations on your new dog!