



Floki 284288: What to Expect

Floki is a graduate of our Behavior Modification Program and is looking for a special home. Floki is a young and loving dog who enjoys playing fetch (11/10 his favorite activity), running around with his dog friends, and exploring the big wide world. When Floki is home, he likes to pull every toy out of the toy bin and spend time chewing and shredding them to pieces. Floki is a dog with a battery that rarely depletes and needs owners who can give him healthy outlets for his boundless teenage energy in a safe environment that includes training, enrichment, and exercise. When Floki is comfortable, he is confident and curious ready to explore new spaces, meet new people and dogs, and practice his training. But when he is nervous, often in new environments or busy and loud spaces, he will be shy and apprehensive. This looks like darting on the leash, crouching low to the ground, and refusing treats. He needs patient owners who can introduce him to the world through positive reinforcement techniques and **slowly** bring him into contact with situations he is initially uncomfortable with, reading his body language to understand his needs. We've been able to introduce Floki to many dogs of various size and temperaments, and even into play groups as large as six dogs. He is very polite and social with other dogs, and we think he could be a dog who enjoys occasional trips to the dog park or doggie daycare as an outlet for his energy and enrichment.

Floki is an adolescent dog learning how he fits into the world of being a pet dog. He is evaluating his boundaries and figuring out what he is and isn't capable of, during this period it's important that his owners continue his training, using the same positive techniques we've been successful using at OHS. Floki loves to play fetch, but sometimes he gets so excited during this game that he jumps at the person throwing the ball as they reach for and/or pick up the tennis ball. We've been successful in teaching Floki how to "sit" + "wait" while we pick up the ball to practice impulse control, but he will need continued help and reinforcement with this to be successful long term. We don't see this as a resource guarding behavior at this time, but a lack of impulse control paired with over arousal at the excitement of being able to chase the ball. It's during one of these interactions that Floki did jump onto a ball at the same time someone went to pick it up, causing his tooth to scrape their hand breaking skin.

Floki has also had difficulty in the past walking by and ignoring other people and dogs while out on walks, in a previous home he has jumped and barked at other people/dogs while on a walk and when hitting the end of his leash, turned around and bitten at the leash and loose-fitting clothes in frustration. We have been successful walking Floki on a head halter leash that clearly communicates to Floki while using treats to reward calm and engaged behavior. He now regularly goes for walks with and around other dogs and people with little to no issue. Due to Floki's intensity with playing fetch and periodic reactivity on leash, we don't think he would be a good candidate for a home with children or a home with small pets like cats. People who live in busy downtown environments could also potentially have difficulty navigating tight spaces and busy streets/sidewalks with Floki, especially if he becomes nervous with he activity.

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

If you're having people over, put Floki on leash so they learn to not dart out the front door or jump all over people.

Once everyone is sitting down and calm you can drop the leash and allow your dog to decide if they want to go say hi to your guests. Ensure your guests ask Floki to sit before being pet so they're rewarded for keeping 4 feet on the floor.

Walk Floki on an appropriate walking tool. We have been using a special head halter, called a transitional leash, to help guide Floki to walk nicely on leash with little to no pulling. When Floki sees other dogs on walks, they become incredibly excited and then frustrated that they cannot run up to say hello and play, causing them to jump, pull, whine, and sometimes bark. It will be important to never let Floki run up to other dogs on leash as that can reinforce their frustrations.

Floki needs daily exercise to reduce stress. Floki loves to go for runs, walks, play fetch, and chase a flirt pole. Giving your dog a healthy outlet for some of their energy will help them settle during calm hours at home.

Work on having Floki settle on a mat and gently praise them for lying down. If they get up to pace, call them back and use a treat to lure them into a down again. If Floki is on leash, you can hold them with approximately 4 feet of leash and wait until they offer a settle by lying down. Softly praise and treat when they do this.

Practice crate training. Start by feeding meals in a wire crate and work your way up from there. It will be in your best interest to **slowly** increase time in the crate, so they view it as a safe, comfortable spot. When you cannot monitor your dog in the home, allow them some time to settle and relax in the crate.

“Puppy proof” your home and practice tether training to prevent them from getting into puppy/adolescent trouble. When home have Floki on leash, attached to you or tethered to a large piece of furniture as you go about your daily routine. This will help with potty training, bonding, and creating boundaries within the home. Let Floki drag the leash around the house or yard from time to time to simulate “freedom”, but do not let them off leash until they can 100% be trusted not to get into things they shouldn’t. This could take up to a few weeks. Crate Floki when you cannot watch them. This will ensure their puppy curiosity doesn’t get them into any trouble. You will have long lasting success if you follow this method.

Take a training class. Floki would benefit from taking some training classes with their new owners and would love to learn more alongside their family in a training class. Training classes help strengthen the bond between owner and dog by creating clear and precise communication so there are no misunderstandings. You can find more info about our training classes on our website at (<https://www.oregonhumane.org/training/training-at-ohs/>).

Allow for time to build trust. Always let Floki decide if they want to come closer to you. Don’t force interactions. As they grow more comfortable, you will see Floki decide that they enjoy spending time with you by coming closer for pets, jumping next to you on the couch, and following your resident dog around.

Use routine to get Floki comfortable in their new home. It will take a couple weeks for Floki to feel comfortable in their new home and with you. Having a predictable schedule will help them adjust to their new home.

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

Visiting the Vet: Unless it is an emergency, give your dog plenty of time to bond to you before taking them to your vet. Floki does very well at the vet, they handle meeting new being well. The vet can still be a scary place. Bringing tasty treats like cheese and/or hot dogs can help make the experience more pleasant.

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

We’re here to help!

We want Floki to be successful in your home. We’re available to answer questions via phone and email. During your first two months with Floki, we can also set up a free one-on-one consultation. For questions or to schedule an appointment, contact Annika at **(503) 802-6713** or annikah@oregonhumane.org.

Please keep in touch so we can continue to help you now and in the future. Reach out if you have 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!