



Just Ken 286261: What to Expect

Just Ken is a graduate of our Behavior Modification Program and is looking for a special home. Ken is an incredibly sweet and loving dog who will melt into your hands and lap for pets. Just like your typical Labrador retriever Ken is abundantly goofy and playful, with toys, people, and other dogs! While at OHS, we've been successful introducing Ken to other dogs who share a similar playstyle. He can be eager to leap and bound for play and takes direction well. He would not be a good match for overly rowdy dogs, those who don't like playful large puppies, or the chaos of a dog park. Play dates within a controlled environment with known dogs would be best while Ken adjusts to bonding with his new family. Ken also loves meeting new people and will lean in for pets when meeting someone new, sometimes he can jump up on folks, but we've been successful reinforcing him for sitting and keeping four paws on the floor. Ken is very motivated for treats and takes his job of dog very seriously.

When excited Ken can become overflowing with energy that comes out in the form of "zoomies," a healthy expression of happiness and excitement in a dog. During these expressive moments there have been times when Ken has been overstimulated and jumped on handlers in an attempt to illicit interaction. This has led to him jumping on and grabbing at a human with his mouth breaking skin. We've been successful asking Ken to sit or using toys to redirect his energy onto and have seen great results. Ken can also be a little head shy, choosing to avoid fast movement around his face. We think Ken would do best without small children in the home, but older dog experienced children would find Ken a delight and fun play partner. While at OHS Ken has shown some stressed and anxious behavior in his kennel, leading him to attempt to escape by climbing the walls and rushing the doors. We have been successful placing Ken in quieter spaces which has lowered his anxiety and attempts to escape. It will be important that owners keep a long leash on Ken while he's outdoors in the yard and don't attempt to leave him alone until he's had the opportunity to relax. This can take several weeks as he adjusts to his new life, it is better to be safe than sorry.

Ken can be a little nervous with loud noises and fast movements, because of this we don't think he would do well in a busy neighborhood like downtown. There are times when Ken sees dogs on leash, especially if they're barking at him, and will pull towards them in excitement and return barking. We've been incredibly successful walking Ken on a special walking tool, called a transitional leash, that works as a head halter. Ken is very responsive and engaged with his handlers and enjoys his leisurely walks in the neighborhood. He would not do well in an area where a lot of off leash dogs will run up on him as this can be rude and frightening.

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

Use routine to get Ken comfortable in their new home. It will take a couple weeks for Ken to feel comfortable in their new home and with you. Having a predictable schedule will help them adjust to their new home. It's not uncommon for dogs to be stressed and anxious the first few weeks in a new home.

Use treats and toys to build trust. Maintaining and continuing Ken's training will create a bond and a form of communication between two species who don't understand each other. The more positive experiences Ken has with their owners, the more valuable you will become in high distracting situations.

If you're having people over, put Ken 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 Ken to sit before being pet so they're rewarded for keeping 4 feet on the floor.

Ken needs daily exercise to reduce stress. Ken 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.

Walk Ken on an appropriate walking tool. We have been using a special head halter, called a transitional leash, to help guide Ken to walk nicely on leash with little to no pulling. When Ken 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, bark, and sometimes lunge. It will be important to never let Ken run up to other dogs on leash as that can reinforce their frustrations.

“Puppy proof” your home and practice tether training to prevent them from getting into puppy/adolescent trouble. When home have Ken 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 Ken 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 Ken 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.

Practice “Leave it.” Ken may bark and lunge if they see other dogs out on a walk. When a dog is sighted, **before** they start barking, say “leave it.” When they turn to look at you, reward with praise and a treat and walk away from the trigger. Distance is calming.

Don’t take Ken to busy places where they will have lots of uncontrolled interactions with people/dogs (such as Saturday Market, off-leash dog parks, coffee shops, walks down Hawthorne St., Home Depot, etc.).

Be your dog’s advocate. It’s okay to ask someone to stop or prevent a person from letting their dog come up to say hi to your dog. Watch their body language and help your dog out of situations if they appear stressed. Explain that Ken is not comfortable with dogs running up on them and doesn’t enjoy meeting strange dogs while on their walk. Distance is calming.

Patience will come in handy for you. Ken 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. Ken 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. Ken 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 Ken to be successful in your home. We’re available to answer questions via phone and email. During your first two months with Ken, 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!