



## Drumstick 284283: What to Expect

**Drumstick is a graduate of our Behavior Modification Program and is looking for a special home.** Drumstick is a very playful adolescent pup who loves nothing more than playing fetch, learning new tricks for treats, and getting any and all attention from people as much as possible. Drumstick was adopted into a home as a tiny puppy with an inexperienced owner and as Drumstick grew into adolescence, became really overwhelmed with owning a large dog. During his time in the home Drumstick was described as being an affectionate lap dog, overly excited jumping on visitors, and if escalated further a dog who uses his mouth to communicate discomfort. This can be in the form of destructive behavior to toys and non-dog items when left alone or overly excited using his mouth during play grabbing on clothes or the leash, and when uncomfortable with touch, for example on his feet, using his mouth to create space. We have been successful building a relationship with Drumstick through positive reinforcement techniques and teaching him how to work with us, instead of forcing him into interactions he's uncomfortable with. We've started crate training so he can be left alone, comfortable, and not get into any adolescent funny business as well as started muzzle training for nail trims & vet visits. Drumstick is an insecure dog who needs help building confidence and trust in people through the same positive reinforcement techniques we've been successful using here at OHS.

Being an insecure dog who wants to be a confident dog, Drumstick sometimes shows conflicting behavior especially when interacting with other dogs. He wants to interact and play but can become easily overwhelmed if the other dog is too exuberant or rough in their play style. He likes to chase and be chased but does not handle wrestling play styles very well. We've also seen Drumstick when overwhelmed hide behind his handlers in an attempt to create space. Scheduling play dates with known social confident respectful dogs will help him understand dog body language better as he grows into his confidence rather than taking him to a dog park where there will be many unknown dogs. With time and appropriate interactions, we think he would enjoy doing play dates with groups of dogs, but it's important he first build a strong relationship with his new owners.

Due to his distrust and insecurity, Drumstick has shown some instances of resource guarding high value items from humans, this can look like raising his lip, low growling, and when pushed further snapping at hands. We've been successful at OHS insuring Drumstick's comfort by not taking things away without doing a fair trade or waiting until he's done with an item. We use treats and other toys to show Drumstick that we are never taking things away but creating value in doing a far better trade. We can play tug-o-war, fetch, and implement food enrichment items alongside Drumstick with great success with this method of respecting boundaries. It's important his future adopters continue to use these techniques to continue his success long term. While Drumstick has successfully enjoyed interacting with children, we think he would do best in a home with older dog savvy kids who can understand respecting his boundaries.

### **Here's how to help Drumstick settle in during your first months together:**

**Patience will come in handy for you.** Drumstick 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. Drumstick will pay you back by supplying love and enthusiasm!

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

**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 Drumstick is not comfortable with people and doesn't enjoy meeting strangers while on their walk.

**Drumstick needs daily exercise to reduce stress.** Drumstick 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.

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

**Work on having Drumstick 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 Drumstick 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.

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

**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 Drumstick 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 Drumstick 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 Drumstick 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.** Drumstick 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/>).

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

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 Drumstick to be successful in your home. We're available to answer questions via phone and email. During your first two months with Drumstick, 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](mailto: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!