



Millie Doggie Brown 299498: What to Expect

Millie Doggie Brown is a graduate of our Behavior Modification Program and is looking for a special home. Millie is a happy and playful girl who had a rough start to life and is searching for someone who can introduce her to the world safely and humanely. Millie's history is a mystery, but based on her behavior and residual scaring we think she spent most of her early life with her mouth taped shut, a diaper taped on, and sitting in a crate. Despite this, Millie is a happy girl eager to please and full of love! She enjoys walks with lots of sniffing and curiosity, playing with toys, and cuddling into you for affection. Due to Millie's lack of socialization to the world at an early age, she is still learning how to navigate the world confidently. She can become fearful in situations she feels she has no control, such as walks in busy areas or wide-open spaces. She will tuck her tail and lower herself to the floor or bark at the site of unknown people or dogs. We've been slowly introducing her to the big wide world through trust and positive reinforcement training. Millie loves people, but she can be wary at first, especially if she is behind a barrier, like a fence, crate, or door. With unknown and unfamiliar people, Millie will bark and growl. Through offering treats she quickly learns who is friendly and trustworthy and she's had little issuing meeting and working with a team as large as 20. When on walks, it will be important to not let strangers walk up to Millie and reach out to pet as this could further cement her fear in strangers and the unknown. Asking strangers to offer a treat and tossing it on the ground can create positive associations without overwhelming Millie. If the world could ignore her, she will learn to focus her trust on her handler, so avoid busy places.

Millie is full of love and excitement when it's time to go for walks or play in the yard. This can manifest in jumping and light mouthing behavior on hands or arms. We believe this is due to her lack of training and exposure early in life during those puppy years. She is learning to take treats nicely, to sit for leashing & pets, and to wait at doorways calmly. She is eager to learn and please, especially with treats and has mastered a few of these behaviors already. Her new owners should continue to work on calm behaviors in times of excitement. Due to Millie's past, she is still learning the social cues to canine communication. She can come in very excited and cautiously rushing up to other dogs, sometimes with barking, raised stiff tail, and growling. This can startle other dogs as this behavior can be interpreted as offensive and Millie can respond inappropriately. We've introduced Millie to a couple of dogs, and they did not enjoy her lack of socialization and Millie has shown she isn't ready for dog-to-dog interactions. We believe she would not be a good candidate for the dog park as the uncontrolled environment will overwhelm her and increase her fear.

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

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

Designate a "safe spot" in your home. You can use a crate or taller baby gates to confine them to a smaller area where they have access to water, bed, and toys. When you are unable to supervise the dog, leave them in their safe spot. Slowly work toward leaving them alone, unsecured, once they've had the chance to settle into your home and you know with certainty, they will be comfortable.

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 Millie is not comfortable with strange people and doesn't enjoy meeting strangers while on their walk. Tossing a treat on the ground is more effective for your dog to make positive associations with new people. Distance is calming.

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

Let them drag a leash attached to their collar for the first week or two inside and outside the home. Fast movements are startling. Using the leash as a tool to guide them toward and away from appropriate and inappropriate things in your home, will help Millie feel safe rather than rushing or pushing. If you go slow at the beginning, you'll build a trusting relationship. Treats always help!

Allow for time to build trust before venturing out into big experiences. Allow Millie time to learn you have their best interest at heart through training, play, and creating routine. The more predictable you are, the faster Millie will settle and learn you will protect them in uncertain situations.

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

Millie needs daily exercise to reduce stress. Millie 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.

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

Skip the dog park. Don't take Millie to busy places where they will have lots of uncontrolled interactions with people or other dogs (such as Saturday Market, dog parks, coffee shops, etc.). Millie has shown us they get overwhelmed in being around a lot of other dogs/people. Taking leashed hikes to the river, playing in the backyard, or to places not frequented by many other people will allow for exercise, but keep Millie confident and engaged with you for the first couple months.

Visiting the Vet: Unless it is an emergency, give your dog plenty of time to bond to you before taking them to your vet. Millie does well at the vet, they can handle meeting new people 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 Millie to be successful in your home. We're available to answer questions via phone and email. During your first two months with Millie, 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!