



Hot Pocket 312375: What to Expect

Hot Pocket is a graduate of our Behavior Modification Program and is looking for a special home. Hot Pocket is a very sweet, goofy pittie boy that wants to show off all his favorite toys! He's quick to make friends with people he meets and shows off all of his joy with the biggest butt wiggle tail wags. Hot Pocket entered the shelter system due to some medical issues, specifically a fracture to his pelvis. Unsure of what caused the injury, he needed some care, and we were able to provide him with a safe place to heal. Now that he's healed and clear to resume normal dog activities, he's looking for his next adventurous home! He would do best in an active home without small children or small animals like cats. Hot Pocket was recently adopted and returned due to a mismatch with a young child in the home. His exuberant behavior and the child's inability to regulate their movements, made him easily over aroused with jumping, chasing, and grabbing onto loose fitting clothes and toys. We think Hot Pocket would do well in a home with older children who are comfortable with an exuberant high energy dog.

Being an adolescent dog on intense rest restrictions, Hot Pocket found himself easily frustrated that he couldn't get up and run around, and during some outings in his frustration he would turn to biting the leash, jumping on his handlers, and grabbing onto loose fitting clothes. We've been successful helping Hot Pocket understand these behaviors don't result in him getting what he wants and have been able to redirect his frustration into training. Asking him to sit, leave it, and using toys Hot Pocket has learned to enjoy calm walks and playing with toys. Hot Pocket is your typical adolescent pittie when it comes to greeting and playing with other dogs, he can come in fast, excited, and a little too curious. Sensitive or aloof dogs will find him overwhelming, but other confident and social dogs who like to play will reciprocate his playfulness. It will be important to help Hot Pocket learn to manage his excitement at seeing other dogs, by not allowing leashed greetings, scheduling playdates with known dogs in secure environments, and avoiding uncontrolled environments like the dog park or Saturday Market. In his excitement at seeing other dogs, he may bark, lunge, and pull hard on the leash in an attempt to greet another dog. His handlers will need to work on the engage/disengage game to help him learn how not to hyperfocus on the presence of other dogs.

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

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.

Walk Hot Pocket on an appropriate walking tool. We have been using a special head halter, called a transitional leash, to help guide Hot Pocket to walk nicely on leash with little to no pulling. When Hot Pocket 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 Hot Pocket 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 Hot Pocket 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 Hot Pocket 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 Hot Pocket 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 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.

Hot Pocket needs daily exercise to reduce stress. Hot Pocket 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 Hot Pocket settle on a mat, dog bed, or cot 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 Hot Pocket 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.

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

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. Distance is calming.

Skip the dog park. Don't take Hot Pocket 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.). Taking leashed hikes to the river, playing in the backyard, or to places not frequented by many other dogs will allow for exercise, but keep Hot Pocket calm and engaged with you.

Don't take Hot Pocket 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.).

Visiting the Vet: Unless it is an emergency, give your dog plenty of time to bond to you before taking them to your vet. Hot Pocket does very well at the vet, they 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.

We're here to help!

We want Hot Pocket to be successful in your home. We're available to answer questions via phone and email. During your first two months with Hot Pocket, we can also set up a free one-on-one consultation. For questions or to schedule an appointment, contact us at **(503) 285-7722 ex 422** or BMODTrainers@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!

Behavioral Medication for your new dog

This dog has been prescribed one or more medications to help reduce anxiety and impulsivity during their time in the shelter. You may be provided with a supply of this dog's medication(s) along with specific dosing instructions at the time of adoption. We would recommend that you continue giving this medication for at least the first 6 months after adoption to help reduce stress that may be associated with this dog making a smooth transition into your home. In order to avoid any adverse side effects (including behavioral and systemic) please do not abruptly stop administering these medications or discontinue use without consulting your veterinarian. When it appears time to stop giving your dog these medications, please contact your veterinarian for an appropriate protocol to make sure you have enough medication to allow for a gradual weaning off process. Please do not substitute other supplements or medications (including your own prescriptions) without consulting a veterinary professional.

During this process, please watch for any signs of worsening fear or anxiety. If the dog appears to be getting worse during the weaning off process, contact your veterinarian as longer treatment or a different combination of medications may be needed. Remember that successful behavioral rehabilitation often relies on a combination of pharmaceutical therapy as well as various training modalities.