



Dosa 336097: What to Expect

Dosa is a graduate of our Behavior Modification Program and is looking for a special home. Dosa is a sweet, shy, and goofy girl who has a lot curiosity for life. She was born on a rural property and came to OHS through our Humane Law Department; her former owner struggling to care for the number of dogs they had on their rural property. While it was in Dosa's best interest to be removed from this property, that wide open space had been all she had known for her whole life. Prior to coming to OHS she had never lived indoors, walked on a leash, been pet by a human, or played with toys. It has been a big adjustment for Dosa to get comfortable with things we are habituated to, like walking on indoor floors, wearing a collar, living inside, seeing cars, and even the sights and noise from a television. Dosa is looking for a loving and comfortable spot to land. When comfortable she loves romping around the yard, playing with toys, playing with other dogs, and leaning in for pets. When uncomfortable or overwhelmed, Dosa can submissively urinate, will find a corner, bush, or hiding spot to hunker down and wait for the "scary" to disappear. On walks she may unexpectedly dart or attempt to run away. Often times on her way back into a building she is will lay down and refuse to move, opting to stay outside where she can sniff, play, and exist in a space more familiar. We have been working with Dosa to become comfortable indoors, but her new family will need to continue introducing her to the world of being a pet dog in neutral and positive ways. Dosa is looking for a patient family who can help her adjust to life as a pet dog at her pace.

Dosa is still learning how to potty when outside for her walks and play time, she can be both nervous or too excited when outside to be comfortable enough to eliminate. She is very well trained to a target towel, similar to a potty pad, but adopters will need to work diligently to get her comfortable eliminating outside. Dosa will do best in a calm home with low traffic, as the hustle and bustle of people can be very intimidating for her. For this same reason, Dosa will do best in a home without younger children, as their fast and unpredictable movements can be very frightening for her. High rise apartments and/or busy downtown like neighborhoods will be very overwhelming and terrifying for Dosa and could make potty training and exposure to the big wide world scarier than necessary. We expect that Dosa will be overwhelmed by everything they encounter at first. During the critical first months in a new home, their safety will depend on your good judgment and forethought. **A frightened dog will look for any occasion to bolt when startled: out of vehicles, out the front door, or slipping out of the leash. Keep a very tight grip of that leash!**

Here's how to help Dosa 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.

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 Dosa is not comfortable with 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.

Let them drag a leash attached to their collar for the first week or two inside and outside the home. Fast movements are startling, and it will take time for them to be okay with you approaching and removing the leash. If you go slow at the beginning, you'll build a trusting relationship. Treats always help!

Allow for time to build trust. Always let Dosa decide if they want to come closer to you. Don't force interactions. As they grow more comfortable, you will see Dosa decide that they enjoy spending time with you by coming closer for pets, jumping next to you on the couch, and playing with toys.

Supervise your dog outside. Even if you have a fenced yard, please do not let Dosa out alone. They are could dig under a fence or slip through a gap in your fence! They do like to go for short walks and go outside to potty but need some time to build confidence to go on longer excursions in even the quietest of neighborhoods.

Wait to take walks. Dosa will need time to bond with you before you start taking them for walks. Give them a couple of weeks to get to know you and their new home, then practice walking around your yard before trying a walk around the block. They're already doing a great job of checking in with their human at the other end of the leash – continue encouraging this behavior to help strengthen the bond by offering treats and encouraging words.

Limit introductions to new people. Take your time to get to know Dosa before introducing them to someone new. They may need to meet a new person multiple times before feeling comfortable with strangers. Treats and allowing Dosa to approach as they feel comfortable will be best. New people should just completely ignore Dosa at first – playing hard to get is the way to their heart.

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

When you have people over, **it's okay to put Dosa in another room.** If you'd like Dosa to meet a guest, put them on a leash and give them time to adjust before allowing your guest to pet. Let it be Dosa's choice to go to them for pets or hang back and watch. Crowding Dosa or forcing them to interact can make fearful behavior worse.

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

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

Don't take Dosa 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'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 Dosa to be successful in your home. We're available to answer questions via phone and email. During your first two months with Dosa, we can also set up a free one-on-one consultation. For questions or to schedule an appointment, contact us at **(503) 285-1145** 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!