



Gator 336177: What to Expect

Gator is a graduate of our Behavior Modification Program and is looking for a special home. Gator is a fun little dog with a lot of spunk and enthusiasm for life. He loves to run, play fetch, tug-o-war, and exploring the great outdoors. Don't be fooled by his size, while he is short and small, he wants to get up and go! When his exercise needs are not met his energy looses in the form of zoomies around the house, digging, chewing on inappropriate items, and bouncing off the walls. He is a dog that will need more than just walks around the neighborhood, but intentional exercise that works his body and his brain frequently. Urban or wilderness adventures on the weekend would be a great outlet for him to keep his brain and body working, with multiple daily walks and play sessions throughout the week. Gator loves to learn through positive reinforcement treat training, pets, and play. He already knows how to sit, stay, and walks nicely on leash and would love to continue his training in his new home. In his excitement for life, he can door dart in attempts to get outside and run around. We have been successful teaching Gator to "sit and wait" at all doorways every time we enter or exit, to practice some impulse control. His new family will need to continue practicing this routine to really instill that an open door, does not mean we can run through it.

Gator was briefly adopted and returned when he became over aroused and excited in his home leading to behaviors the owners didn't feel equipped to handle. When he was amped up, he would jump on people and mouth on their hands and loose fitting clothes, pick up toys and run around with them stopping suddenly to growl at people, and when overstimulated further would mount dog beds and blankets – any attempts to remove the bed or him would result in him growling again. We have been successful at OHS teaching Gator to regulate his emotions through impulse control exercises and relaxation techniques. When we play with him, we don't use our hands and direct his behavior onto appropriate toys. We never take toys away from him but swap them for other toys. We are also getting Gator out for exercise with running in the yard, play dates with other dogs, walks on leash, and some outings with our running team. All of these combined have helped direct Gator's overexcitement into appropriate behaviors.

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

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

Gator needs daily exercise to reduce stress. Gator 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 Gator 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 Gator 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.

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 Gator 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 Gator 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 Gator 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.

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

Take a training class. Gator 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/>).

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

Visiting the Vet: Unless it is an emergency, give your dog plenty of time to bond to you before taking them to your vet. Gator 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.

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