



Alaska 337592: What to Expect

Alaska is a graduate of our Behavior Modification Program and is looking for a special home. Alaska is an adorable, super squishy faced gal, who has a lot of happy in her heart! She loves playing with toys, romping in the yard, and snuggling up on the couch with her people. But don't let her squishy nature fool you! Alaska would love nothing more than to accompany you on every adventure - from walks and hikes to runs and beach trips, she'd love to be your PNW adventure buddy! When excited, Alaska may jump up on handlers, and if overstimulated more may grab onto loose fitting clothing, the leash, or bags/purses with her mouth. During one of these moments of overexcitement, Alaska did jump up on her handler, mouthing their arm with her teeth breaking skin. During her time in the Behavior Modification program, we've been successful teaching her to sit & wait for leashing or before throwing toys in the yard. Her future adopters will need to be prepared to continue her training using the same positive reinforcement-based training techniques we've found successful here at OHS. We believe Alaska would do best in a home without small children, as she may accidentally knock them over in her excitement or try to steal their toys or food in their hands.

Alaska has had conflicted interactions with dogs while at OHS. While Alaska at times does like to play with certain dogs, those feelings of excitement and enthusiasm for life can cause frustration when seeing another dog and not being able to immediately run up to say hello. When on leash, or behind a barrier such as a fence, if she sees another dog, Alaska will pull, whine, and bark. It's important not to allow her to greet dogs on leash or when displaying these behaviors as greeting dogs will only reinforce these behaviors. We've been successful teaching Alaska to walk nicely on leash and "leave it", checking back in with her handlers when she sees another dog on walks. When allowed to greet other dogs, her excitement can cause her to rush up to dogs in an attempt to say hello, which other dogs may find rude. She is not yet competent at dog language and often misunderstands or is misunderstanding to other dogs. Older or calmer dogs might find her behavior overwhelming, but other social, not easily offended, and playful dogs will enjoy playing with Alaska in a rough & tumble playstyle. Because of this, Alaska is not a candidate for uncontrolled settings like dog parks or doggie daycares. Instead, she would be better suited for playdates with known dogs in a back yard or at a SniffSpot after slow and intentional introductions. While Alaska could play with another well-socialized adult dog, she would enjoy soaking up all the attention for herself as the only pet in the home.

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

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

Alaska needs daily exercise to reduce stress. Alaska 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.

Skip the dog park. Don't take Alaska 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.). Alaska has shown us they don't have an interest in being around other dogs/people. 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 Alaska calm and engaged with you.

Work on having Alaska 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 Alaska 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 "Leave it." Alaska may bark and lunge if they see other dogs out on a walk. When a dog is sighted, **before** they start barking, say "leave it." When they turn to look at you, reward with praise and a treat and walk away from the trigger. Distance is calming.

Walk Alaska on an appropriate walking tool. We have been using a special head halter, called a transitional leash, to help guide Alaska to walk nicely on leash with little to no pulling. When Alaska 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 Alaska 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 Alaska 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 Alaska 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 Alaska 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. Alaska 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 is an emergency, give your dog plenty of time to bond with you before taking them to your vet. Alaska 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 Alaska to be successful in your home. We’re available to answer questions via phone and email. During your first two months with Alaska, 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!