



Miller 342202: What to Expect

Miller is a graduate of our Behavior Modification Program and is looking for a special home. Miller is an adolescent dog who loves to play, get up and go, and especially loves to cuddle up on the couch with his family. Miller is an incredibly sweet dog who loves to shower his family with gentle hugs, kisses, and cuddles. Being a young dog, he also loves to get up and go adventure exploring quiet neighborhoods and the natural beauty the Pacific Northwest has to offer. He is a good blend between adventure time friend and couch hangout buddy. At times Miller can be fearful of spaces with a lot of strange people, loud noises, and unknown environments with a lot of hustle and bustle like a downtown type neighborhood. Miller was brought into the shelter as a stray, so his history is a mystery. Upon arrival, Miller was very nervous with the chaotic environment of a busy shelter, avoiding people, barking on leash, and avoiding new people who entered his kennel. He was transferred to our Behavior Modification program where he could decompress in a quiet environment with consistent staff interactions. Once Miller had the chance to trust his environment and handlers, he opened up to be a very sweet, affectionate, and playful dog.

During his time at OHS we've had the opportunity to introduce Miller to multiple dogs to observe his comfort and sociability. Miller has shown conflicted behavior with other dogs and would prefer not to interact with other dogs in any capacity. While Miller can walk on leash politely, see another dog and not have a reaction, if a dog approaches Miller he will react defensively to protect his space, including barking, flashing teeth, snapping at another dog, and if pushed further biting. His owners will need to be mindful about navigating public spaces and avoid uncontrolled interactions with other dogs such as avoiding parks with off-leash dogs, keeping Miller on leash at all times, and not allowing dogs to approach on leash. When Miller feels safe and comfortable he will turn to his human for guidance and direction. 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 Miller calm and engaged with you. Due to his behavior Miller needs a home without other pets.

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

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 Miller is not comfortable with dogs. Move off trail, sidewalk, or across the street to avoid situations with unknown dogs.

Remember to keep doors and gates secured and locked. If Miller were to get loose in the neighborhood there is a possibility they could likely run up to any person to excitedly greet them, but if they encountered another animal, Miller and their target could end up in a dangerous situation. It will be up to you to be mindful and cautious of opening doors and gates that lead into the neighborhood.

Practice "Leave it." Miller 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 high value treat and walk away from the trigger. Distance is calming.

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

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

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

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

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

Miller needs daily exercise to reduce stress. Miller 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.

Walk Miller on an appropriate walking tool. We have been using a special head halter, called a [transitional leash](#), to help guide Miller to walk nicely on leash with little to no pulling. When Miller sees other dogs on walks, they become incredibly excited and then frustrated, which may lead them to jump, pull, whine, bark, and sometimes growl. It will be important to never let Miller run up to other dogs on leash as that can reinforce their frustrations and lead to potentially unsafe situations.

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 Miller 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 Miller 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 Miller 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. Miller 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 to you before taking them to your vet. Miller 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 Miller to be successful in your home. We're available to answer questions via phone and email. During your first two months with Miller, 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!