



Flynn 345373: What to Expect

Flynn is a graduate of our Behavior Modification Program and is looking for a special home. Flynn is a delightfully sweet little dog that's sure to make you laugh! With a fresh new haircut, he loves going for slow paced sniffy walks and thinks that all tasks need the help of a 10 lb. poodle mix in your lap. He makes a fantastic emailing sending companion! Flynn comes to Oregon Humane through a local county shelter, where the hustle and bustle of shelter life combined with painful levels of matted fur manifested as a defensive stance towards handlers. While in our care, we've been able to give Flynn a quiet and consistent environment that he needed to settle and decompress. Combining this quieter environment with new people and positive rewards that Flynn enjoys (like high value food like cheese), he's really come out of his shell to show us what a playful little guy he is! He wants to do everything with his people, and if that's going for a nice walk or sitting around together, he's down for it. This love for his people can sometimes be a little overwhelming, and he's barked, charged, and snapped at other handlers coming up towards his favorite people. Adopters will need to be mindful of this behavior and set Flynn up for success when meeting new people in the home or on walks to prevent any further resource guarding like behaviors from developing. If all his favorite people are together, he doesn't play favorites, he just soaks up all the love.

Flynn was adopted and returned after several weeks in a new home when his behavior escalated to bites that broke skin. In one instance Flynn had grabbed a cat food can and began resource guarding it away from any humans, growling and attempting to run away. When the owner reached down to grabbed the can, Flynn jumped and bit onto their hand breaking skin. In another incident Flynn was left to interact with a young child, when the child suddenly moved frightening Flynn he jumped up and bit the child on the face then ran away cowering and submissive urinating. Flynn needs a calm, quiet, and low traffic home with no children residents or visitors and a family that will set him up for success by slowly introducing him to the big wide world. His owners will need to advocate for his space and ensure he doesn't feel the need to protect himself by using his teeth.

Upon coming to Oregon Humane, Flynn's coat was very matted and painful to the touch. On top of this, Flynn hasn't had the needed exposure and training to find grooming a pleasant and routine experience. Flynn will need dedicated training and support (such as situational anxiety medication) and an experienced groomer to work with him to build these skills, as ongoing grooming will be an important part of his life. Flynn will need to be groomed every 4-6 weeks, on top of daily maintenance like brushing at home, and future adopters will need to be very intentional and thoughtful about this process to make sure grooming becomes a much more positive experience for him!

Here's how to help Flynn 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 Flynn is not comfortable with strange 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 Flynn decide if they want to come closer to you. Don't force interactions. As they grow more comfortable, you will see Flynn decide that they enjoy spending time with you by coming closer for pets, jumping next to you on the couch, and crawling into your lap for attention.

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

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

Take Flynn outside on leash. Even if you have a fenced yard, please do not let Flynn out alone. They are so small that they could easily hide under your deck or a bush - or slip through a gap in your fence! Flynn does like to go for walks and go outside to potty but needs some time to figure out the routine before being trusted off leash.

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

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

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

We expect that Flynn 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!**

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