



Brenda 347543: What to Expect

Brenda is a graduate of our Behavior Modification Program and is looking for a special home. Brenda is a sweet and shy little lady, and underneath her scruffy exterior is a bright, bubbly spirit just waiting to shine! She came into the Humane Society as a stray, with no known history, and the shelter life was overwhelming. She would curl up in the corner of her kennel, avoiding interaction and was nervous and stressed. Through the Second Chance Program, she joined the Behavior Modification Program at Oregon Humane. The quieter, more supportive environment gave her the space she needed to feel safe. And with that safety, the once-timid Brenda has blossomed into a joyful, silly girl who delights in her walks, thrives in play with other dogs, and eagerly wiggles her way over to familiar people for pets and belly rubs.

Brenda has displayed resource guarding around food, toys, and people when interacting with another dog in a home. In one instance at the shelter, after kibble was dropped on the floor during play, she became tense and made an air snap toward the other dog. We have found that maintaining a structured environment during any food related situations helps prevent this behavior, as it reduces Brenda's perceived need to protect resources. Brenda has been introduced to many dogs of all shapes and sizes, and she consistently proves to be an appropriate and adaptable playmate. She naturally matches the energy of other dogs, whether they want to chase, be chased, or simply coexist and explore together. Due to her previous experience in a home with another dog, we think she would do best as the only dog in the home, so she doesn't feel the need to protect her newfound resources.

Brenda needs a patient, understanding home where she can adjust at her own pace. She will do best in a calm home without any small children and away from busy streets and high activity. Expect her to feel overwhelmed at first, and during the early months, her safety will rely on careful planning and consistent patience. **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!** With time, patience, and gentle guidance, Brenda will grow more confident and settle comfortably into her new home!

Here's how to help Brenda 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 towards leaving them alone unsecured once they've had the chance to settle into your home and you know with certainty, they will be comfortable.

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 Brenda 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 Brenda 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 them 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.

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 Brenda 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 Brenda decide if they want to come closer to you. Don't force interactions. As they grow more comfortable, you will see Brenda 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.

Supervise your dog outside. Even if you have a fenced yard, please do not let Brenda out alone. They are small and could easily hide under your deck or a bush - 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.

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

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

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

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

We expect that Brenda 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 is an emergency, give your dog plenty of time to bond to you before taking them to your vet. Brenda does very well at the vet, with patience 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 Brenda to be successful in your home. We're available to answer questions via phone and email. During your first two months with Brenda, 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!