



Elbow Macaroni 343971: What to Expect

Elbow Macaroni is a graduate of our Behavior Modification Program and is looking for a special home. Elbow Macaroni (or El Mac, Ellie Mac, Elbow, or Elbow Mac) is a very silly dog putting in the work to figure out how the world works. He loves meeting and playing with new dogs, sampling new snacks, and running as fast as his short legs will let him. Elbow Mac comes to Oregon Humane through our Humane Law Enforcement, where he was surrendered alongside 15 other small dogs. While it is in a dog's best interest to be removed from these situations, going from the only place they've known as home into the shelter system can be quite the shock. When uncomfortable, Elbow Mac will attempt to create space by backing away, and if pressed further, will resort to showing teeth and snapping to avoid handling. We were able to bring Elbow Mac into our Behavior Modification program (BMod) to give him a quiet space with consistent staff to help him learn how to be a pet dog. We were able to start pairing new scary experiences like walking on leash or being pet with positive rewards, like tasty cheese and hotdogs. Elbow Mac has made progress with walking on leash and gets excited when he sees familiar handlers coming to get him from his kennel. Future adopters will need to continue using the same positive reinforcement-based training methods we've found success with in the BMod program as he learns to adjust to pet dog life. We expect that Elbow Mac 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!**

During his time in the BMod program, we've introduced Elbow Mac to multiple dogs to determine his interest in interacting with new dogs. Elbow Mac has found great joy in other dogs, and loves to play and wrestle with other friendly dogs! Confident dogs act as a role model for him as well, giving him the confidence to continue interacting with people and showing him how to be a pet dog. Elbow Mac would prefer to go home with another social dog already in the home; a pet meet is required prior to his adoption to ensure both dogs personalities are a match. Elbow Mac would do best in an adult only family with a quiet, low traffic home environment and away from the hustle and bustle of busy streets. He's still learning how to interact with adults, and the unpredictability of children are not a match for him. It's possible Elbow Mac may never be comfortable being picked up, handled for exams or harnessing, or enjoy any interactions with strangers. It could take months of trust and relationship building for Elbow Mac to even be comfortable having the leash clipped on for daily walks or receiving gentle pets.

Here's how to help Elbow Mac 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 Elbow Mac is not comfortable with people or dogs 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 Elbow Mac decide if they want to come closer to you. Don't force interactions. As they grow more comfortable, you will see Elbow Mac decide that they enjoy spending time with you by coming closer for pets, jumping next to you on the couch.

Supervise your dog outside. Even if you have a fenced yard, please do not let Elbow Mac 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 Elbow Mac before introducing them to someone new. They may need to meet a new person multiple times before feeling comfortable with strangers. Treats and allowing Elbow Mac to approach as they feel comfortable will be best. New people should just completely ignore Elbow Mac at first – playing hard to get is the way to their heart.

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

Take Elbow Mac outside on leash. Even if you have a fenced yard, please do not let Elbow Mac 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! Elbow Mac 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 Elbow Mac in another room.** If you'd like Elbow Mac to meet a guest, put them on a leash and give them time to adjust before allowing your guest to pet. Let it be Elbow Mac's choice to go to them for pets or hang back and watch. Crowding Elbow Mac or forcing them to interact can make fearful behavior worse.

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

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

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