



Gustav 346916: What to Expect

Gustav is a graduate of our Behavior Modification Program and is looking for a special home. Gustav is a very sweet, sensitive little dog who enjoys relaxed environments, cozy fuzzy beds, and soft pets. He has the most adorable face and a gentle nature that shines through once he feels safe and comfortable. Gustav came from a home where he lived with multiple other small dogs and had very limited access to resources, human interaction, and positive experiences with the world around him. Because of this, he missed out on important early socialization and is still learning that new people, places, and experiences can be safe and enjoyable. His future family will need to be patient, understanding, and committed to helping him build confidence at his own pace.

Having spent the first year and a half of his life fairly isolated, many everyday experiences are still new to Gustav. Things like walking on a leash, everyday household noises, or even receiving gentle pets can feel overwhelming for him at first. When he is unsure, he may respond with hesitation, anxiety, fear, and he may tuck himself into a corner or underneath something. During his time at Oregon Humane, we have been helping Gustav create positive associations with these experiences through gentle, reward-based training and lots of tasty treats. His future home should continue using these same positive reinforcement techniques to help him feel secure and supported as he learns.

Gustav is especially sensitive to fast movements and sudden noises. He would thrive in a calm, lower-traffic home without very young children. Gustav might also benefit from living with another confident, friendly dog who can help show him the ropes and provide reassurance through companionship and play. Like many dogs who haven't had consistent structure before, Gustav is still working on potty training and learning appropriate bathroom routines. With patience, consistency, and kindness, he will continue making progress. Gustav may need a little extra time and understanding, but for someone willing to go at his pace, he has the potential to become a deeply loyal, very playful, and loving companion.

Here's how to help Gustav 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.

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

Wait to take walks. Gustav will need time to bond with you before you start taking them for walks. Give them a couple of weeks to get to know you and their new home, then practice walking around your yard before trying a

walk around the block. Gustav will do best walking alongside a confident canine companion. They're already doing a great job of checking in with their human at the other end of the leash – continue encouraging this behavior to help strengthen the bond by offering treats.

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

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

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

Use an exercise pen to confine Gustav to a small area when you are not home or able to supervise them (see picture). Give them a bed, water, and a potty pad. This "safe spot" will also be a great place to put them when you have visitors to your home, so they don't have to worry about interacting with everyone if they're not comfortable.

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