



Mikey 347490: What to Expect

Mikey is a graduate of our Behavior Modification Program and is looking for a special home. Mikey is big, adorable, and goofy German Shepherd. He enjoys going for walks, playing with toys, and is easily motivated to learn new things! He's already got the hang of sit, down, stay, crate, and walking loosely on leash. He can often be found snuggled up on the couch with his favorite people or rolling in grass on his walks. Mikey has a lot of excitement for life and when excited may jump up onto handlers, if overstimulated further, may grab onto loose fitting clothing, the leash, or bags/purses in his mouth. Mikey loves people and has never met a stranger; he would make an excellent wingman if you're looking to make new human friends. However, he is reactive to the sight of other dogs, with jumping, barking, and pulling. If allowed to get closer he will snap at other dogs. This is likely due to a lack of socialization in early development and overarousal at the sight of other dogs. Mikey would love to meet all the human friends, but is not a candidate for dog interactions at this time.

During his time in the Behavior Modification program, we've been successful teaching Mikey alternative behaviors such as sitting and waiting for leashing or before toys are thrown in the yard. He loves to learn new things and catches on quickly to new behaviors, routine, and cues. At times it feels like he can read our minds, he is so responsive to training. Mikey will need patient owners, without small children, who can continue his training using the same positive reinforcement-based training techniques we've found successful here at Oregon Humane.

In low traffic environments away from constant run ins with other dogs, Mikey walks in a nice heel, checks in with his handlers, sits when you stop, and enjoys peaceful walks, hikes, or strolls. His new family will need to continue his training with disengagement at the sight of other dogs. He is not a candidate for off leash adventures, but would love to run around a yard or Sniff Spot in a controlled environment. Mikey has had conflicted dog interactions during his time at OH and it's likely that the chaos of this environment has led to his reactivity at the sight of other dogs. With a patient family and some dutiful training, we believe Mikey can learn to be comfortable and relaxed in the presence of other dogs. Introducing him to other dogs is something his family will have to take slow and thoughtful consideration paired with training to ensure is successful and that it is something Mikey chooses to want to engage in.

Here's how to help Mikey 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 Mikey is not calm with dogs and doesn't enjoy meeting them while on their walk. Distance is calming.

Mikey needs daily exercise to reduce stress. Mikey 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 Mikey on an appropriate walking tool. We have been using a special head halter, called a transitional leash, to help guide Mikey to walk nicely on leash with little to no pulling. When Mikey sees other dogs on walks, they become incredibly excited and then frustrated that they cannot run up to say hello and play, causing them to jump, pull, whine, bark, and sometimes growl. It will be important to never let Mikey run up to other dogs on leash as that can reinforce his frustrations.

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

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

Practice "Leave it." Mikey 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 treat and walk away from the trigger. Distance is calming.

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

Don't take Mikey to busy places where they will have lots of uncontrolled interactions with people/dogs (such as Saturday Market, off-leash dog parks, coffee shops, walks down Hawthorne St., Home Depot, etc.).

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.

Work on having Mikey settle on a mat and gently praise them for lying down. If they get up to pace, call them back and use a treat to lure them into a down again. If Mikey is on leash, you can hold them with approximately 4 feet of leash and wait until they offer a settle by lying down. Softly praise and treat when they do this.

Visiting the Vet: Unless it is an emergency, give your dog plenty of time to bond to you before taking them to your vet. Mikey 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.

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