



Puddles 348167: What to Expect

Puddles is a graduate of our Behavior Modification Program and is looking for a special home. Puddles is a very sweet and sensitive poodle that is putting in the work to discover the joys of being a pet dog! He loves chewing on Nylabones, running around with his dog friends, and gentle pets on his fuzzy head. Puddles came to OH via a shelter in central Oregon, where he was found as a severely matted stray. Matting can be incredibly painful for dogs, as the mats pull and tug at the skin, causing bruising and sensitivity. This made any form of touch frightening and uncomfortable to Puddles, even after the matting was shaved off during his neuter. While Puddles is comfortable and confident around people any reach of a hand would cause him to flee from his handlers. Bringing Puddles into the Behavior Modification program has allowed us to provide him with positive interactions with touch, pairing human touch with high value treats and doggy playdates (his favorite thing). Slowly over several weeks, Puddles has allowed more handling, even gently seeking out pets from known and trusted handlers. Adopters will have to be dedicated and able to continue this progress with Puddles, using the same positive reinforcement-based training methods we've had success with at OH. We expect that Puddles 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!**

Due to his coat type, Puddles will need continued training and positive experiences with grooming. A failure to continue this progress with his handling and grooming skills will result in Puddles' coat becoming matted and painful again. Finding a dog groomer skilled with handling sensitive dogs is a must, or future adopters will need to be comfortable continuing to trim and shave his fur at home. He has shown that with a trusted human and dog friend he will allow a bath and scissor trim. Adopters will want to work up to using electric clippers slowly. It could take several weeks before Puddles is confident in his new family to allow touch or grooming. Frequent grooming is paramount to his continued success with viewing touch, brushing, and clipping as a positive event.

During his time at the shelter, Puddles has shown that he greatly prefers the company of other social dogs! He finds a great deal of confidence watching other dogs interact with people and the world around them. Puddles will need to go home with a confident resident dog, and a pet meet will be required prior to adoption to ensure that all dogs in the home are a personality match.

Here's how to help Puddles 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.

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

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

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

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

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

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.

Behavioral Medication for your new dog

This dog has been prescribed one or more medications to help reduce anxiety and impulsivity during their time in the shelter. You may be provided with a supply of this dog's medication(s) along with specific dosing instructions at the time of adoption. We would recommend that you continue giving this medication for at least the first 6 months after adoption to help reduce stress that may be associated with this dog making a smooth transition into your home. In order to avoid any adverse side effects (including behavioral and systemic) please do not abruptly stop administering these medications or discontinue use without consulting your veterinarian. When it appears time to stop giving your dog these medications, please contact your veterinarian for an appropriate protocol to make sure you have enough medication to allow for a gradual weaning off process. Please do not substitute other supplements or medications (including your own prescriptions) without consulting a veterinary professional.

During this process, please watch for any signs of worsening fear or anxiety. If the dog appears to be getting worse during the weaning off process, contact your veterinarian as longer treatment or a different combination of medications may be needed. Remember that successful behavioral rehabilitation often relies on a combination of pharmaceutical therapy as well as various training modalities.

We're here to help!

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