



Leela 304495: What to Expect

Leela is a graduate of our Behavior Modification Program and is looking for a special home. Leela is a sweet and sensitive gal looking for a soft place to land. When comfortable she adores affection and is a playful dog who loves to run around the yard. Leela is frightened by loud industrial noises when out on walks, and when startled she can pancake, dart, and attempt to hide from the perceived threat. She does well on walks in quiet spaces without heavy vehicle traffic and is looking for a low traffic quiet neighborhood to call home. We expect that Leela 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!**

We've had the opportunity to introduce Leela to other dogs during her time here at OH and she's shown us that she can be conflicted about interacting with other dogs. Leela can become overwhelmed by overly exuberant and rowdy dogs and feels comfortable advocating for her personal space with barking and snapping. Settings with uncontrolled dog interactions like dog parks would not be a good fit for Leela, and she would enjoy one on one playdates or walks with known appropriate dogs. A pet meet is required prior to adoption, to ensure that all dogs in the home are appropriate matches for living and co-existing with one another.

Here's how to help Leela 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 Leela is not comfortable with strange people and doesn't enjoy meeting strangers while on their walk. Distance is calming.

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

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

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 Leela decide if they want to come closer to you. Don't force interactions. As they grow more comfortable, you will see Leela decide that they enjoy spending time with you by coming closer for pets, jumping next to you on the couch, and following you around.

Limit introductions to new people. Take your time to get to know Leela before introducing them to someone new. Treats and allowing Leela to approach as they feel comfortable will be best. New people should just completely ignore Leela at first – playing hard to get is the way to their heart.

Leela needs daily exercise to reduce stress. Leela 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.

Skip the dog park. Don't take Leela 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.). Leela has shown us they don't have an interest in being around loud crowds of other dogs/people. Taking leashed hikes to the river, playing in the backyard, or to places not frequented by much traffic will allow for exercise, but keep Leela calm and engaged with you.

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

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.