



Stardust 356651: What to Expect

Stardust is a graduate of our Behavior Modification Program and is looking for a special home. Stardust is a shy and reserved pup who is learning all about the big wide world. When he came into the shelter he found the environment very overwhelming, and in this state of fear and discomfort would choose not to engage with people or even go for walks. Moving him into our Behavior Modification Program gave him a quiet and calm environment with the same consistent faces that helped him relax and come out of his shell. Starburst is a sweet puppy who is learning to trust humans. He would do well in a quiet and low traffic environment with a patient family who can continue to use the same positive reinforcement techniques we've found successful here at OH. When comfortable Stardust is curious, playful, and loves tasty treats. When uncomfortable Stardust will avoid whatever is causing him discomfort by evading, moving away, and darting if pressed further. We expect that Stardust 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!**

Stardust gains a lot of confidence from other dogs. We've had the opportunity to introduce him to a variety of other dogs during his time, and he will readily follow an older confident dog and engage in appropriate play with younger more playful pups. We believe having another dog in the home could help Stardust gain some confidence and model what benefits come with being a pet dog. A pet meet is required before adoption, to ensure personality compatibility. He would also enjoy soaking up all the attention for himself. Due to his sensitive disposition, he is not a candidate for the uncontrolled chaotic environments of the dog park. He would much prefer controlled interactions with known dogs in a securely fenced in yard or Sniffspot.

Here's how to help Stardust 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 Stardust 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.

Use routine to get Stardust comfortable in their new home. It will take a couple weeks for Stardust 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. Stardust 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. Stardust 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 Stardust decide if they want to come closer to you. Don't force interactions. As they grow more comfortable, you will see Stardust 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 Stardust 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 Stardust before introducing them to someone new. They may need to meet a new person multiple times before feeling comfortable with strangers. Treats and allowing Stardust to approach as they feel comfortable will be best. New people should just completely ignore Stardust at first – playing hard to get is the way to their heart.

Stardust needs daily exercise to reduce stress. Stardust 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.

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.

“Puppy proof” your home and practice tether training to prevent them from getting into puppy/adolescent trouble. When home have Stardust on leash, attached to you or tethered to a large piece of furniture as you go about your daily routine. This will help with potty training, bonding, and creating boundaries within the home. Let Stardust drag the leash around the house or yard from time to time to simulate “freedom”, but do not let them off leash until they can 100% be trusted not to get into things they shouldn't. This could take up to a few weeks. Crate them when you cannot watch them. This will ensure their puppy curiosity doesn't get them into any trouble. You will have long lasting success if you follow this method.

Skip the dog park. Don't take Stardust 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.). Stardust has shown us they don't have an interest in being around other dogs/people. 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 Stardust 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 Stardust to be successful in your home. We're available to answer questions via phone and email. During your first two months with Stardust, 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!