Gowan 359271: What to Expect

Gowan is a graduate of our Behavior Modification Program and is looking for a special home. Gowan is a short, sweet dog who is learning how to navigate the big wide world with confidence and trust. When uncomfortable Gowan will choose to hide and observe to take in her surroundings. Once she's had some time to trust her people, she can be very sweet and enjoy gentle pets and calm walks. It will take time for her to feel comfortable enough to play, explore, and go out for bigger adventures than just walks around the neighborhood. Her family will find success in using the same positive reinforcement techniques we've found successful here at OH. We feel she would do best in a home with calm older children as the loud noises and fast movements of small children can be frightening.

Gowan is learning to trust not only humans but other dogs as well. She is neutral to the presence of other dogs and at this time does not enjoy playing and would prefer to be the only dog in the home. If a dog approaches her before she is ready she will communicate for space by moving away, flashing teeth, and snapping. She can share the same space as other dogs without incident, but will choose people over dogs. Due to this, she is not a candidate for the chaotic environment of dog parks or doggie daycare which would only increase her fear and discomfort around other dogs.

It will take several weeks or more for Gowan to adjust to her new home trusting not only her new environment, but those who live within it. Positive or neutral experiences, like treats or walks, can help her find people rewarding. We expect that Gowan 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!**

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

"Puppy proof" your home and practice tether training to prevent them from getting into puppy/adolescent trouble. When home have Gowan 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 Gowan 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 Gowan 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.). Gowan 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 Gowan 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 Gowan to be successful in your home. We're available to answer questions via phone and email. During your first two months with Gowan, 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!