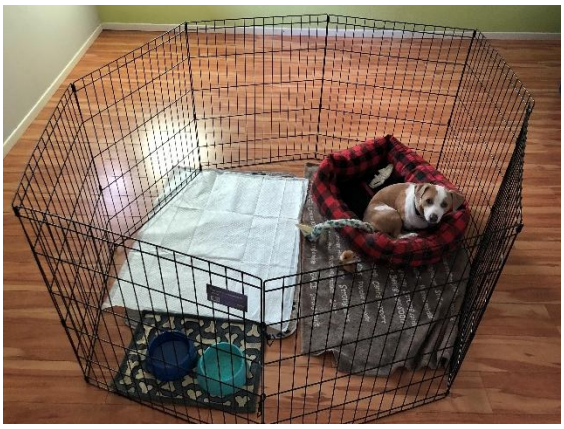
Maya 357519: What to Expect

Maya is a graduate of our Behavior Modification Program and is looking for a special home. Maya is a sweet and shy little dog who is learning how to navigate the world as a pet dog living in a home. Maya came to OH from a shelter partner out of state where she was previously living in a hoarding situation with dozens of other dogs. She will need help in her new home learning how to navigate the world and living in an urban environment. Maya will need patient owners who will continue to use the same positive reinforcement techniques we've found successful here at OH. A low traffic home away from the hustle and bustle of a busy environment will further help Maya decompress and adjust to her new home. She would do best in a home without small children whose unpredictable movements and loud noises can be startling. Maya is social with other dogs, and would likely find a lot of courage and confidence from following another social dog around the house and neighborhood. A pet meet is required before adoption to ensure personality compatibility.

When comfortable Maya will curl up on the couch next to you – not on you, adores affectionate gentle pets, and playing with social confident dogs of similar size. She is learning how to go for walks around the neighborhood, but it will take her some time to become confident with the hustle and bustle of life outside. When uncomfortable, Maya will choose a comfortable spot to observe the world around her, either on a dog bed, under furniture, or on the couch. If startled, she may dart and attempt to hide. She is learning how to go for slow leisurely walks on leash and seems to be adjusting to this new routine, but can be easily startled by loud noises and fast movements. The outside world is a new experience for her. We expect that Maya will be overwhelmed by everything she encounters at first. During the critical first months in a new home, her 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 Maya settle in during your first months together:

Use an exercise pen to confine Maya to a small area when you are not home or able to supervise them (see picture). Give them a bed, water, and a potty pad. This "safe spot" will also be a great place to put them when you have visitors to your home, so they don't have to worry about interacting with everyone if they're not comfortable.



Maya's "safe spot" when no one is home.

Limit introductions to new people. Take your time to get to know Maya before introducing them to someone new. She may need to meet a new person multiple times before feeling comfortable with strangers. Allowing Maya to approach as she feels comfortable will be best. New people should just completely ignore Maya at first – playing hard to get is the way to their heart.

Take Maya outside on leash. Even if you have a fenced yard, please do not let Maya out alone. She is so small that she could easily hide under your deck or a bush - or slip through a gap in your fence! She does like to go for short walks and go outside to potty but needs some time to build confidence to go on longer excursions in even the quietest neighborhoods.

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

Let her drag a leash attached to her collar for the first week or two inside and outside the home. Fast movements are startling, and it will take time for her 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 Maya decide if she wants to come closer to you. Don't force interactions. As she grows more comfortable, you will see Maya decide that she enjoys spending time with you by coming closer for pets, jumping next to you on the couch, and following your resident dog around.

Wait to take walks. Maya will need time to bond with you before you start taking her for walks. Give her a couple of weeks to get to know you and her new home, then practice walking around your yard before trying a walk around the block. Maya will do best walking alongside a confident canine companion. She's already doing a great job of checking in with her human at the other end of the leash – continue encouraging this behavior to help strengthen the bond by offering treats.

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 Maya is not comfortable with people and doesn't enjoy meeting strangers while on her walk. Distance is calming.

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

Patience will come in handy for you. Maya responds best to positive reinforcement and reward-based training. She will need an understanding, calm owner who has the time and desire to work on helping her learn to live in a home. Maya will pay you back by supplying love and enthusiasm!

Don't take Maya to busy places where she 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.).

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