Moonlight 358341: What to Expect

Moonlight is a graduate of our Behavior Modification Program and is looking for a special home. Moonlight is a snuggly little love bug who adores long sniffari adventures and cozy couch cuddles. She's just as happy exploring the world as she is snoozing beside her family while they watch TV or read! Moonlight came to Oregon Humane from rural Pendleton, Oregon, where she and her siblings were raised in an isolated environment with limited exposure to the sights, sounds, and experiences of everyday life. When she first arrived, she often shied away from handlers, trembled, and looked for ways to escape situations that felt overwhelming. Moving Moonlight into our Behavior Modification Program has given her the opportunity to decompress in a quieter, calmer environment while gradually introducing her to new experiences at a pace that feels safe and manageable. Through positive reinforcement, including food, play, and praise, we are helping her build confidence and develop positive associations with learning, exploring, and navigating the world around her.

As Moonlight grows more comfortable and confident, her silly, playful, and energetic puppy personality blossoms! When overly excited, she can get mouthy, grab onto loose-fitting clothing, or jump on her handlers for attention. She will benefit from continued guidance as she develops appropriate ways to channel her puppy enthusiasm. Moonlight loves to learn and has shown us just how much she can accomplish with patience, encouragement, and positive reinforcement. She will thrive with dedicated adopters who are excited to continue the reward-based training that has helped her at OH.

Moonlight has also enjoyed meeting and playing with other dogs in the program. As an energetic, easily excited puppy, however, she can rush into introductions and overwhelm dogs. Unstructured settings, such as dog parks, may not be the best fit. Instead, thoughtfully planned playdates with familiar, friendly, and confident dogs will give her opportunities to socialize while continuing to develop positive dog-to-dog communication skills. If you have another dog at home, a pet meet is required before adoption to ensure it is a good match.

Here's how to help Moonlight 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.

Use routine to get Moonlight comfortable in their new home. It will take a couple weeks for Moonlight 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. Moonlight 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. Moonlight 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!

Wait to take walks. Moonlight will need time to bond with you before you start taking them for walks. Give them a couple of weeks to get to know you and their new home, then practice walking around your yard before trying a walk around the block. Moonlight will do best walking alongside a confident canine companion. They're already doing a great

job of checking in with their human at the other end of the leash – continue encouraging this behavior to help strengthen the bond by offering treats.

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 Moonlight 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 Moonlight 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.

Take a training class. Moonlight would benefit from taking some training classes with their new owners and would love to learn more alongside their family in a training class. Training classes help strengthen the bond between owner and dog by creating clear and precise communication so there are no misunderstandings. You can find more info about our training classes on our website at (https://www.oregonhumane.org/training/training-at-ohs/).

We expect that Moonlight 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!**

Visiting the Vet: Unless it is an emergency, give your dog plenty of time to bond to you before taking them to your vet. Moonlight does very well at the vet, with patience they handle meeting new people well. The vet can still be a scary place. Bringing tasty treats like cheese and/or hot dogs can help make the experience more pleasant.
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 Moonlight to be successful in your home. We're available to answer questions via phone and email. During your first two months with Moonlight, 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!