



## Luca: What to Expect

**Luca is a graduate of our Behavior Modification Program and is looking for a special home.** Luca is a big smart dog who loves to play and cuddle! Luca needs to find a dog experienced, adult-only home with a patient person who has time to continue working on setting boundaries and training using the same positive reinforcement techniques we use at OHS. He would not do well in a home with a lot of hustle and bustle, one with small animals, or one with children. Luca is a big dog with a big personality, who loves people, but can be nervous when meeting someone new. When excited Luca likes to jump up on his humans and if overstimulated more will grab onto loose fitting clothes, the leash, or purses/bags. He will need to be introduced to new people slowly, with lots of treats, and a walk around the neighborhood. We've been very successful using positive training techniques, asking Luca to sit and wait for pets to help him in his overexcited state.

Luca is an excellent leash walker with the appropriate leash walking tool he is a joy to walk around the neighborhood or even out on the hiking trails. He needs continued help with his reactivity towards small animals, dogs, and strangers while on walks. Luca is on our running team and is a delight to go on runs with, he would thrive in an active and/or adventurous home. Luca has shown signs of barrier reactivity in previous homes, barking at passersby's out the window. Giving Luca a quiet place to settle away from windows, like his crate, will help him settle into a home as you train him not to bark out the window. He would do best in a home with a secured BACKyard with visual barriers from neighbors or bust sidewalks.

We have trained Luca to settle and be calm while free in one of our Real-Life Rooms, set up like a living room including TV and window. Luca has done phenomenal at relaxing while loose in this room and choosing to play with toys or sleep and not reacting when watching people walk by or knock on the door. We used the assistance of a remote treat dispensing machine to teach Luca to relax and reward him for calm behavior. He can now hang out in this room unsupervised for up to 3 hours without issue. This training can easily translate into his new home and OHS will help give you the tools to succeed in Luca's training.

Luca likes to play with other dogs and could do well in a home with another dog or visit friendly dogs regularly. He does not do well with out-of-control greetings, such as a dog running up into his face when on leash or off leash dog parks.

### Here's how to help Luca settle in during your first months together:



**Use treats to build trust.** Maintaining and continuing his training will create a bond and a form of communication between two species who don't understand each other.

**Designate a "safe spot" in your home.** You can use a crate to confine him to a smaller area where he has access to water, bed, and toys (see picture). When you are unable to supervise him, leave him in his safe spot.

**Practice home alone training.** Luca may whine or bark if left home alone for extended periods of time. We've had success leaving him alone for over a few hours using an automatic food dispenser to occasionally reward him for quiet, calm behavior. We've also been working on crate training. To continue crate training, start by feeding his meals in the crate and work your way up from there.

**Be his advocate.** It's okay to ask someone to stop or prevent a person from coming up to say hi to your dog. Watch his body language and help him out of situations if he appears stressed.

**Luca needs daily exercise to reduce stress.** Luca loves to go for runs, play fetch, and go for walks. Giving him a healthy outlet for some of his energy will help him settle during calm hours at home.

**Work on having him settle on a mat** and gently praise him for lying down. If he gets up to pace, call him back and use a treat to lure him into a down again. If he is on leash, you can hold him with approx. 4 feet of leash and wait until he offers a settle by lying down. Softly praise and treat when he does this.

**Skip the dog park!** Don't take him to busy places where he will have lots of uncontrolled interactions with people or other dogs (such as Saturday Market, dog parks, coffee shops, etc.).

**Practice "Leave it."** Luca may bark and lunge if he sees other dogs when he's on a walk, especially if they bark at him. When he sees a dog, **before** he starts barking, say "leave it." When he turns to look at you, reward with praise and a treat and walk away from the trigger. Distance is calming.

**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.

**Patience will come in handy for you.** Luca is a sensitive dog who responds best to positive reinforcement and reward-based training. He needs an understanding, calm owner who has the time and desire to work with him. He will pay you back by supplying love and enthusiasm!

## **We're here to help!**

We want Luca to be successful in your home. We're available to answer questions via phone and email. During your first two months with Luca, we can also set up a free one-on-one consultation. For questions or to schedule an appointment, contact Annika at **(503) 802-6713** or [annikah@oregonhumane.org](mailto:annikah@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 his/her 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. It is difficult to predict whether this dog will benefit from treatment over an even longer period of time – this is something that we ask you to discuss with this dog's new veterinarian when you take him/her in for your first exam. When it appears time to stop giving your dog these medications, please contact your veterinarian for an appropriate weaning off protocol and to make sure you have enough medication to allow for a weaning off process.

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 may be needed.