



Missy: What to Expect

Missy is a sweet girl who loves to play fetch and learn new things. She is looking for a home with someone who can continue working to ease her anxiety of being home alone, using the same positive reinforcement training methods we have used here at OHS and keeping her on anti-anxiety medication. It would be best if you worked from home or have someone home all the time until she can get used to the new home and start to view it as her permanent place to live. She will need a home without cats or small animals due to her wanting to chase and becoming easily overstimulated.

Missy needs a quiet, calm home and environment. She is overwhelmed by strangers and busy environments and would struggle in a home with lots of people in and out. If you have a yard, it is recommended to first start taking her out in the yard to go potty as this will allow her time to settle before taking her out for walks. If you don't have a yard and need to take her out, keep close to your home and keep outings short, for potty breaks only at first and work up to taking longer walks in your quiet neighborhood.

Missy has shown aggression dogs she has lived with and she will need to be the only pet in your home so she can have you all to herself – she really deserves that.

Missy needs positive reinforcement and reward-based training methods. This can include treats and toys. Anything negative or forceful will cause her anxiety level to increase and will be counterproductive for both of you.

Here's how to help Missy during your first months together:

Use treats and play time to build trust. Missy enjoys playing with toys and loves treats. Always let her be the one to decide if she wants to come closer to you and don't force interactions. As she becomes more comfortable, you can pair treats with petting and begin handling her collar and leash. When visitors come to the house, you could put her in a different room at first, then bring her out on leash and give her treats. Have your visitors completely ignore her as **you** throw treats and her toy to make a happy association and take the pressure off. You may hand the visitors treats and toys and have them **throw them** for her at a distance. This prevents inappropriate greeting behavior from people (reaching to pet, bending over, sustained eye contact) which scares her. It's always best to be completely neutral and calm around a shy dog than to try to get them to like you.

Give her ample time to settle into your home. Develop a predictable daily schedule to help her acclimate to your house. In her previous homes she was destructive when left alone and cannot be crated as she panics worse in a crate. (See Previous Owner Questionnaires) We have been working with her gradually being left alone in our "Real Life" Room to teach her that she is fine if left unattended and that we return to her. When you leave, she will pace and drool. At first, she could only be in the room alone for a couple minutes without crying and scratching the door, but after a few weeks, she can now be left in there for 30 minutes and will lie on the couch licking her Kong Toy. She will now go freely into and lie down in a wire crate as long as the door remains open, so you can continue and build this training at home (with our help of course ☺).

Ignore mouthy behavior: If she gets mouthy or jumpy with you, calmly and quietly stand, turn to a 45 degree angle and ignore her. If you ignore the behavior and it continues (or if she starts to jump/mouth at someone else), everyone should immediately either leave the room, or – if she is dragging her leash – calmly pick up her leash and walk her to a separate room. A brief break may help her calm down. After a few minutes, give her a chance to try again.

When playing, encourage her to “**get your toy.**” Praise her for carrying a toy around. If she drops the toy, all the attention stops until she picks it up again. Avoid any wrestling-type play or tug-of-war. Take plenty of breaks while you are playing.

Work on having her “settle” at your feet and gently praise her for lying down. If she gets up to pace, call her back and use a treat to lure her into a down again.

Missy is on medication for her anxiety and you can also use **Adaptile (Dog Appeasing Pheromone)** in addition, to help her settle into the new environment.

Use a harness for walks. Missy may pull hard on leash when she sees other dogs. A body harness like the freedom no pull harness is recommended for walks. If you have a yard, or a place to play indoors, it will be in your best interest to play a game of fetch **before** you take Missy on a walk. This will help reduce her energy level so she can stay focused during the walk.

Practice “Leave It.” Like many dogs, Missy may bark at some people and other dogs. Practice saying “leave it” in a happy tone and reward her with her favorite treat for looking at you and remaining quiet. Again, playing fetch before going on a walk will help reduce the barking and overexcited behavior on leash.

No dog parks or dog play dates for Missy! She has been aggressive towards dogs so you don’t want to get her into trouble!

Patience will come in handy for you. Missy is a dog who needs time to adjust to a new environment. She needs someone who stays home, who is calm and who has the time and desire to work with her and her anxieties and she will repay you with lots of love and loyalty.

We’re here to help!

We want Missy to be successful in her home. We’re available to answer questions via phone and email. Contact the Behavior Help Line **(503) 416-2983**. One-on-One training consultations are also available. More information at oregonhumane.org/training.

Please keep in touch so we can continue to help you and Missy now and in the future. Please reach out if you have any 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!