



Rina: What to Expect

Rina is a graduate of our Behavior Modification Program and needs a special home. For Rina, **it's all about going slow and building confidence.** Rina is a very nervous girl who is learning all about how the world works and is building confidence to live within it. We don't know much about her history, but it is likely she came from a situation where she ran around a home with several of her siblings with little human interaction. She needs to find a home with a patient, calm person(s) who understands and can live with her sensitive nature. She would not do well in a busy home, a home with lots of hustle and bustle, or one with children.

Rina will do best in a home with a social, confident dog (or dogs!). She enjoys spending time with other dogs that are also playful, curious, and social. Going to a home with a dog will help her open-up and build her confidence quicker. Having a resident dog will also help relieve the social pressure Rina may feel at first. A pet meet is required before adoption, to ensure the dogs get along. She developed a best friend here in the shelter whom she enjoyed playing, snuggling, and hanging out with. It might take some time to get comfortable with a new friend, but once she does she lights up and is very playful.

We expect that Rina will be overwhelmed by everything she encounters at first. Rina came in to OHS through our Second Chance program, so we do not know her history, however during her time in the shelter she was able to learn how to walk on a leash, meet new dog friends, and build trust in people. During the critical first months, 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 the leash. Keep a very tight grip of that leash!**

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

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

Let her drag a leash attached to her collar for the first few weeks. Fast movements tend to startle her, and it will take time for her to be okay with you removing/clipping on her leash. If you go slow at the beginning, you'll build a trusting, long-lasting relationship.

Use treats to build trust. Always let Rina decide if she wants to come closer to you. Don't force interactions. As she grows more comfortable, you can pair treats with petting and begin practice of clipping and unclipping the leash. Always go slow.



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

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

Take her outside on leash. Even if you have a fenced yard, please do not let Rina 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 walks and go outside to potty but needs some time to figure out her routine before being trusted off leash.

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 her crate, so she views it as a safe, comfortable spot.

Be your dog's advocate. It's okay to ask someone to stop or prevent a person from coming up to say hi to your dog. When you are on a walk, and someone asks to pet Rina, just explain that she is shy and prefers not to be pet by strangers. Rina will also give very clear signals that she is uncomfortable with the interaction.

No dog parks! Playing in controlled settings - like play dates at home with dogs you know - will work better. It is best to go slow with introductions to other dogs. Don't try introducing her to strange dogs on a walk. She could easily startle, pull away from you and then be very hard to catch.

Don't take her to busy places where he 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.).

Try using **Adaptil (Dog Appeasing Pheromone)** or **Rescue Remedy by Bach Flower Essences**. These products can help dogs settle in new environments by easing the stress associated with change.

Visiting the vet: Unless it's an emergency, give Rina plenty of time to bond with you before taking her to your vet. Start with positive visits just for treats. Vet visits will more than likely be scary, but if he already trusts you, your presence may help her feel more comfortable. Talk to your vet about using a "Fear Free" approach.

Patience will come in handy for you. Rina is sensitive and 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. She will pay you back by supplying love and enthusiasm!

We're here to help!

We want Rina to be successful in her new home. We're available to answer questions via phone and email. Call our Pet Behavior Helpline at (503)416-2983 or email Annika at AnnikaH@oregonhumane.org to connect with a trainer. One-on-one consultations are available.

Please keep in touch so we can continue to help you 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!