



## Toby 254731: What to Expect

**Toby is a graduate of our Behavior Modification Program and is looking for a special home.** Toby is a playful and curious pup who loves playing fetch! He is a sensitive dog who needs an understanding family who can continue to help him grow into a confident and trusting dog. Toby was surrendered when his family could no longer meet his needs and Toby found himself in increasingly uncomfortable situations with one of the teenagers in the home. Due to conflicted feelings and a lack of mutual understanding, Toby has bitten a few times. These instances were specific to the teenager in the home and happened when hands were rushing at Toby's face; to take the leash off, to take a toy away, and when petting. During his time at OHS Toby has demonstrated his levels of discomfort clearly and appropriately. Once he's comfortable with a person, he will walk up and nudge their hand for pets, bring over and drop his ball for fetch, and take treats nicely from hands. When pressured to interact before Toby is ready, he will attempt to flee the situation and if pursued and cornered further will snap and attempt to bite at hands reaching for him, such as for medical exams, vaccinations, and being held. He would not do well in a home where he is picked up or grabbed frequently. Toby does not want to use his teeth to create space, he gives many signals when he is uncomfortable and tries to create space before he feels he has no other choice. It's important his new family allow Toby to decide when he's ready for any physical interactions. This could take several weeks of slow trust building through play, walks, and training.

Toby is motivated to learn new things and already has a few behaviors under his belt such as sit, spin, and dance. He walks well on leash but can be nervous in new spaces. It will take him some time to become familiar with your neighborhood route before he's confidently walking down the street. Busy neighborhoods with a lot of vehicle or foot traffic could frighten Toby and it will be wise to not go further than he is comfortable. He would also be content hanging out at home or in the yard playing fetch! We expect that Toby 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!**

Toby has been able to meet new people best when guests ignore him and allow him to approach for sniffs. It will be important to advocate for Toby's space with any strangers or guests you may encounter either in home or while out on a walk. Explain that while Toby is curious, he is not a very trusting dog and ignoring him is the fastest way to win him over. Tossing treats is another great way to allow Toby positive interactions with strangers without comprising his comfort level. We think Toby would do best in a low traffic home without children or other dogs. While Toby can exist with other dogs, he doesn't enjoy overly playful, invasive, or overbearing dogs. He has successfully and safely interacted with cats in his previous home and could do well in a home with other cats.

### **Here's how to help Toby 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 toward leaving them alone, unsecured, once they've had the chance to settle into your home and you know with certainty, they will be comfortable.

**Patience will come in handy for you.** Toby 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. Toby will pay you back by supplying love and enthusiasm!

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

**Don't take Toby to busy places** where they 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.).

**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 Toby is not comfortable with people and doesn't enjoy meeting strangers while on their walk. Tossing a treat on the ground is more effective for your dog to make positive associations with new people. Distance is calming.

**Let them drag a leash attached to their collar** for the first few weeks 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!

**Allow for time to build trust.** Always let Toby decide if they want to come closer to you. Don't force interactions. As they grow more comfortable, you will see Toby decide that they enjoy spending time with you by coming closer for pets, jumping next to you on the couch, and following you around.

**Supervise your dog outside.** Even if you have a fenced yard, please do not let Toby out alone. They are small and could easily hide under your deck or a bush - or slip through a gap in your fence! They do like to go for short walks and go outside to potty but need some time to build confidence to go on longer excursions in even the quietest of neighborhoods.

**Wait to take walks.** Toby 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.

**Limit introductions to new people.** Take your time to get to know Toby before introducing them to someone new. They may need to meet a new person multiple times before feeling comfortable with strangers. Treats and allowing Toby to approach as they feel comfortable will be best. New people should just completely ignore Toby at first – playing hard to get is the way to their heart.

**Use treats and toys to build trust.** Maintaining and continuing Toby's training will create a bond and a form of communication between two species who don't understand each other. The more positive experiences Toby has with their owners, the more valuable you will become in high distracting situations.

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