



## Tumbleweed 304054: What to Expect

**Tumbleweed is a graduate of our Behavior Modification Program and is looking for a special home.** Tumbleweed is a sweet and cuddly little gal! Once she's comfortable, she likes to go for leisurely walks, cuddling up with her people on the couch, and playing with toys in the yard! Tumbleweed can be a nervous dog, especially when meeting new people or exploring new spaces. When nervous or uncomfortable, Tumbleweed will do her best to move away from what scares her. This can look like avoiding eye contact, hiding, darting to the end of the leash, or looking for an escape from a room or yard. If cornered or pushed further outside her comfort zone she could escalate to growling or even snapping and biting. It can take time and patience for her to warm up to new people and she will need patient owners who can continue to introduce her to the world, slowly, at her pace, using the same positive reinforcement-based training methods we use here at OHS. Letting Tumbleweed decide when she's comfortable approaching someone new is a great way for her to explore with little social pressure. Once she's comfortable with a person, she will crawl right into their lap.

Tumbleweed was transferred to OHS through our Second Chance Program, after being found as a stray. We don't know much about her history, however the community member who found her on their property stated that once she got onto their property, she caught and killed a few of their chickens. Because of this, Tumbleweed will do best in a home without chickens, ducks, cats, or other small animals. While Tumbleweed does like to play with dogs, she can get easily overwhelmed, and prefers to hang out with well socialized confident dogs who understand not to crash into or rough house with her. We believe she could do well living with another confident well socialized dog (or dogs) and having another dog around may help relieve her of some of the social pressure she feels at first. A pet meet is required to ensure dogs are a good match.

During her time at OHS, we've seen that Tumbleweed is a very athletic young dog and when nervous, attempts to escape spaces by jumping or slipping under fences. She's able to jump 5-6 feet vertically with little to no effort. While a fenced yard is not required, owners will need to be mindful of her while out in the yard, until you can guarantee with absolute certainty, she will not jump the fence. Owners should expect to spend time in the yard with Tumbleweed, preferably on a long leash or drag line, for the first few months in the home as she settles into her new routine and family.

### **Here's how to help Tumbleweed 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.

We expect that Tumbleweed 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!**

**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 Tumbleweed 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 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!

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

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

**Don't take Tumbleweed 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.).

**Tumbleweed needs daily exercise to reduce stress.** Tumbleweed loves to go for runs, walks, play fetch, and chase a flirt pole. Giving your dog a healthy outlet for some of their energy will help them settle during calm hours at home.

**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 Tumbleweed 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 Tumbleweed 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 Tumbleweed 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.

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

**Take a training class.** Tumbleweed 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/>).

**Visiting the Vet:** Unless it is an emergency, give your dog plenty of time to bond to you before taking them to your vet. Tumbleweed does very well at the vet, 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 Tumbleweed to be successful in your home. We're available to answer questions via phone and email. During your first two months with Tumbleweed, 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!