

Bread Loaf 309241: What to Expect

Bread Loaf is a graduate of our Behavior Modification Program and is looking for a special home. Bread Loaf is a special rescue dog who was previously living on some property in the Dalles. He ran loose around a property with 25+ other dogs, many his relatives, creating tunnel systems in the dirt, and being overseen by one owner. He and his siblings were brought into OHS after the danger of a fire put their lives at risk. When Bread Loaf arrived at the shelter, he was very fearful and afraid of people, with avoidance behavior where he would run away, cower, and snap at hands that attempted to handle him. We moved him into a quieter space where he could have consistent work with professional dog trainers, a dedicated space for healing, and the time to come out of his shell and trust the humans around him.

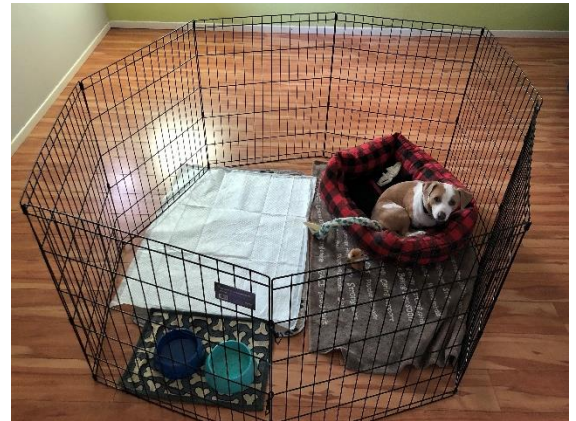
It takes Bread Loaf time to warm up to new places and new people, but as he does, he enjoys the finer things in life, casual sniffy walks and the occasional gentle head scratches. Bread Loaf is still a nervous dog, and he may never be a dog who is completely comfortable being touched, petted, or picked up. When Bread Loaf is uncomfortable, he tries to move away from what scares him, often darting on leash or trying to hide in the corner. If handlers continue to push him when he's uncomfortable, he may escalate to snapping or biting. He will need patient owners, without small children, who can continue to introduce him to living side by side with humans, slowly, using the same positive reinforcement-based techniques we use here at OHS. We expect that Bread Loaf will be overwhelmed by everything he encounters at first. During the critical first months in a new home, his 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!**

Bread Loaf is a breed of dog that will need consistent brushing and/or grooming in order to prevent matting. Because Bread Loaf isn't completely comfortable with handling or brushing at this stage, keeping a consistent and regular grooming schedule is the best option to prevent any uncomfortable matting or tangling. Owners will likely need to partner with their veterinarian for calming medication and a groomer who is comfortable and skilled in handling a fearful dog such as Bread Loaf. He has successfully been professionally groomed while at the shelter, while the event was necessary it was very overwhelming, and he frequently eliminated in stress and fear. Going slow and building a trusting relationship will help Bread Loaf feel confident and comfortable during grooming activities.

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

Use an exercise pen to confine Bread Loaf to a small area when you are not home or able to supervise them (see picture). Give them a bed, water, favorite toy, and a potty pad. This "safe spot" will also be a great place to put them when you have visitors to your home, so they don't have to worry about interacting with everyone if they're not comfortable.

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 Bread Loaf 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.



Bread Loaf's "safe spot" when no one is home.

Don't take Bread Loaf 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.).

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!

Allow for time to build trust. Always let Bread Loaf decide if they want to come closer to you. Don't force interactions. As they grow more comfortable, you will see Bread Loaf 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.

Take Bread Loaf outside on leash. Even if you have a fenced yard, please do not let Bread Loaf out alone. They are so small, that they could easily hide under your deck or a bush - or slip through a gap in your fence! Bread Loaf does like to go for walks and go outside to potty but needs some time to figure out the routine before being trusted off leash.

Wait to take walks. Bread Loaf 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.

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

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

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.

We're here to help!

We want Bread Loaf to be successful in your home. We're available to answer questions via phone and email. During your first two months with Bread Loaf, we can also set up a free one-on-one consultation. For questions or to schedule an appointment, contact us at **(503) 285-7722 ex 422** or BMODTrainers@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 their 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. In order to avoid any adverse side effects (including behavioral and systemic) please do not abruptly stop administering these medications or discontinue use without consulting your veterinarian. When it appears time to stop giving your dog these medications, please contact your veterinarian for an appropriate protocol to make sure you have enough medication to allow for a gradual weaning off process. Please do not substitute other supplements or medications (including your own prescriptions) without consulting a veterinary professional.

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 or a different combination of medications may be needed. Remember that successful behavioral rehabilitation often relies on a combination of pharmaceutical therapy as well as various training modalities.