



## Nadja 123456: What to Expect

**Nadja is a graduate of our Behavior Modification Program and is looking for a special home.** Nadja can be a super sweet, albeit sometime nervous and wary dog. Like any nervous gal, it takes her some time to warm up to new people and places, but once she does, she loves going for walks, playing with her dog friends, and getting gentle scratches. Prior to coming to OHS, Nadja was born on and had been living secluded on a porch with her siblings and parents. She did not receive the exposure she needed as a young puppy to build her confidence and resiliency in new situations and environments. She does not yet understand how to be a “pet dog” and will need help from her future adopters to introduce her positively and slowly to living in a pet home. When Nadja is uncomfortable or frightened, she will do her best to move away from what’s scaring her or freeze in place and refuse to move until the “threat” is gone. This can look like hiding, trying to make herself small, feigning sleep or trembling, and refusing to eat or move without physical intervention. During her time at OHS, she has learned to walk on a leash, take treats from people’s hands, and explore new spaces. She will need patient owners who can take the time to slowly introduce Nadja to the great big world, one little step at a time. Once Nadja has bonded to you, she will become your shadow and follow you around seeking attention and affection. Her trust in you only bolsters her ability to interact with new experiences and spaces.

We expect that Nadja 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!**

### **Here’s how to help Nadja settle in during your first months together:**

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

**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 Nadja is not comfortable with strange people and doesn’t enjoy meeting strangers while on their walk. Letting Nadja smell without people reaching for him will help him explore confidently without worry strangers will grab him.

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

**If you’re having people over, put Nadja on leash so they learn to not dart out the front door or jump all over people.** Once everyone is sitting down and calm you can drop the leash and allow your dog to decide if they want to go say hi to your guests. Let Nadja smell your guests first without them touching, so he’s comfortable approaching. Treats always help.

**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 Nadja 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 Nadja 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 Nadja 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.** Nadja 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. Nadja will pay you back by supplying love and enthusiasm!

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