



Texas Toast 309242: What to Expect

Texas Toast is a graduate of our Behavior Modification Program and is looking for a special home. Texas Toast is a special rescue dog who was previously living on some property in the Dalles. She ran loose around a property with 25+ other dogs, many her relatives, creating tunnel systems in the dirt, and being overseen by one owner. She and her siblings were brought into OHS after the danger of a fire put their lives at risk. When Texas Toast arrived at the shelter, she was very fearful and afraid of people which she exhibited by avoiding people, hiding under her bed, and running away from people, only coming out of her shell when other social and confident dogs were around. We moved her into a quieter space where she could get to know the staff and she has since started to open up, be excited to go on walks, and we are seeing more of her sweet personality show!

It takes Texas Toast time to warm up to new people, places, and things. But once she does, she enjoys following her people around, leisurely sniffy walks, and playing with her dog friends! Since Texas Toast finds a great deal of joy and comfort in other dogs, she may enjoy living with another confident and social dog or dogs to help show her the ropes. Prior to coming to OHS, Texas Toast had never walked on a leash, and this is still something that is new to her. Texas Toast is still learning to trust people, she may never be a dog who enjoys pets, brushing or being picked up. She will need patient owners, without small children, who will continue to introduce her to the urban life, slowly, using the same positive reinforcement-based techniques we use here at OHS. When Texas Toast is uncomfortable, she freezes, darts, and tries to hide from what scares her, but if pushed further when in this frightened state, she could eliminate in fear, snap, or even growl to try and create space. We expect that Texas Toast 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!**

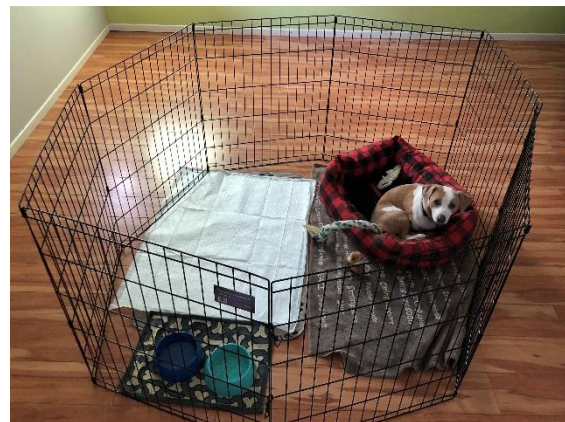
Texas Toast is a breed of dog that will need consistent brushing and/or grooming in order to prevent matting. Because Texas Toast isn't completely comfortable with handling or petting at this stage, keeping her coat short will be the best option to prevent any uncomfortable matting or tangling. Allowing her coat to grow too long can lead to an inability to see, discomfort + lesions where the hair is matting, and an inability to defecate. 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 Texas Toast. Grooming visits will need to be scheduled every 6-8 weeks to maintain a healthy short coat and low stress grooming experience for the rest of her life.

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

Use an exercise pen to confine Texas Toast 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 Texas Toast is not comfortable with people and doesn't enjoy meeting strangers while on their walk. 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!



Texas Toast's "safe spot" when no one is home.

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

Supervise your dog outside. Even if you have a fenced yard, please do not let Texas Toast 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. Texas Toast 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. Texas Toast will do best walking alongside a confident canine companion.

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

Don't take Texas Toast 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.).

Patience will come in handy for you. Texas Toast 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. Texas Toast 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.

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.

We're here to help!

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