

Lion 314649: What to Expect

Lion is a graduate of our Behavior Modification Program and is looking for a special home. Lion is a shy but playful little puppy who is looking for a home that will help her grow in a safe and patient environment. Lion came to us with her siblings from another shelter, so her history is a mystery. She likely came from an accidental litter, and they became too old to care for, and ended up in the shelter which was very overwhelming for these shy babes. Lion is a shy puppy who when afraid chooses to avoid, hide, and observe. She gains confidence through neutral and positive exposure and really gains confidence when another dog is around, especially one she can play with. When comfortable she will crawl into your lap, play with toys, and enjoys curious sniffy walks. It will take time for Lion to feel confident while out in the big wide world. Advocating for her space with strangers and unknown dogs will teach her to trust her humans when faced with the unknown. Forcing her into interactions she isn't interested in will only reinforce her fear. Taking things slow and steady will provide positive long-term results.

We have noticed some resource guarding when Lion is enjoying a high value item, and another puppy or dog comes around to investigate or take the item. This is likely due to her being around her siblings too long and competing for resources. We recommend advocating for her space and giving her high value items in a space where she won't be bothered by other pets in a space like a crate, ex pen, or baby gated area. This will help her relax and feel safe when enjoying a high value item, instead of reinforcing that desirable items are at risk of being taken away. We expect that Lion 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!**

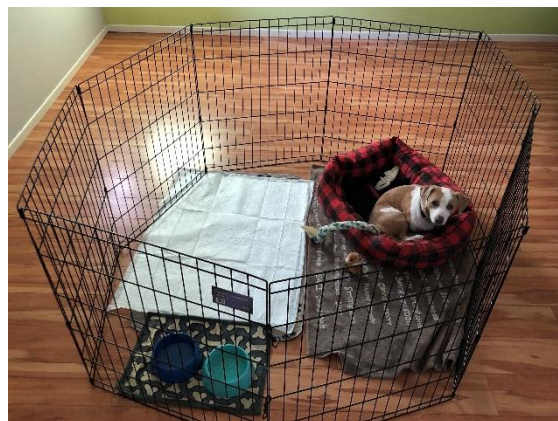
Here's how to help Lion settle in during your first months together:

Use an exercise pen to confine Lion 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.

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

Don't take Lion 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.).

When you have people over, **it's okay to put Lion in another room.** If you'd like Lion to meet a guest, put them on a leash and give them time to adjust before allowing your guest to pet. Let it be Lion's choice to go to them for pets or hang back and watch. Crowding Lion or forcing them to interact can make fearful behavior worse.



Lion's "safe spot" when no one is home.

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

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

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

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 Lion 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.

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 Lion 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 Lion 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 Lion 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.

Visiting the Vet: Unless it is an emergency, give your dog plenty of time to bond to you before taking them to your vet. Lion 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 Lion to be successful in your home. We're available to answer questions via phone and email. During your first two months with Lion, we can also set up a free one-on-one consultation. For questions or to schedule an appointment, contact us at **(503) 285-1145** 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!