Annette 276490: What to Expect

Annette is a graduate of the Behavior Modification Program and needs a special home. Annette is a sweet girl once she gets to know a person, but she will be scared at first. Annette needs a quiet home with a patient, calm person. She will make an excellent companion for someone who has the time to commit to helping her come out of shell. Once she does, you’ll see what a sweet, affectionate, and playful girl she is.

Annette came from another shelter with her 3 kittens. All we’re placed into a foster home where Annette could finish raising her babies. While in the foster home, she was an excellent mother to her kittens, but did display shy, fearful behavior to the foster parent. Once back at OHS, she continued to display fearful behaviors towards people and loud noises. She would display this behavior by being crouched low in the back of her kennel, dilated eyes, and darting when staff attempted to handle her. It was then decided to place her in the Behavior Modification program to allow time for her to acclimate and work with her on her fearful behavior.

Expect that Annette will hide for a few weeks. It’s important to provide her with an appropriate hiding spot for her to relax in, such as a hidey bed. By having appropriate hiding spots for Annette, it will allow you to work on building a relationship, without her being confined to a tight spot that is out of reach from you. While in her hiding spot, she may give the impression that she doesn’t want to be pet. This is when you should use a Touch Tool to rub on her cheeks and chin to show you are not a threat. A Touch Tool is a great way to build a bond with her before using your hands to pet her. Anything that can be considered an extension of your hand will work as a Touch Tool (backscratcher, pen, paint brush).

Annette loves to play with wand toys but don’t expect her to want to play with toys right away as she acclimates to her new home. The first few weeks should be used introducing a Touch Tool then progressing to hands before trying to engage with her in playtime. Once that relationship between you and Annette has formed, you’ll have a loving, affectionate, playful kitty as reflected in the video attached to her profile.

Here’s how to help Annette during your first months together:

Confine Annette to one cat-proof room in your house. Provide Annette with a litter box, food, water, and a bed. Ensure she cannot get to inappropriate hiding spots (under the bed, in a closet, on top of a cabinet, etc.). Provide her with a safe, comfortable hiding place instead like her cat carrier, a hidey-bed, or a large dog crate covered with a blanket.

Spend time with Annette in her room. Don’t force her out of her hiding spot. Instead, encourage her to come out on her own using happy talk, offering a Touch Tool, treats or toys. Once she is using the litter box, eating regularly, and coming out of hiding to interact with you, you can start introducing her to the rest of your home. Start by propping the door open and allowing her to come out on her own. Don’t force it! If you come across something that you can tell Annette is worried about, allow her to hang back or hide if she chooses to do so.

Continue to provide a safe space. Even when Annette has started exploring the rest of the house, give her a safe space that she can retreat to. When she is in her safe space, insist that guests leave her alone and try to ignore her yourself. That way, when she comes out, you can reward her bravery with your attention.

No visitors (at first). Allow Annette time to adjust to your house, routine, and lifestyle before introducing her to new people. When you have visitors over, give Annette the freedom to make the decision to interact (or not!). Ask new people to ignore her – or if Annette seems curious or interested, have the new person toss her treats or offer a favorite toy. We want exciting, good things to come from new people.
Practice crate training. Leave her carrier out all the time, so it’s just a part of her normal environment. Add a bed and keep the door securely propped open so she can go in and out on her own, making sure the door won’t swing shut and frighten her. You can also clicker train her to run into the carrier on cue. Helping Annette get comfortable with her carrier will make it easier when it’s time to visit the vet.

Visiting the vet: Unless it’s an emergency, give Annette time to bond to you before taking her to the vet. Vet visits will more than likely be scary, but if she already trusts you, your presence may help her feel more comfortable.

Patience will come in handy for you. Annette is a cat that needs an understanding owner who has the time and desire to allow her to adapt in her own time. She may never be a social butterfly, and that’s okay! Getting to know her and watching her come out of her shell will be extremely rewarding. Celebrate those small victories.

We’re here to help!

We want Annette to be successful in her new home. We’re available to answer questions via phone and email. Call the Behavior Helpline at (503)416-2983 or email Erika at erikas@oregonhumane.org to connect with the Feline Services Manager.

Please keep in touch so we can continue to help you and Annette now and in the future. Please reach out if you have any 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 cat!