



## Judith 280359: What to Expect

**Judith is a graduate of the Behavior Modification Program and needs a special home.** Judith is a sweet girl once she gets to know a person, but she will be scared at first. Judith needs a quiet home with a patient, calm person. She would not do well in a home with a lot of hustle and bustle or one with children. 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.

Judith came from a home of an overwhelmed cat caregiver. Upon arrival to OHS Judith displayed shy, fearful behavior towards people and loud noises. She would display this behavior by hiding in her bed, crouching low, and swatting when approached. 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.

We found early on that Judith loves tasty treats, especially Churu's, and this is how the team first built a bond with her. As she became more confident and comfortable with the team, she started allowing full body pets, kneading and headbutting for more attention. She even loves to play with toys! Judith showed an interest in interacting with the other cats in the program. She was moved into our Sunroom where she could be with other cats 24/7. Once in the room with other cats, Judith became even more comfortable. Because we saw how happy Judith was to be with other cats it is required that she go to a home where there is another cat, preferably one that is pro-social with people so that Judith can learn from them and follow their lead.

Her new family should expect that she 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 Judith, 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, use calm voices and offer tasty treats to show you are not a threat. Place a small amount of Churu or another type of lickable treat on a spoon and offer it to Judith while in her hidey spot. Over time, by continuing to do this, Judith will become more comfortable and recognize that people are not a threat. A Touch Tool would be appropriate to introduce to her before trying to touch her with your hands. A Touch Tool is a great way to build a bond with her before using your hands to pet him. Anything that can be considered an extension of your hand will work as a Touch Tool (backscratcher, pen, paint brush).

Judith 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 offering tasty treats, introducing a Touch Tool, then progressing to hands before trying to engage with her in playtime. Once that relationship between you and Judith has formed, you'll have a loving, affectionate, playful kitty.

### **Here's how to help Judith during your first months together:**

**Confine Judith to one cat-proof room in your house.** Provide Judith 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 Judith 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 Judith is worried about, allow her to hang back or hide if she chooses to do so.

**Continue to provide a safe space.** Even when Judith 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 Judith time to adjust to your house, routine, and lifestyle before introducing her to new people. When you have visitors over, give Judith the freedom to make the decision to interact (or not!). Ask new people to ignore her – or if Judith 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 Judith 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 Judith 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. Judith 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 Judith 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](mailto:erikas@oregonhumane.org) to connect with the Feline Services Manager.

Please keep in touch so we can continue to help you and Judith 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!