



## Waverly 290148: What to Expect

**Waverly is a graduate of the Behavior Modification Program and needs a special home.** Waverly is a sweet, playful girl once she gets to know a person, but she will be scared at first. Patience and time are the best things for her as she acclimates to new people and places.

Waverly was brought in by a family that had what we call an “oops” litter and we do not have much history on Waverly prior to arriving at OHS. When she arrived at the shelter she displayed fearful behavior, crouching low, hiding, hissing, and swatting when staff attempted to engage with 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 towards people.

We found early on that Waverly responded well to verbal encouragement. Sitting near her, speaking softly, and offering slow eye blinks gave Waverly the confidence needed to trust us. Overtime, as her confidence and trust grew even more, she stopped hiding from people and would regularly engage, play, and snuggle with people. She now loves to be pet and will purr and purr to show her happiness. Waverly also loves to play with toys. She loves to pounce, chase, and toss toys in the air while running around with great delight. Waverly has shown an interest in other cats and would do best in a home where there is a resident cat for her to play with. She will do best in a calm environment, one where she can be given plenty of time to acclimate to a new environment.

**Her new family should expect that she will hide for a few weeks, possibly longer.** You'll need to introduce her to new things slowly. Waverly typically flees and hides when overwhelmed or scared. If cornered, she will hiss, cower, and swat so it's important to not overwhelm her as she adjusts to her new home. It's important to provide her with a small room with appropriate hiding spots for her to relax in, such as her own hidey bed. Hiding spots that are confined to a tight spot and out of reach from you will make it difficult to build a bond with her. **She should not be given access to the whole home setting until she has acclimated to one room. The room you set her up in will be the catalyst for how quickly she acclimates.** Start thinking now which room in your home would be best for Waverly to settle into. If it's a bedroom, can she get under the bed or dresser making it difficult to spend time with her? If it's a laundry room or bathroom will the constant in and out of people and noises associated with these rooms be too much for her? By having a room without a lot of foot traffic and with appropriate hiding spots, it will allow you to work on building a relationship. While in her hiding spot, use calm voices and offer tasty treats to show you are not a threat. Place a small amount of a wet food or a treat on a spoon and offer it to Waverly while in her hidey spot. Or toss her a few crunchy treats. Bring the laser pointer or wand toy out and allow her to observe and engage with it. Over time, by continuing to do this, Waverly will become more comfortable and recognize that yummy food/playtime = people, therefore creating a positive association between the two.

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

**This step is crucial in helping Waverly acclimate to her new home. Confine Waverly to one cat-proof room in your house.** Provide Waverly 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 Waverly 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 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 Waverly is worried about, allow her to hang back or hide if she chooses to do so.

**Continue to provide a safe space.** Even when Waverly 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 Waverly time to adjust to your house, routine, and lifestyle before introducing her to new people. When you have visitors over, give Waverly the freedom to make the decision to interact (or not!). Ask new people to ignore her – or if Waverly 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 Waverly 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 Waverly 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. Waverly 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 Waverly 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 Waverly 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!