



## Moose 167266: What to Expect

**Moose is a graduate of the Behavior Modification Program and needs a special home.** Moose is a social, sweet, older girl who likes attention on her own terms. She enjoys being with people, will solicit attention, rubbing on legs, but can easily become fearful in busy and chaotic environments. She has a history of being nervous with new people/places and will need time to acclimate to her new home. Moose will do best in an adult only home as the only pet.

Moose was surrendered by her previous family due to her not acclimating well to having children in the home. Her previous family loved her very much but as their family grew, they could see that she was unhappy and fearful around kids. When Moose arrived at OHS, she was placed in the Behavior Modification program where we could help her settle into the shelter environment. The Behavior Modification is designed to help cats adjust to shelter life that may otherwise display fearful/worried behavior in a home setting. She hid, cowered, and hissed for the first few days but as she settled into the routine, she started to trust us more, and we were able to learn a lot about her during this time. Moose responds well to verbal encouragement, and for the first few days we would gently talk to her, letting her know we were not a threat. We also paired each interaction with treats to help build a positive association with people. Soon she was headbutting for attention, leaning in for cheek and chin scratches and even climbing into laps. She now regularly perches on her scratching post and meows at us for attention.

Moose does not like other animals and will need to be the only pet in her new home. Her previous family described her as being affectionate with the adult family members but would hiss and growl at the small kids as they began crawling and walking. They also stated that she is not overly active and shy with visitors. Moose will do best in a calm, quiet home with adults only as the only pet. Her favorite activities are lounging, napping, and occasionally playing with toys.

### **Here's how to help Moose during your first month together:**

**This step is crucial in helping Moose acclimate to her new home. Confine Moose to one cat-proof room in your house.** Provide Moose 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. Once she is using the litter box, eating regularly, and coming out of hiding to play with toys, you can start introducing her to the rest of your home.

**Spend time with Moose 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 Moose is worried about, allow her to hang back or hide if she chooses to do so.

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

Patience will come in handy for you. Moose is a cat that needs an understanding owner who has the time and desire to allow him to adapt in her own time. She may never be a social butterfly with everyone she meets but she will bond with her new family. 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 Moose 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 Moose 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!