



## Eartha 290696: What to Expect

**Eartha is a graduate of the Behavior Modification Program and needs a special home.** Eartha is a sweet, social girl who likes to have all the attention. She has a history of being nervous with new people/places and will need time to acclimate to her new home. Eartha will do best in an adult only home as the only pet.

Eartha was originally adopted as a 3-month-old kitten from OHS in September of 2023. During her first stay with us, she was an unsocial, fearful girl who needed help building confidence and trust with people. After some time in BMOD, she was adopted into a home where there was another cat. Her new family did an amazing job helping Eartha become more comfortable around people but unfortunately the resident kitty never fully accepted Eartha. During the 6 months in this home, the 2 cats competed for the owner's attention and the discourse between the 2 cats resulted in Eartha having some Litterbox issues. The family made the difficult decision to bring Eartha back to OHS after 6 months. She was placed back in the BMOD program where we could provide her with a more conducive environment and learn more about what may have triggered the litterbox misuse. After receiving a clean bill of health from the medical team, it was suspected that the litterbox concerns were a result of Eartha and the other kitty not getting along. Since coming back to OHS, Eartha has reliably used the litterbox. Eartha is very social and engaging with people but she does not like to share her space or humans with other animals.

Eartha continues to be worried when loud and/or sudden movements occur. In these moments she will run and hide and may hiss or swat if you approach too quickly, but easily recovers with gentle calming voices. Once a bond and relationship are formed with people, she will lean in for pets and headbutt to show her affection. Her favorite activities are lounging, napping, and occasionally playing with toys. Eartha will do best in a calm, quiet adult only home as the only pet.

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

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

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