



Fluffernutter 298164: What to Expect

Fluffernutter is a graduate of the Behavior Modification Program and needs a special home. Fluffernutter is a sensitive, playful boy who is ready to find his forever home. Fluffernutter needs an understanding owner that is experienced with feline body language and has the time and desire to allow him to acclimate in his own time. Fluffernutter may never be a social butterfly with everyone he meets, but he will bond with someone when given the time he needs to get to know you.

Fluffernutter was transferred from another shelter, and we do not have much history on him. When he arrived at the shelter he displayed fearful behavior, crouching low, hiding, and hissing when staff attempted to engage with him. He was also diagnosed with Ringworm, which meant he had to be isolated and receive daily medications and twice weekly baths for 6 weeks before being deemed free of Ringworm. Though the team did a great job at treating him, the medical style handling coupled with his already shy behavior was not conducive to helping him thrive in the shelter environment. After he received his Ringworm treatment, it was decided to place him in the Behavior Modification program to allow time for him to acclimate and work with him on his fearful behavior towards people.

When he first arrived in the Behavior Modification program, Fluffernutter would continuously hide in his kennel. He would also dart and panic (run away) anytime someone came near him. Any attempt at handling him by the team resulted in him running away. We worked on building trust and confidence by talking to him calmly, offering treats and getting him used to our presence by just sitting close by him. We also used wand toys to build a positive association with people. As we soared the wand toy through the air he would watch, chase and pounce on it with great delight. We also allowed him to come out of his kennel to play and engage with the other kitties in the program. We noticed he became more confident and comfortable in his environment any chance he had to be around other cats. He then moved into our Sunroom, which is a communal room, where he could live with other cats 24/7. While in this room, we watched and observed as he climbed the cat towers to look out the windows, snuggled with the other kitties and pounced on toys with delight. The team also sat in this room with him, offering wand toys and tasty treats which he readily accepted from us. While Fluffernutter is comfortable being close by people he is still very hesitant about being pet. He will come up to sniff our fingers but any attempt at petting him results in him moving away.

Fluffernutter will need a family that is committed to helping him progress even more. He still has a long way to go at accepting pets and his new family should expect to work with him on this. Fluffernutter may never be the snuggly, cuddly kitty that we all want him to be, but he does enjoy being around people. He's an active, playful boy who needs time to build confidence and trust with people. Fluffernutter will need to have a cat friend in his new home to help him feel more confident and comfortable.

His new family should expect that he will hide for a few weeks, possibly longer. You'll need to introduce him to new things slowly. Fluffernutter typically runs and hides when overwhelmed or scared. It's important to provide him with a small room with appropriate hiding spots for him to relax in, such as his 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 him. The room you set him up in will be the catalyst for how quickly he acclimates. Start thinking now which room in your home would be best for Fluffernutter to settle into. If it's a bedroom, can he get under the bed or dresser making it difficult to spend time with him? 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 him? 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 his hiding spot, use calm voices and offer tasty treats and toys 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 Fluffernutter while in his hidey spot. Over time, by continuing to do this, Fluffernutter will become more comfortable and recognize that yummy food/playtime = people, therefore creating a positive association between the two.

Here's how to help Fluffernutter during your first months together:

This step is crucial in helping Fluffernutter acclimate to his new home. Confine Fluffernutter to one cat-proof room in your house. Provide Fluffernutter with a litter box, food, water, and a bed. Ensure he cannot get to *inappropriate* hiding spots (under the bed, in a closet, on top of a cabinet, etc.). Provide him with a safe, comfortable hiding place instead like his cat carrier, a hidey-bed, or a large dog crate covered with a blanket.

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

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

No visitors (at first). Allow Fluffernutter time to adjust to your house, routine, and lifestyle before introducing him to new people. When you have visitors over, give Fluffernutter the freedom to make the decision to interact (or not!). Ask new people to ignore him – or if Fluffernutter seems curious or interested, have the new person toss him treats or offer a favorite toy. We want exciting, good things to come from new people.

Practice crate training. Leave his carrier out all the time, so it's just a part of his normal environment. Add a bed and keep the door securely propped open so he can go in and out on his own, making sure the door won't swing shut and frighten him. You can also clicker train him to run into the carrier on cue. Helping Fluffernutter get comfortable with his carrier will make it easier when it's time to visit the vet.

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

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

We're here to help!

We want Fluffernutter to be successful in his 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 Fluffernutter 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!