

Ty 301732: What to Expect

Ty is a unique older kitty looking for a special home. Ty is an independent boy who likes attention on his own terms. He enjoys being around people and is happy to observe what's going on but isn't a fan of being smothered with attention. He has a history of being nervous with new people/places and will need time to acclimate to his new home. Ty will do best in a home without small children. While he has lived with another cat before, he would also be perfectly happy as the only cat in the home.

Ty was adopted from another shelter as a kitten and lived his entire life with his previous owner. In his previous home, his family described him as independent, talkative, and affectionate, but he will let you know when he wants to be left alone. He is not a very active cat and prefers to spend his time napping and watching the world around him.

When Ty arrived at OHS, he displayed fearful, defensive behavior, crouching in the back of his kennel, hissing, and swatting when staff attempted to engage with him. His whole world had been turned upside down after being with his previous family for so long, so you can imagine it was very overwhelming for him. Ty was soon placed in a foster home where we could work on learning more about him and helping him acclimate to all the changes he was experiencing. In the foster home, Ty displayed conflicting behaviors, alternating between purring and growling when the foster family attempted to engage with him. After a few weeks with little change in behavior, he was brought back to the shelter where we could continue to work with him.

Ty is very good at communicating when he needs space. As he acclimated to his foster home, and later, to life in the shelter, he would regularly growl and hiss at us when we spent time with him. When he returned from foster, Ty was initially moved to a quieter area of the shelter, and responded well to staff members talking softly, offering slow eye blinks, and chin scratches with a touch tool for short periods of time. As time went on, Ty began to relax more and the defensive behavior he displayed diminished. He also started accepting treats when we would offer them to him; Churu's are his favorite. He was moved to a larger kennel, and his body language began to relax even more, and he now spends most of his time napping in the sun in his kennel.

Ty is the one that has to decide if he wants to interact or not. When he is in the mood, he will meow at us for attention and when we offer our hand, he will decide to either come forward or walk away. When he is relaxed and in the mood for attention, he will purr and accept pets on his face and head; he does not like full body pets and can be especially sensitive to petting on his back end. He does not like to be picked up. When he does allow pets, it is typically only for a short period of time before he decides he is done. He gives clear signals when he does not want to interact, such as growling or lifting his paw to swat. Ty is a kitty that knows what he wants and isn't afraid to tell you. Ty will do best in a home without small children and with someone experienced in feline body language.

Here's how to help Carmel during your first month together:

This step is crucial in helping Ty acclimate to his new home. Confine Ty to one cat-proof room in your house. Provide Ty 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. Once he is using the litter box, eating regularly, and coming out of hiding, you can start introducing him to the rest of your home.

Spend time with Ty 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 Touch Tool, treats or toys. 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 Ty is worried about, allow him to hang back or hide if he chooses to do so.

Continue to provide a safe space. Even when Ty 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 Ty time to adjust to your house, routine, and lifestyle before introducing him to new people. When you have visitors over, give Ty the freedom to make the decision to interact (or not!). Ask new people to ignore him – or if Ty seems curious or interested, have the new person offer slow blinks, calm and encouraging talk, and, if he is in the mood for it, a favorite treat. 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 Ty 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 Ty 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. Ty 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 with everyone he meets but he will bond with his new family. 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 Ty 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 Ty 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!