



## Kate 328846: What to Expect

Kate is a graduate of the Behavior Modification Program and needs a special home. Kate is a shy but sweet girl who needs a family that has the time and desire to allow her to acclimate in her own time. Kate is sensitive to touch and is still learning that being pet is something she could enjoy. She may never be a social butterfly with everyone she meets, but she will bond with her new family when given time to acclimate.

Kate was found as a stray and we don't have much history on her. When she arrived, she displayed fearful behavior, crouching low in her kennel, cowering and running away any time the staff attempted to handle her. She would also hiss, swat and attempt to bite when staff tried to handle her. It was clear she was very scared and overwhelmed with her current situation so the decision was made to place her in our Behavior Modification program. The environment in the BMOD program is better suited at helping cats feel comfortable in a shelter environment. With the larger kennel space, access to windows, quieter environment and increased one on one time with the team, we set out to learn more about her and help her overcome her fears.

Kate was very nervous for the first several weeks in BMOD and spent most of her time hiding in her bed and watching us with wide eyes. In the beginning, she would run away anytime we got too close but we understood this was her way of communicating she was scared. As time went on, she stopped running away and started to relax when we sat close by her but she still did not want to be touched. We would talk softly to her every day and leave treats in her kennel to build a positive association with people. She started taking treats when offered, Churu's and Temptation treats are her favorite. Kate showed curiosity and interest in meeting the other cats in the program and we allowed her to have regular playdates with them. We noticed her confidence grow around other cats so she was moved to a communal cat room where she could live with other cats 24/7. Staff would regularly spend time in this room, speaking softly to Kate and being a calming presence. She continued to take treats when offered but continued to back away anytime hands approached to pet her. Overtime, Kate began to bond with several staff members, recognizing their voice/presence and started meowing and chatting with these individuals. She began flirtatiously walking around her humane friends, rubbing on our legs to show her affection. While Kate is ok with initiating interactions and rubbing on your legs she continues to be hesitant if we attempt to touch her. We've realized that Kate needs to be the one to initiate interactions and she will only do this once she has been given ample time to get to know you. Over the last few months, she has made several human friends here, and with those individuals she now accepts being pet on the back when she rubs on their legs.

After several months in BMOD, Kate has made great progress and is now always happy to have her human friends visit and spend time with her. She will need a family that is dedicated to helping her progress even more in a new home. She may never be a cuddly kitty but she enjoys being close by the people she loves. Kate's mantra is "slow and steady wins the race" and we know that in the right home she will thrive even more.

She has met several kitties here and would benefit from having a feline friend in her new home. She would prefer a kitty that is happy to relax and hang out and not one that wants to wrestle or rough and tumble play with her. While we don't know much about Kate's life before she came here, she has shown us what a brave and beautiful girl she is. Her new family should expect to continue working with Kate and understand that it will take time. She needs a calm, quiet home with someone that has the time and dedication to help her flourish. If you have a soft spot for sweet, sensitive yet brave kitties, then Kate is the one you've been looking for.

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. Kate typically runs and hides when overwhelmed or scared, 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 Kate 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 Kate 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, Kate will become more comfortable and recognize that yummy food/playtime = people, therefore creating a positive association between the two.

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

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

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

Kate 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 Kate 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 Behavior Modification Manager.

Please keep in touch so we can continue to help you and Kate 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!