



Anakin 337782 and Kenobi 337784: What to Expect

Anakin and Kenobi are graduates of the Behavior Modification Program and need a specific home. Anakin and Kenobi are brothers who can be fearful and shy with new people and in busy, chaotic environments. They bring a lot of comfort to each other and will need to find a home together. Once they feel comfortable with their surroundings, their playful and social personalities shine through. Their new owner should expect to be patient with them as they acclimate to their new home.

Anakin and Kenobi came to OHS from another shelter and we don't have much history on them. When they arrived, they were housed in separate kennels and both displayed fearful/shy behavior towards the staff. They would hide and cower when staff approached and hiss/swat if they felt threatened. The busy chaotic shelter environment was overwhelming for them so the decision was made to place them 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, increased enrichment, and one on one time with the team we set out to learn more about them.

We knew that Anakin and Kenobi were brothers so the decision was made to house them in the same kennel together while in BMOD. We saw immediately that having them together brought a lot of comfort to both of them as they snuggled and groomed each other. For the first few days in BMOD, Anakin and Kenobi hid on their cat tower and watched us with wide eyes. While in BMOD, we spent time building a relationship with them by sitting calmly in their kennel and talking to them. We incorporated treats into every visit and Kenobi was the first one to be brave enough to come close and take treats from our hands. Anakin watched as his brother came closer to us and soon realized that it was also safe for him to do so. We also used toys to build a positive association with them. As we would soar the wand toy through the air, they would stalk, chase and pounce on it with great delight. As they learned that we were their friends, they became braver and soon they were leaning in for pets, headbutting and meowing at us for attention.

Anakin and Kenobi are now very comfortable with the staff here at the shelter and enjoy playing with toys, exploring, and climbing into laps for love. They play with all kinds of toys and will need a family that can provide them with a lot of enrichment. Anakin and Kenobi love each other very much and will need to find a home together. What Anakin and Kenobi needed was a quiet and calm environment before they felt safe enough to engage with people. If you have the patience and time to help them acclimate then you will end up with the sweetest duo!

Their new family should expect that they will hide for a few weeks, possibly longer. You'll need to introduce them to new things slowly. Anakin and Kenobi typically flee, hisses and swats when overwhelmed or scared. It's important to provide them with a small room with appropriate hiding spots for them to relax in, such as their 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 them. The room you set them up in will be the catalyst for how quickly they acclimate. Start thinking now which room in your home would be best for Anakin and Kenobi to settle into. If it's a bedroom, can they get under the bed or dresser making it difficult to spend time with them? 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 them? 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 their hiding spot, use calm voices and offer tasty treats to show you are not a threat. Place a small amount of wet food or a treat on a spoon and offer it to Anakin and Kenobi while in their hidey spot. Over time, by continuing to do this, Anakin and Kenobi will become more comfortable and recognize that yummy food = people, therefore creating a positive association between the two.

Here's how to help Anakin and Kenobi during your first months together:

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

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

Continue to provide a safe space. Even when Anakin and Kenobi have started exploring the rest of the house, give them a safe space that they can retreat to. When they are in their safe space, insist that guests leave them alone and try to ignore them yourself. That way, when they come out, you can reward their bravery with your attention.

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

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

Visiting the vet: Unless it's an emergency, give Anakin and Kenobi time to bond to you before taking them to the vet. Vet visits will more than likely be scary, but if they already trust you, your presence may help them feel more comfortable.

Patience will come in handy for you. Anakin and Kenobi need an understanding owner who has the time and desire to allow them to adapt in their own time. Getting to know them and watching them come out of their shell will be extremely rewarding. Celebrate those small victories.

We're here to help!

We want Anakin and Kenobi to be successful in their 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 Behavior Modification Manager.

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