



Rainy 342066: What to Expect

Rainy is a graduate of the Behavior Modification Program and needs a special home. Rainy is a sweet and sensitive girl who is ready to find her forever home. She may be timid at first, but once she feels safe she enjoys being close by people, being pet and playing with toys. Rainy may never be a social butterfly with everyone she meets, but she will bond with someone when given the time she needs to get to know you.

Rainy came to OHS from another shelter and we don't have much history on her. When Rainy arrived at OHS she displayed fearful, shy behavior that would present itself as hiding, hissing, and swatting if we got too close to her. After 2 weeks with no change in her behavior, 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, increased enrichment, and one on one time with the team we set out to learn more about her.

Rainy was nervous for the first week in BMOD and spent most of her time hiding in her bed and watching us with wide eyes. In the beginning, she would cower and hiss if we got too close but we understood this was her way of communicating she was scared. We would talk softly to her every day and leave treats in her kennel to build a positive association with people. As she started to understand we were not a threat her body language relaxed and she began to eat the treats that we offered in our presence. She also showed an interest in toys, and as we soared the wand toy though the air, she chased and pounced on it with great delight. By using toys and treats (two things Rainy loves) it helped her to understand that only good things happen when people are around. She is nervous with hands approaching and needs to feel safe with someone before allowing pets. Once she knows you are her friend she loves being pet, will meow for attention and has the best purr motor. She also loves other cats and has met several other kitties here at the shelter. Having a cat friend helps her feel more confident and comfortable in her environment.

Rainy has shown tremendous progress here and we know that in the right home she will flourish even more. If you have a calm, quiet home and patience to help her acclimate you'll see her sweet personality shine. Rainy still has moments when she startles easily and may run and hide but recovers quickly with verbal encouragement. Rainy will do best in a calm home, with a family that is patient with her as she acclimates. She will also need a kitty friend to snuggle and play with.

Rainy has been diagnosed with a medical condition called Pectus Excavatum. This is a congenital condition, meaning she was born with it, that causes the sternum to grow inward at an abnormal angle. Radiographs were taken to confirm the pectus and to evaluate her heart and lungs. Currently her heart and lungs appear to have enough space to function as needed and no overt abnormalities of the heart and lungs were noted. Currently there are no clinical signs noted and she went under anesthesia with no issues or concerns.

Because this condition is congenital it will likely remain this way for life and only mild changes may occur as she grows into her adult body. Many animals with this condition are able to live a normal life and only monitoring is required, however follow-up with a community veterinarian is essential to monitor for any changes and indications for additional treatments.

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. Rainy typically flees, hisses and swats when overwhelmed or scared. 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. 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 Rainy 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 wet food or a treat on a spoon and offer it to Rainy while in her hidey spot. Over time, by continuing to do this, Rainy will become more comfortable and recognize that yummy food = people, therefore creating a positive association between the two.

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

This step is crucial in helping Rainy acclimate to her new home. Confine Rainy to one cat-proof room in your house. Provide Rainy 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.

Spend time with Rainy 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 toy or treats. 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 Rainy is worried about, allow her to hang back or hide if she chooses to do so.

Continue to provide a safe space. Even when Rainy 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 Rainy time to adjust to your house, routine, and lifestyle before introducing her to new people. When you have visitors over, give Rainy the freedom to make the decision to interact (or not!). Ask new people to ignore her – or if Rainy 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 Rainy 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 Rainy 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. Rainy 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, and that's okay! 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 Rainy 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 to connect with the Feline Behavior Modification Manager.

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