



Max 346749: What to Expect

Max is a graduate of the Behavior Modification Program and needs a special home. Max is an active, affectionate, silly, and exuberant boy who enjoys exploring and playing with toys. He would do best in a home with a patient person who can provide him with a consistent routine along with daily, interactive play sessions. Max will need a home that can keep up with his energy level, one that can provide him with both physical and mental enrichment.

When Max first arrived at OHS he displayed overstimulated, frustrated behavior being confined to his small kennel. His bold, exuberant personality and playful, high-energy nature would sometimes get him into trouble when staff would engage with him—especially when he became overstimulated and would latch onto legs or arms, biting and scratching. Because the busy shelter environment and limited kennel space were overwhelming for Max, the decision was made to place him in our Behavior Modification Program. This program offers an environment better suited to helping cats feel at ease in a shelter setting. With a larger kennel, access to windows, a quieter atmosphere, and more one-on-one time with staff, we were able to begin to get a better understanding of his needs and personality.

Max acclimated very quickly to the BMOD program. From day one, he was social with people, eagerly played with toys and enjoyed lounging on his cat tower while watching birds and small critters outside the window. Max greets us each morning with a cheerful demeanor and eagerly plays with any toy we offer him. He is an active and busy boy and is always looking for something to explore, climb, or play with. He's an expert with puzzle feeders and interactive toys, loves sprinting through crinkly tunnels, and spends plenty of time climbing his cat tower. He enjoys chasing treats skittering across the floor, ambushing blankets and hauling them around, and skillfully stalking and pouncing on wand toys. Max has a history of treating people like playthings—especially when they walk by or approach him—so we made sure he had plenty of toys to keep him engaged. We also wanted to evaluate how he interacted with other cats, so we introduced him to a few. At first, he was cautious around them, but as he became more comfortable and settled into his surroundings, we discovered that he truly enjoys the company of other cats and has a very relaxed, easygoing demeanor with them. He would likely do well with another cat in the home, given slow and gradual introductions.

Max does enjoy being pet and can be quite cuddly, but he also has a history of putting his mouth on hands or legs and scratching when overstimulated. Although Max has not shown signs of overstimulation since arriving in the BMOD program, he did display this behavior at the main shelter and while adjusting to new environments. His overstimulation is typically linked to feelings of stress or while in “play mode”. When overwhelmed, he may scratch or bite—especially if he is petted for too long. It is important to read his body language and recognize when he's had enough. Signs that he is becoming overstimulated include tail twitching, dilated pupils, fur standing on end, and rapid, frequent head butting or kneading. When you notice these cues, it's important to stop petting him and either give him space to walk away or calmly remove yourself from the area. When Max is in “play mode” he can overstimulate quickly so it's important to pay close attention to his body language and not pet him during this time. It's also important to reward him when he is calm and relaxed by offering treats and praise to encourage calm behavior.

Max is a very active kitty and will need a home that can keep up with his energy level, one that can provide him with both physical and mental enrichment. He does like to relax and lounge throughout the day, but he always finds time to play. A home that can provide him with increased enrichment that includes a variety of toys, scratching posts to climb on, and windows for bird watching will make him very happy. Max may benefit from having safe outdoor access and if you like to go on adventures consider taking him with you! He could be trained to wear a harness and go on hikes where he could explore and climb trees safely. If you are looking for a happy, silly, and active boy then Max is the one for you!

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

Confine Max to one cat-proof room in your house. Provide Max 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 to play with toys, you can start introducing him to the rest of your home.

Enrich his space. Max loves toys, scratching posts, and perches with a window view. Giving him the opportunity to climb, jump, play, scratch and engage in natural cat behavior may help reduce overstimulated behaviors.

Keep a routine. A predictable daily schedule will help Max settle into your home. Give him time to get to know you before introducing him to new people.

Schedule interactive play sessions with her every day. Max needs at least 10 minutes of dedicated play in the morning and again in the evening to alleviate stress and built-up frustration. Try to mimic natural hunting behavior. Choose a fishing-pole toy and make the toy soar around the room like a bird, engaging Max's attention. Or simulate mouse activity by sliding the end of the toy around on the floor in quick, jerky movements. Allow him to pounce and catch the toy and bat it around. Then start again. End your play session by allowing him to capture the toy.

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 Max get comfortable with his carrier will make it easier when it's time to visit the vet.

We're here to help!

We want Max 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 Behavior Modification Manager.

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