



Mia 347840: What to Expect

Mia is a graduate of the Behavior Modification Program and needs a special home. Mia is a sweet, affectionate, and petite little lady with a playful and curious nature. Mia may need a little time to adjust to new environments, but once she feels safe and secure, she blossoms into a loving and affectionate companion. Once she feels comfortable, Mia enjoys spending time with her human companions, exploring her surroundings, watching wildlife from the window, savoring tasty treats, chatting with her people, and playing with her favorite toys.

Mia came to OHS as a stray with her newborn kitten, and we do not have much history on her. Mia and her kitten were placed in a foster home to provide a safe environment for post-natal care and recovery. During her first foster placement, it became apparent that Mia was highly uncomfortable around other cats. Although she was kept separate from the resident cat, the cat's presence in the home appeared to cause significant stress and anxiety. Mia displayed behaviors including hissing, swatting, and attempting to bite the foster caregiver. To better support her and her kitten, Mia was transferred to a second foster home where she could continue raising her kitten in a space with less exposure to resident cats. Her foster caregiver described her as an attentive and devoted mother, not only to her biological kitten but also to two orphaned kittens she helped raise. However, while her kittens were still dependent on her, Mia continued to show signs of stress. On one occasion, while the foster caregiver was spending time in the room, they stood up to turn off the lights and Mia crossed the room and bit their leg multiple times, breaking the skin. The caregiver felt this behavior may have been influenced by the stress of caring for young kittens as well as the presence and scent of the resident cat in the home. Once her kittens were weaned, the decision was made to bring her into 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 her needs and personality.

Mia acclimated very quickly to the BMOD program. We saw immediately that being in a quiet, calm environment and having choice and control made her feel safe. From day one, she was social with people, eagerly played with toys, and enjoyed lounging on her cat tower while watching birds and small critters outside the window. We quickly discovered that she loves wand toys— when we waved the wand toy through the air, we watched her expertly stalk it before catapulting spectacularly high and impressing us with her acrobatic skills. Mia is always the first to greet us every morning in her expressive kitty dialect, showcasing her sparkling personality, and she never misses the chance to wish us goodnight at the end of each day. Mia is happiest when she's spending time with her human companions and regularly seeks out attention and interaction from staff. She often asks for affection by rubbing against our legs, chirping up at us, and even standing up on her hind legs for a little extra headbutting oomph.

Mia would thrive in a home with an adopter who understands feline body language and can recognize and respond appropriately to her emotional needs. During her time in the BMOD program, Mia has consistently demonstrated that she finds the presence of other cats stressful. She will vocalize, growl, and hiss at cats that approach her kennel, indicating that she will be happiest as the only kitty in her future home where she can enjoy all the attention to herself. While in BMOD we have not witnessed any defensive behaviors towards the staff - she has been consistently sweet, friendly, and social with everyone she has met. We believe the bite incident that occurred in her foster home was likely a response to the stress of caring for her kittens in an unfamiliar environment, combined with the presence of another cat's scent in the home.

Mia is an affectionate kitty who will thrive in a home that can provide ample time to play with her and give her attention. While she enjoys her downtime lounging and relaxing, she also makes plenty of time for play and socializing throughout the day. She would do best in a calm, predictable environment that offers a variety of toys, sturdy scratching

posts and climbing opportunities, and plenty of window access for bird watching to keep her engaged and happy. With the right balance of enrichment, affection, and respect for her boundaries, Mia has all the makings of a wonderful companion. If you're looking for a sweet, social, chatty, and playful companion, Mia is the gal for you!

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

Confine Mia to one cat-proof room in your house. Provide Mia 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.). Instead, provide her with

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

Continue to provide a safe space. Even when Mia 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.

Enrich her space. Mia loves toys, scratching posts, and perches with a window view. Giving her 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 Mia settle into your home. Give her time to get to know you before introducing her to 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 Mia get comfortable with her carrier will make it easier when it's time to visit the vet.

We're here to help!

We want Mia to be successful in her new home. We are available to answer questions via phone and email. Call the Behavior helpline at (503)416-2983 or email the BMOD Cat trainers at bmodcat@oregonhumane.org to connect with the Feline Behavior Modification department.

Please keep in touch so we can continue to support you and Mia 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!

