



## Lavender 350493: What to Expect

Lavender is a graduate of the Behavior Modification Program and needs a special home. Lavender is a beautiful, sweet, and sensitive girl who is ready to find her forever home. She may be shy at first, but once she feels safe, she loves staying close to her people, soaking up affection, and playing with toys. Lavender may never be a social butterfly with everyone she meets, but with patience and time to build trust, she will form a strong, loving bond with her people.

Lavender was transferred to OHS from another shelter we do not have much history on her. When she first arrived, she displayed fearful behavior and would hiss, cower, and hide in the back of her kennel with tense body language. Because of the high stress she was experiencing, 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 dedicated one-on-one time with our team, we were able to help her decompress and learn more about her personality.

Lavender was nervous for the first couple of weeks in the BMOD program and spent most of her time watching us with wide eyes from her cat tower. In the beginning she would hiss and dart away when we approached, and we understood this was her way of communicating that she was scared. To help her build confidence and trust, the team focused on a calm, consistent presence—speaking softly to her and simply sitting nearby so she could become comfortable with us at her own pace and pairing these interactions with tasty treats. It didn't take long to discover that Churus are her absolute favorite! Lavender began to readily eat the treats we offered her in our presence, and she began to show an avid interest in toys. When we waved the wand toy through the air, we watched her expertly stalk and pounce on it with great delight. By using treats and toys (two things Lavender loves), we were able to create positive associations with people, helping her gain confidence and trust. Today, she eagerly looks forward to our visits, happily accepting treats, engaging in play, and seeking out gentle affection.

Once she forms a bond with someone, Lavender is the definition of a true lap cat. She loves being close to her people, weaving affectionately around their legs, offering sweet headbutts, and curling up on a shoulder or in a cozy lap. She's happiest when she's soaking up endless pets, cuddles, and quality time with the people she loves. Lavender is a petite little lady with an incredibly sweet, gentle personality that quickly wins hearts.

Lavender also enjoys the company of other cats. She may be a little cautious when meeting new feline friends, but once she feels comfortable, she happily seeks out their companionship with gentle headbutts and invitations to interact. During her time in the BMOD Program, she has made many feline friends and can often be found playing, grooming, or snuggling with the other kitties in the program.

While she has grown confident in this environment, she still has moments when she startles easily and may run and hide, but with gentle verbal reassurance she recovers quickly. Lavender will do best in a calm, quiet home with someone who understands that trust takes time and is willing to provide the patience and support she needs to settle in and feel secure. She will also need a calm kitty friend in her new home to snuggle and play with. She has shown tremendous progress here and we know that in the right home she will flourish even more. If you are looking for an incredibly sweet and affectionate little companion who will happily stick by your side, Lavender is the perfect girl for you!

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. Lavender 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 Lavender 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 Lavender while in her hidey spot. Over time, by continuing to do this, Lavender will become more comfortable and recognize that yummy food = people, therefore creating a positive association between the two.

### **Here's how to help Lavender during your first months together:**

**This step is crucial in helping Lavender acclimate to her new home.** Confine Lavender to one cat-proof room in your house. Provide Lavender 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 a safe, comfortable hiding place like her cat carrier, a hidey-bed, or a large dog crate covered with a blanket.

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

**Continue to provide a safe space.** Even when Lavender 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 Lavender time to adjust to your house, routine, and lifestyle before introducing her to new people. When you have visitors over, give Lavender the freedom to make the decision to interact (or not!). Ask new people to ignore her – or if Lavender 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 Lavender 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 Lavender 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. Lavender 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 Lavender 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 the BMOD Cat trainers at [bmodcat@oregonhumane.org](mailto:bmodcat@oregonhumane.org) to connect with the Feline Behavior Modification department.

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