



Antoenio 354178: What to Expect

Antoenio is a graduate of the Behavior Modification Program and needs a special home. Antoenio is a sweet and handsome gentleman who is ready to find his forever home. He can be a bit shy in new environments, but once he feels safe, his sweet personality truly shines. He loves being pet, enjoying yummy treats, bird-watching from his window-side cat tower, and playing with his favorite toys. Antoenio may never be a social butterfly with everyone he meets, but he will form an incredibly strong and loving bond with his person.

Antoenio was surrendered to another shelter due to his previous owner's living situation changing. While at the other shelter, he displayed fearful behavior and would hiss and run away when staff approached. Because he was experiencing a high level of stress in that environment, the decision was made to transfer him to OHS, where he could receive additional support through 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 him decompress and learn more about his personality.

Antoenio was nervous during his first few days in BMOD, spending most of his time tucked away on a high perch and watching us with wide, cautious eyes. With patience, the offer of treats and plenty of gentle encouragement, he gradually became brave enough to come down and investigate the staff that spent time in his kennel. As he leaned forward to sniff the hands that offered him treats he quickly realized that we were his friends. He gradually accepted and enjoyed gentle chin scratches, and as his fears subside he began headbutting us for more attention and rubbing on us to show his appreciation.

It seems the busy and chaotic environment of the previous shelter left him feeling unsure and overwhelmed by all the changes he was experiencing. Once he had a few days to settle into the quiet, calm environment of the BMOD program, his sweet and affectionate personality began to shine through. He now greets staff with a happy headbutt, rubbing on us for attention and enjoying lots of pets from his nose to his tail. He's always the first to greet us when we come to visit, eagerly following us around and purring with happiness from all the affection he receives.

In addition to his affectionate nature, Antoenio enjoys interactive play and especially loves batting at wand toys. He is also an avid bird-watcher who loves observing the world from his favorite window-side perches. Antoenio has also met several other cats here and does well with them. He may enjoy having a feline friend to hang out with in his new home though he would also do fine as the only kitty. Antoenio will do best in a calm home, with a family that is patient with him as he acclimates. If you are looking for the sweetest boy who is very affectionate and just needs a calm environment, Antoenio is the kitty for you!

His new family should expect that he will hide for a few weeks, possibly longer. You'll need to introduce him to new things slowly. Antoenio typically hisses and hides when overwhelmed or scared. It's important to provide him with a small room with appropriate hiding spots for him to relax in, such as his 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 him. The room you set him up in will be

the catalyst for how quickly he acclimates. Start thinking now which room in your home would be best for Antoenio to settle into. If it's a bedroom, can he get under the bed or dresser making it difficult to spend time with him? 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 him? 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 his 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 Antoenio while in his hidey spot. Over time, by continuing to do this, Antoenio will become more comfortable and recognize that yummy food = people, therefore creating a positive association between the two.

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

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

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

Continue to provide a safe space. Even when Antoenio has started exploring the rest of the house, give him a safe space that he can retreat to. When he is in his safe space, insist that guests leave him alone and try to ignore him yourself. That way, when he comes out, you can reward his bravery with your attention.

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

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

Visiting the vet: Unless it's an emergency, give Antoenio time to bond to you before taking him to the vet. Vet visits will more than likely be scary, but if he already trusts you, your presence may help him feel more comfortable.

Patience will come in handy for you. Antoenio is a cat that needs an understanding owner who has the time and desire to allow him to adapt in his own time. He may never be a social butterfly, and that's okay! Getting to know him and watching him come out of his shell will be extremely rewarding. Celebrate those small victories.

We're here to help!

We want Antoenio 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 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 help you and Antoenio 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!