



Bo 353045: What to Expect

Bo is a graduate of the Behavior Modification Program and needs a special home. Bo is a sweet, sensitive, and handsome tabby gentleman who is ready to find his forever home. He may be a little timid at first, 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, curling up in a cozy lap, and playing with his favorite toys. Bo may never be a social butterfly with everyone he meets, but with patience, understanding, and time to build trust, he will form an incredibly strong and loving bond with his person. Once you've earned his trust, you'll have a loyal companion who will happily fill your days with affection, sparkling conversation, and cuddles.

Bo was brought into another shelter due to his caretaker no longer being able to care for him, and we do not have much history on him. When Bo first arrived at his previous shelter, he displayed shy and fearful behavior. He would cower and hide 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.

Bo was nervous during his first week in BMOD and spent most of his time hiding on a high perch, watching us with wide, cautious eyes. We respected his boundaries, spoke to him gently, and offered treats to help him build positive associations with people. Before long, he realized we were not a threat, and his body language became noticeably softer and more relaxed. As Bo became more comfortable, he gradually started approaching us to sniff our hands before leaning in for gentle pets. Now, he greets us every morning with a soft meow inviting us to come snuggle.

Bo seems to feel most comfortable when he has his own space. While housed in close proximity to other cats, he showed signs of stress by spraying in his kennel. After being moved to a quieter kennel without a neighboring cat, this behavior resolved. Because of this, we believe Bo would thrive as the only cat in his new home, where he can enjoy a calm environment and soak up all the love and attention for himself from his new family.

In addition to his affectionate nature, Bo enjoys interactive play and especially loves chasing and batting at wand toys. He is also an avid bird-watcher who loves observing the world from his favorite window-side perches. Bo still has moments when he startles easily and may run and hide, but he recovers quickly with verbal encouragement. He has shown tremendous progress here and we know that in the right home he will flourish even more. Bo 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 with the cutest little chirping meow, Bo 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. Bo typically flees, hisses and swats 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 Bo 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 Bo while in his hidey spot. Over time, by continuing to do this, Bo will become more comfortable and recognize that yummy food = people, therefore creating a positive association between the two.

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

This step is crucial in helping Bo acclimate to his new home. Confine Bo to one cat-proof room in your house. Provide Bo 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 Bo 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 Bo is worried about, allow him to hang back or hide if he chooses to do so.

Continue to provide a safe space. Even when Bo 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 Bo time to adjust to your house, routine, and lifestyle before introducing him to new people. When you have visitors over, give Bo the freedom to make the decision to interact (or not!). Ask new people to ignore him – or if Bo 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 Bo 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 Bo 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. Bo 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 Bo 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 Bo 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!