



Grants Pass 351038: What to Expect

Grants Pass is a graduate of the Behavior Modification Program and needs a special home. Grants Pass is a sweet and handsome boy 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 and birdwatching from his window-side cat tower. Grants Pass 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.

Grants Pass came to OHS from the home of an overwhelmed cat caregiver who was unable to provide proper care for him. When Grants Pass first arrived, he displayed shy and fearful behavior. He would cower and hide when staff approached. Because he was experiencing a high level of stress in the shelter environment, the decision was made to enroll him in the 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.

Grants Pass was nervous during his first week in BMOD, spending much of his time tucked away on his cat tower 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. Slowly but surely, Grants Pass began to realize that we were not a threat, and his body language became noticeably softer and more relaxed. As we offered him treats, he quickly learned that only good things happen when people spend time with him. His favorite treats are Churus and he happily accepts them when we offer. Even though he was taking treats from our hands, he continued to cower and back away if we attempted to pet him. It became clear that, while he was ok with us being close to him, he wasn't quite ready for hands-on interaction. So, we introduced a touch tool—an object that acts as an extension of your hand. For Grants Pass, we used a back scratcher. As we gently touched his cheeks with the back scratcher, Grants Pass surprised us by leaning into it, closing his eyes, and purring happily. It quickly became clear that Grants Pass loved being touched; he was simply unsure about the people behind the hands. We continued using the back scratcher to help him build confidence and trust. Before long, Grants Pass was accepting gentle touches from our hands, leaning into affection, flirtatiously headbutting, and purring contentedly.

Now that Grants Pass knows we're his friends, he eagerly looks forward to spending time with us and happily soaks up every bit of affection he can get. He'll even stand on his hind legs and gently reach out with a paw when he wants more pets! Although he can still be easily startled and may occasionally run and hide, he quickly regains his confidence with gentle words and reassurance. Grants Pass is also an enthusiastic bird-watcher. He loves lounging by his favorite windows, taking in all the sights and sounds of the world outside. While he has met some of the other cats here, he has shown us that he feels nervous and unsure around them. Because of this, we believe he would thrive as the only cat in his new home, where he can enjoy all the love and attention he deserves.

Grants Pass has made tremendous progress during his time with us, and we know that with the patience, love, and security of the right home, he will continue to blossom. He will do best in a calm environment with a family who understands that he may need a little time to fully settle in and feel comfortable.

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

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

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

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