



Raven 350462: What to Expect

Raven is a graduate of the Behavior Modification Program and needs a special home. Raven is a sweet and sensitive tuxedo 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, curling up in his cozy cat bed, telling us all about his day, and playing with his favorite toys. Raven 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, conversation, and cuddles.

Raven came to OHS after he was found living in an abandoned home with 14 other cats. We are unsure how long he and the other cats had been left to fend for themselves prior to coming to OHS. When he arrived at OHS he displayed fearful behavior and would cower, hide, hiss, and swat when staff approached him. Because of the high stress he was experiencing, the decision was made to place him 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 him decompress and learn more about his personality.

Raven was shut down and nervous for the first few weeks in BMOD and spent most of his time hiding under his cat tower, beneath any sort of bedding he could squeeze under. In the beginning he would hiss if we got too close, but we understood this was his way of communicating that he was scared. We spoke softly to him and offered treats, and we learned very quickly that he is very food motivated-- Chorus are his absolute favorite treat! Before long, he started to come towards us, soliciting attention, and leaning in for cheek and chin scratches. He started understanding that every time staff visited him, his bravery would be rewarded with treats and he was soon reciprocating our attention by purring and climbing into our laps for cuddle time.

As Raven became more comfortable in our presence and began to enjoy the attention, he also started displaying signs of anxiety when staff were not actively engaging with him. In his kennel, he would pace, vocalize, and persistently seek attention. He also began spraying in his kennel, which can be an indication of insecurity or stress related to the environment. Although Raven had a kennel of his own, he could still see and smell the other cats participating in the BMOD program. We suspected that being in close proximity to the other cats was increasing his anxiety and contributing to his spraying behavior.

Due to the increased anxiety Raven was experiencing, we started him on an anti-anxiety medication, Fluoxetine. He was also moved to a different area of our Behavior Center where he could be housed away from the other cats. The combination of medication and the change in environment has successfully resolved his spraying behavior while in our care. Raven is also noticeably more relaxed now that he has his own space away from other cats. He no longer paces, vocalizes, or persistently seeks attention from staff.

Raven is now comfortable and relaxed in his own space. He can often be found lounging on his cat tower, playing with his toys, or watching "bird TV" on the iPad we provide for him. He enjoys visits from staff and eagerly looks forward to

the Churus we offer or pouncing on wand toys as we swing them through the air. After enjoying his Churu or getting some playtime in, Raven loves to climb into our laps for cuddle time, where he happily purrs and soaks up the attention. He is now a happy, social, and relaxed boy, thanks to finding the right combination of medication and environment to help him feel secure and at ease. If you're looking for a sweet, social boy who loves lap time and would thrive in a calm, quiet home where he can be the only kitty, Raven may be just the companion you've been looking for!

To help set Raven up for success, his adopters will be provided with a supply of Fluoxetine to support his transition into his new home. The good news is Raven is highly food motivated and takes his medication like a champ – he readily eats it in a pill pocket or smothered in Churu, making it easy to administer.

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

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

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

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