



Zippy 353204: What to Expect

Zippy is a graduate of the Behavior Modification Program and needs a special home. Zippy is a sweet and playful boy who is ready to find his forever home. Zippy may be a little timid at first, but once he feels safe and secure, his charming, playful personality shines through. He loves snuggling with his feline friends, enjoying tasty treats, zooming around the room, perching high on his cat tower, and playing with his favorite toys. While Zippy may never be a social butterfly with everyone he meets, with patience and time to build trust, he'll form a deep bond with his special person and become a fun-loving, energetic companion.

Zippy came to OHS from another shelter, and we do not have much history on him. When Zippy arrived at OHS he displayed fearful, shy behaviors that presented as hiding, darting, and hissing when the staff attempted to engage with him. Due to the level of stress he was displaying and the impact it had on his ability to comfortably interact with staff, he was enrolled 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.

Zippy was understandably worried and overwhelmed during his first few days in BMOD. He quietly observed us with wide, cautious eyes and would hiss and back away if we got too close. As we spent time sitting in his kennel, offering treats and gentle encouragement, his body language gradually softened. It didn't take long for him to realize we were there to help. Soon he was accepting treats from our hands – Churus are his favorite – leaning in for cheek and chin scratches, relaxing with his toys, and purring contentedly. It became clear that the loud, busy environment of the main shelter had been the source of his fear. Once he settled into the calmer, quieter setting of BMOD, he finally felt safe enough to let his true personality shine.

Zippy also had the opportunity to enjoy playdates with other cats in the BMOD program, and it quickly became clear that he loves feline companionship. He eagerly seeks out other cats for attention, rubs affectionately against them, and enjoys playing with toys alongside them. Having a kitty friend seems to give him an extra sense of comfort and confidence, and we could tell that being with other cats helps him feel safe, secure, and more at ease.

Zippy has blossomed into the playful, sweet, and happy little boy we always knew he could be. While he can still be startled by sudden movements or unfamiliar situations and may briefly run to hide, he recovers quickly with gentle reassurance and kind words. He has made tremendous progress during his time in the BMOD program, and we're confident he will continue to flourish in the right home.

Zippy will do best in a calm, quiet home with a family that will be patient with him as he acclimates. He will also need a kitty friend in his new home to snuggle and play with.

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

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

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

Provide Zippy 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 Zippy 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 Zippy is worried about, allow him to hang back or hide if he chooses to do so.

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