



Gomez 354176: What to Expect

Gomez is a graduate of the Behavior Modification Program and needs a special home. Gomez is a sweet, sensitive, and handsome 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, curling up in a cozy lap, telling us all about his day, and playing with his favorite toys. Gomez 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.

Gomez was brought into another shelter due to his caretaker being unable to provide sufficient care for him, and we do not have much history on him. When Gomez first arrived at his previous shelter, he displayed shy, fearful, and anxious behavior. He would cower, hiss, swat, and attempt to bite 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.

Gomez was shut down and nervous for the first few weeks in BMOD and spent most of his time hiding on his cat tower, watching us with wide, cautious eyes. 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 respected his boundaries, spoke to him gently, and offered treats to help him build positive associations with people. We learned very quickly that he is very food motivated-- Churus are his absolute favorite treat! He started to understand that every time staff visited him, his bravery would be rewarded with treats. As Gomez became more comfortable, he gradually started approaching us to sniff our hands before leaning in for gentle pets. It wasn't long before he was climbing into our laps and actively seeking out affection. Gomez is the definition of a lap cat—he loves being close to his people and is happiest curled up in a lap or leaning into an embrace, soaking up all the attention and affection he can get. He may be a somewhat scraggly-looking gentleman as he grows back his beautiful fur, but we know he'll be quite the handsome fellow once he's feeling healthy and happy. More importantly, he is an absolute sweetheart! He's always the very first to greet us with his adorable meows and soft, slow eye blinks, letting us know he's ready for some special snacks and cuddle time.

In addition to his affectionate nature, Gomez enjoys watching birds through the window or on TV, chasing and batting at wand toys, and soaking up the sunshine from his window-side cat tower. Most of all, he loves curling up in a cozy bed in a spot where he can stay close to his favorite people. 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. Gomez 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. Gomez 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 gentleman there ever was, with the cutest little chirping meow, Gomez 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. Gomez 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 Gomez 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 Gomez while in his hidey spot. Over time, by continuing to do this, Gomez will become more comfortable and recognize that yummy food = people, therefore creating a positive association between the two.

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

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

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