



Corvallis 351008: What to Expect

Corvallis is a graduate of the Behavior Modification Program and needs a special home. Corvallis is a sweet and sensitive boy who is ready to find his forever home. Corvallis may be a little timid at first, but once he feels safe and secure, his charming personality shines through. He loves spending time lounging on his cat tower, gazing out the window, snacking on treats and being pet by the people he has befriended here. While Corvallis 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 blossom into an affectionate and fun-loving companion.

Corvallis came to OH from the home of an overwhelmed cat caregiver who was unable to provide proper care for him. When he arrived he exhibited fearful and shy behaviors and had several medical concerns that required attention, including multiple mobile and fractured teeth that needed to be extracted. The busy, chaotic shelter environment, combined with the hands-on medical handling required to provide his care, proved overwhelming for Corvallis. On one occasion, he bit a staff member while they were attempting to administer medication. It was a quick bite and release and did not require medical attention. 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.

Corvallis was worried and overwhelmed during his first few days in BMOD. He spent much of his time hiding on his cat tower, quietly watching us with wide, cautious eyes. If anyone approached too closely, he would hiss to let us know he was frightened and needed space. We respected his boundaries, spoke to him softly, and gave him the time he needed to feel safe. It didn't take long for us to discover one of Corvallis's favorite things: food! Treats, especially Churus, quickly became the key to winning his heart. We paired our visits and interactions with these tasty rewards, helping Corvallis learn that people could bring good things rather than fear or stress. With patience, consistency, and plenty of treats, Corvallis gradually began to build trust and confidence in his human friends. Before long, he started looking forward to staff visits, and each day we noticed his body language becoming more relaxed in our presence.

Although Corvallis became increasingly comfortable in our presence, he remained hesitant when hands approached to pet him. To help him feel more at ease, we introduced a touch tool which is an object that serves as an extension of our hand. In Corvallis's case, we used a back scratcher to gently introduce the experience of being touched. When we brought it near him, he would lean forward to investigate and sniff it. We slowly began using it to gently scratch his cheeks, and before long, Corvallis was leaning into the touch and clearly enjoying the attention. As Corvallis's confidence grew, so did his trust in people. With time, he became increasingly comfortable with gentle affection and now leans into cheek, chin, and full-body pets once he feels safe, often headbutting for more attention.

Each day, we gently encouraged Corvallis to explore new experiences, from investigating toys to venturing beyond his kennel and exploring the larger space around him. Although he hasn't shown much interest in toys during his time with us, we've discovered that he has a few favorite ways to spend his days. Corvallis loves gazing out windows, watching the wildlife outside, and finding a sunny spot where he can bask in the warmth. These simple pleasures have become some of his favorite parts of the day, allowing him to relax, feel comfortable, and enjoy the world around him at his own pace.

Corvallis has also had the opportunity to meet some of the other cats in our program. He has shown curiosity and politely greets his feline neighbors, but he doesn't seem particularly interested in spending extended time with them. Corvallis is happiest having a space of his own where he can relax, observe the world around him, and do his own thing without the company of other cats. He seems to appreciate being the king of his own little castle.

Corvallis has blossomed into the sweet, happy boy we always knew he could be. Although sudden movements or unfamiliar situations can still startle him, causing him to briefly retreat to a hiding spot, 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. Corvallis will need a family who understands that building trust takes time and is willing to meet him where he is. With patience, gentle and positive interactions, and respect for his boundaries, his future family can help him continue to grow in confidence and discover just how wonderful life can be when he feels safe and loved.

Corvallis has tested positive for FIV and will need to be indoors only in his new home. FIV is a virus that progresses very slowly, gradually affecting a cat's immune system over a period of years. This leaves them more susceptible to other infections that healthy cats would be able to fight off. FIV is most commonly spread through bite wounds, and research has shown it is generally not spread through casual, cordial contact between cats. FIV is a disease specific to cats and cannot be spread to humans or dogs.

For more information on FIV, please visit this helpful link: <https://www.vet.cornell.edu/departments-centers-and-institutes/cornell-feline-health-center/health-information/feline-health-topics/feline-immunodeficiency-virus>

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

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

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

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