Lily 284331*:* What to Expect

Lily is a graduate of the Behavior Modification Program and needs a special home. Lily is a sweet and sensitive girl who is ready to find her forever home. Lily may be a little timid at first, but once she feels safe and secure, her charming and loving personality shines through. She enjoys tasty treats, napping on soft blankets, cuddling and being pet from nose to tail. Lily may never be a social butterfly with everyone she meets, but she will bond with someone when given the time she needs to get to know you.

Lily was brought to Oregon Humane due to not getting along with the other cat in the home. Her previous owner described her as being very sweet and affectionate with people she knows, but nervous and shy with strangers. When Lily arrived, it was clear the busy and noisy shelter environment proved overwhelming for her. She spent much of her time hiding beneath her blanket and cowering, clearly struggling to feel safe and secure. Although she never displayed any aggressive behaviors toward staff, it was evident that she needed a quieter, more supportive environment to help her adjust. Recognizing her needs, we welcomed Lily into our Behavior Modification (BMOD) Program, where the calmer setting and individualized support are better suited to helping fearful cats build confidence and feel more comfortable in the 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 her decompress and learn more about her personality.

Lily was understandably worried and overwhelmed during her first few days in BMOD. She spent much of her time on her cat tower, watching us with wide and worried eyes. We started by simply sitting quietly in her kennel, speaking softly and offering treats for her to enjoy. When we noticed her body language relaxing with our hand nearby, we gently reached out to pet her cheek. It didn't take long for us to discover that gentle touch was exactly what Lily needed to begin feeling safe and building trust with us. Lily absolutely loves being pet, and the soothing comfort of gentle affection helps her relax and gain confidence. Before long, she leaned into our hands, enthusiastically headbutting us for more pets, and purring up a storm. Once Lily knows she's safe, she is more than happy to show off just how much she enjoys affection.

Lily has blossomed from a worried, shy girl, into the sweet and social kitty we knew she could be. She has shown us just how much she loves affection, gentle pets, and spending time with her people. She also enjoys Churu treats, cozy naps on soft blankets, and looking out the window. Lily will thrive in a calm, patient home where she can be the only cat. With patience, understanding, and gentle encouragement, Lily will continue to build confidence and feel safe enough to let her wonderful personality shine.

Her new family should expect that she will hide for a few weeks, possibly longer. You'll need to introduce her to new things slowly. Lily typically flees and hides when overwhelmed or scared. It's important to provide her with a small room with appropriate hiding spots for her to relax in, such as her 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 her. The room you set her up in will be the catalyst for how quickly she acclimates. Start thinking now which room in your home would be best for Lily to settle into. If it's a bedroom, can she get under the bed or dresser making it difficult to spend time with her? 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 her? 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 her 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 Lily while in her hidey spot. Over time, by continuing to do this, Lily will become more comfortable and recognize that yummy food = people, therefore creating a positive association between the two.

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

This step is crucial in helping Lily acclimate to her new home. Confine Lily to one cat-proof room in your house. Provide Lily with a litter box, food, water, and a bed. Ensure she cannot get to ***inappropriate*** hiding spots (under the bed, in a closet, on top of a cabinet, etc.). Provide her with a safe, comfortable hiding place instead like her cat carrier, a hidey-bed, or a large dog crate covered with a blanket.

Spend time with Lily in her room. Don't force her out of her hiding spot. Instead, encourage her to come out on her own using happy talk, offering a toy or treats. Once she is using the litter box, eating regularly, and coming out of hiding to interact with you, you can start introducing her to the rest of your home. Start by propping the door open and allowing her to come out on her own. Don't force it! If you come across something that you can tell Lily is worried about, allow her to hang back or hide if she chooses to do so.

Continue to provide a safe space. Even when Lily has started exploring the rest of the house, give her a safe space that she can retreat to. When she is in her safe space, insist that guests leave her alone and try to ignore her yourself. That way, when she comes out, you can reward her bravery with your attention.

No visitors (at first). Allow Lily time to adjust to your house, routine, and lifestyle before introducing her to new people. When you have visitors over, give Lily the freedom to make the decision to interact (or not!). Ask new people to ignore her – or if Lily seems curious or interested, have the new person toss her treats or offer a favorite toy. We want exciting, good things to come from new people.

Practice crate training. Leave her carrier out all the time, so it's just a part of her normal environment. Add a bed and keep the door securely propped open so she can go in and out on her own, making sure the door won't swing shut and frighten her. You can also clicker train her to run into the carrier on cue. Helping Lily get comfortable with her carrier will make it easier when it's time to visit the vet.

Visiting the vet: Unless it's an emergency, give Lily time to bond to you before taking her to the vet. Vet visits will more than likely be scary, but if she already trusts you, your presence may help her feel more comfortable.

Patience will come in handy for you. Lily is a cat that needs an understanding owner who has the time and desire to allow her to adapt in her own time. She may never be a social butterfly, and that's okay! Getting to know her and watching her come out of her hell will be extremely rewarding. Celebrate those small victories.

We're here to help!
We want Lily 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 Lily 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!