Peanut 358007*:* What to Expect

Peanut is a graduate of the Behavior Modification Program and needs a special home. Peanut is a sensitive and playful boy who is ready to find his forever home. Peanut may be a little timid at first, but once he feels safe and secure, his charming, playful personality shines through. He loves enjoying tasty treats, basking in the sunshine on his window-side cat tower, snuggling with other cats and showing off his impressively high leaps while playing with his favorite toys.

Peanut was brought to OH through our Second Chance program and we don't have much history on him. When he arrived, he had a medical condition that required the removal of his right eye. He also displayed fearful, shy behavior and would cower, hide and run anytime 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.

Peanut was initially feeling worried and overwhelmed during his first few days in BMOD. He spent much of his time tucked away on his cat tower, quietly observing us with tense body language. Whenever we tried to engage with him, he would make himself as small as possible, and if anyone approached too closely, he would quickly dart away, letting us know that he was frightened and needed space. We respected his boundaries, spoke to him gently, and offered tasty treats to help him build positive associations with people. It didn't take long for us to discover that Peanut is quite the treat lover, especially when it comes to Churus! Before long, he was happily enjoying them in our presence, a small but encouraging step toward feeling more comfortable and safe with us.

Peanut also began showing an interest in the other kitties in the BMOD program. We often caught him peeking out from the safety of his perch, curiously watching them play and interact with staff. Seeing his growing curiosity and interest in making feline friends, we began introducing him to some of the other cats through supervised playdates. Peanut eagerly approached his new friends and would happily follow them around, seemingly finding comfort and reassurance in their company. It quickly became clear that having other cats around helped him feel more confident, secure, and at ease in his environment. Having feline friends by his side was just what this sweet boy needed to start coming out of his shell!

We also discovered just how much Peanut loves playtime! Waving feather wand toys through the air and tossing rolling balls and stuffies for him to chase helped bring out his playful side and encouraged him to engage more confidently with us. Although Peanut grew more comfortable in our presence, he remained hesitant when hands approached to pet him. To help him become more comfortable with touch, we introduced a touch tool—an object that acts as an extension of the hand. For Peanut, we used a back scratcher. Initially, he would lean forward to sniff the scratcher before moving away to show he was unsure. With time, patience, and positive reinforcement through treats, we gradually helped him become more comfortable with the tool. Once he feels comfortable with someone, Peanut enjoys gentle cheek and chin scratches. His future family should be prepared to give him time to settle in at his own pace, build trust through gentle, positive interactions, and respect his boundaries as he continues to gain confidence with handling.

Peanut is a sweet boy who has made tremendous progress while in our care. As he has grown more comfortable, he has shown us his goofy, playful side and a love for all kinds of toys and the companionship of other cats. Peanut will thrive in a calm, patient home with a friendly resident cat and a family who understand the importance of giving him time to settle in at his own pace. With patience, understanding, and gentle encouragement, Peanut will continue to build confidence and let his charming personality shine.

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

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

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

Continue to provide a safe space. Even when Peanut 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 Peanut time to adjust to your house, routine, and lifestyle before introducing him to new people. When you have visitors over, give Peanut the freedom to make the decision to interact (or not!). Ask new people to ignore him – or if Peanut 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 his to run into the carrier on cue. Helping Peanut 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 Peanut 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. Peanut 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 hell will be extremely rewarding. Celebrate those small victories.

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