



Mystik Dan 307052: What to Expect

Mystik Dan is a graduate of the Behavior Modification Program and needs a special home. Mystik Dan is a sweet, playful boy once he gets to know a person, but he will be scared at first. Patience and time are the best things for him as he acclimates to new people and places.

Mystik Dan came to OHS from an overwhelmed cat caregiver. When he first arrived, he displayed fearful, shy behavior and was avoidant of being pet. After several weeks with no change in his behavior, he was placed in the Behavior Modification Program. The environment in the BMOD program is more conducive to helping cats feel comfortable in a shelter environment. With the larger kennel space, access to windows, and increased one on one time with the team we set out to learn more about him and help him overcome his fears

When he first arrived in BMOD he would hide in his bed and peek his head out to observe the team as we moved around the space. He started off hissing at us when we attempted to engage with him, but we just sat in his kennel, calmly talking to him, and offering slow eye blinks. Over time, he began to show relaxed body language and showed an interest in playing with toys. As we soared wand toys through the air, he will track them, then chase and pounce on them with great delight. He also started accepting treats from us and meowing for attention. Mystik Dan is now accepting of being pet once he knows you are his friend and will lean in and purr. Mystik Dan loves other cats, so we regularly allowed him to have playdates with the other kitties in the program. Being around his cat friends helps him feel even braver in his environment. What Mystik Dan needed was time to build trust and confidence with people in a calm environment and we are looking for a family that can help him transition into a new home with the same love and patience. Mystik Dan will need to find an adult only home where there is another cat for him to have as a friend.

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. Mystik Dan typically flees, hides, and cowers 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. **He should not be given access to the whole home setting until he has acclimated to one room. 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 Mystik Dan 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 a wet food or a treat on a spoon and offer it to Mystik Dan while in his hidey spot. Or toss him a few crunchy treats. Bring the laser pointer or wand toy out and allow him to observe and engage with it. Over time, by continuing to do this, Mystik Dan will become more comfortable and recognize that yummy food/playtime = people, therefore creating a positive association between the two.

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

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

Continue to provide a safe space. Even when Mystik Dan 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 Mystik Dan time to adjust to your house, routine, and lifestyle before introducing him to new people. When you have visitors over, give Mystik Dan the freedom to make the decision to interact (or not!). Ask new people to ignore him – or if Mystik Dan 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 Mystik Dan 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 Mystik Dan 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. Mystik Dan 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 Mystik Dan 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 Erika at erikas@oregonhumane.org to connect with the Feline Behavior Modification Manager.

Please keep in touch so we can continue to help you and Mystik Dan 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!