



## Kirby 306877: What to Expect

**Kirby is a graduate of the Behavior Modification Program and needs a special home.** Kirby is an active, social kitty who enjoys exploring and playing with toys. He needs to find a home with a person who is willing to provide him with a consistent routine and daily, interactive play sessions. Kirby will need a home that can keep up with his energy level, one that can provide him with both physical and mental enrichment.

Kirby was transferred from another shelter to the OHS Salem campus and we do not have much history on him. While at the Salem campus, he displayed frustrated behavior in his kennel due to the environment not being conducive to what he needed. The kennel was too small for his needs and what he really wanted was to have an opportunity to run around and play, which is all normal cat behavior. While at the shelter he would stick his paws out of the kennel to slap people as they walked by. This resulted in a few scratches but no major injuries. When he was displaying this behavior, it was his way of trying to get people to pay attention to him. After several of these incidences it was decided to transfer him to the OHS Portland campus and place him 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, increased enrichment, and more one on one time with the team we set out to learn more about him.

Kirby acclimated very quickly to the BMOD program. The BMOD environment provides bigger kennels for each cat, their own window to look out of and multiple climbing structures for him to climb. It became clear that what Kirby needed to make him happy was more space and increased enrichment. We would give him ample opportunities to explore the space outside of his kennel every day and he would run and race around with great delight. He loves all kinds of toys, feather ones, tunnels, and anything he can pounce on. He loves to be involved in what people are doing, loves to be pet and leans in for check and chin scratches. The behavior he displayed at the Salem campus was all because he was bored, but now with an appropriate outlet for his enrichment needs in BMOD he is a happy, fun-loving kitty. Kirby has met several other kitties here and while he does ok with them, he can play a bit rough. If you have another kitty at home that likes to rough house with other kitties, then Kirby may be a good fit for you. Kirby would also do fine as the only cat as long as he has ample toys and opportunities to play. Kirby does have his calm moments, he's not always running around and active, so if you adopt Kirby then you'll have the best of both worlds. A playful kitty who loves attention and being social with people.

### **Here's how to help Kirby during your first month together:**

**Confine Kirby to one cat-proof room in your house.** Provide Kirby 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. Once he is using the litter box, eating regularly, and coming out of hiding to play with toys, you can start introducing him to the rest of your home.

**Enrich his space.** Kirby loves toys, scratching posts, and perches with a window view. Giving him the opportunity to climb, jump, play, scratch and engage in natural cat behavior may help reduce overstimulated behaviors.

**Keep a routine.** A predictable daily schedule will help Kirby settle into your home. Give him time to get to know you before introducing him to new people.

**Schedule interactive play sessions with him every day.** Kirby needs at least 10 minutes of dedicated play in the morning and again in the evening to alleviate stress and built-up frustration. Try to mimic natural hunting behavior.

Choose a fishing-pole toy and make the toy soar around the room like a bird, engaging Kirby's attention. Or simulate mouse activity by sliding the end of the toy around on the floor in quick, jerky movements. Allow him to pounce and catch the toy and bat it around. Then start again. End your play session by allowing him to capture the toy.

**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 Kirby get comfortable with his carrier will make it easier when it's time to visit the vet.

### **We're here to help!**

We want Kirby 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](mailto:erikas@oregonhumane.org) to connect with the Feline Services Manager.

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