



Twinkles 310889: What to Expect

Twinkles is a graduate of the Behavior Modification Program and needs a special home. Twinkles is a sensitive, sweet girl who is ready to find her forever home. Twinkles 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.

Twinkles was surrendered to OHS due to her owner being placed in a care facility. Her whole world has been turned upside down after being with her previous family for 12 years, so you can imagine all the changes have been overwhelming for her. Upon arriving at OHS, the decision was made to place her in the Behavior Modification Program. The environment in the BMOD program is more conducive to helping cats feel comfortable in a shelter environment. We knew that coming into the shelter would be overwhelming for her, and we wanted her to have a quieter, calmer environment to acclimate in than the busy shelter environment. With the larger kennel space in BMOD, access to windows, and more one on one time with the team we set out to help Twinkles feel comfortable with all the changes she was experiencing.

In her previous home, she was described as being very cuddly and bonded with her former owner but shy with visitors. It took Twinkles a few days to settle into the new routine in BMOD and she regularly hid and sometimes hissed in the beginning when we attempted to interact with her. Twinkles is very good at communicating when she is nervous, she will hiss and politely ask for you to go slow with her. As she acclimated to the BMOD program, we would sit calmly in her suite, talking softly and offering slow eye blinks. As time went on, Twinkles began to trust us more and the defensive behavior she displayed diminished. She started accepting treats when we would offer them to her, Churus are her favorite. When she knows you are a friend, she will readily accept chin and cheek scratches. She also has the best purr motor! We know that once in a home, with a predictable routine and time to build trust and confidence with her new family she will flourish even more. Twinkles does not like chaotic or noisy environments so she will do best in a calm, quiet home with no small kids. Twinkles has a positive history living with other cats and may do ok with a calm and relaxed kitty in her new home. Twinkles is ready to find a loving home to call her own where she can be treated like the Queen she is.

Here's how to help Twinkles during your first month together:

This step is crucial in helping Twinkles acclimate to her new home. Confine Twinkles to one cat-proof room in your house. Provide Twinkles 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. Once she is using the litter box, eating regularly, and coming out of hiding to play with toys, you can start introducing her to the rest of your home.

Spend time with Twinkles 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 Touch Tool, treats or toys. 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 Twinkles is worried about, allow her to hang back or hide if she chooses to do so.

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

Patience will come in handy for you. Twinkles 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 with everyone she meets but she will bond with her new family. Getting to know her and watching her come out of her shell will be extremely rewarding. Celebrate those small victories.

We're here to help!

We want Twinkles 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 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 Twinkles 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!