



Frog 312272: What to Expect

Frog is a graduate of the Behavior Modification Program and needs a special home. Frog is a sensitive, sweet boy who is ready to find his forever home. Once he feels comfortable and knows he is safe, he is social, engaging and loves being with people. Frog will bond with his new family when given the time he needs to acclimate.

Frog was found living in an abandoned home, and we suspect he had been in the home by himself for over a month. When he arrived at the OHS Salem campus, he was very ill and dehydrated. He was also very scared and would hiss, swat and cower in the back of his kennel. His medical needs were addressed but his behavior continued to deteriorate in the shelter environment. He was so scared of all the changes going on around him he would actively swat, hiss and growl at staff as they attempted to handle him. Due to this behavior, the decision was made to move him to the OHS Portland campus where he could join 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 more one on one time with the team we set out to learn more about him and help him overcome his fears.

Frog hid on his cat tower for several days when he first arrived in BMOD, only coming off his tower at night to eat and use the litterbox. Any attempt at engaging with him resulted in him cowering, hissing and swatting at us. We soon found that Frog responds well to verbal encouragement. Sitting near him, speaking softly, and offering slow eye blinks gave him the confidence needed to trust us. He also loves treats, especially Temptations, and we used treats to build a positive association between people and food. Overtime, we encouraged him to come out of hiding using calm voices and tasty treats. As Frog became more comfortable with the routine and understood we were not a threat, he stopped hiding and started hopping off his cat tower to engage with us. Frog was still weary of touch for the first few weeks but as his confidence grew, he started accepting and enjoying pets. He also started allowing us to brush him, which he really liked! He then began playing with toys when we offered them to him. As we soared wand toys through the air he would watch, chase and pounce on it with great delight. He also loves watching bird videos. He showed an interest in meeting the other kitties that were also in the program, so we allowed him to come out of his kennel to play and engage with them. Frog enjoys the company of other cats and likes to play and spend time with them. Frog may enjoy having a kitty friend in his new home. Frog's favorite activities are napping in sunbeams, eating treats and playing.

It took Frog several weeks to feel comfortable in our presence, and even though he has made great progress he does continue to get scared every once in a while. This typically occurs when there is a lot of movement near him, loud noises and sometimes if he's being pet and he decides he is done. In these moments he may hiss or swat but recovers quickly with verbal encouragement. We know that in these moments he is telling us he is still unsure about what is going on. We feel confident that as he acclimates and continues to build trust and confidence, this behavior will dissipate.

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

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

Continue to provide a safe space. Even when Frog 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 Frog time to adjust to your house, routine, and lifestyle before introducing him to new people. When you have visitors over, give Frog the freedom to make the decision to interact (or not!). Ask new people to ignore him – or if Frog 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 Frog 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 Frog 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. Frog is a cat that needs an understanding owner who has the time and desire to allow him to adapt in his own time. 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 Frog 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 Frog 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!