



## Dennis 313075: What to Expect

Dennis is a graduate of the Behavior Modification Program and needs a special home. Dennis is an active, playful and social boy looking for a home that can keep up with his energy level and provide consistency and routine in his new home.

Dennis was originally transferred to OHS from another shelter and we did not have much history on him. He was adopted out on 2 different occasions and both times he was returned due to his exuberant, mouthy behavior that resulted in him putting his teeth on hands. When he came back to OHS, he displayed frustration in his kennel, pacing, climbing and always seeking out attention. These are all normal behaviors for a young, exuberant kitty that felt cooped up in his kennel. The decision was made to place him in our Behavior Modification Program where we could accommodate his enrichment needs better. 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 enrichment we set out to learn more about Dennis.

Dennis settled into the BMOD program very quickly. Dennis was housed in a large kennel in BMOD, one that has multiple climbing structures and windows to look out of. He was given ample toys to keep him entertained and he was allowed playdates with other cats in a larger area outside his kennel. Dennis loves to run, jump and pounce on toys and play with the other cats. As we soared wand toys through the air he would stalk, chase and pounce on them with great delight. We did not use our hands to play with him and instead redirected him toward appropriate toys. Dennis also loves to be pet, but the times when he was in "play mode" he would occasionally get mouthy. We understood that in these moments to not pet him and to instead use toys to engage with him. We know to only pet him when he is in a relaxed and calm manner, and it is during these times he will lean in and purr.

Dennis is an active and high energy boy who loves all kinds of toys. Dennis does have his moments where he is calm and likes to snuggle, but when he is ready to play, watch out! He has a ton of energy and will need lots of enrichment and resources to keep him entertained. Toys, such as traditional cat toys and automated ones will help to keep him mentally happy and healthy. Dennis has met several other kitties here and while he enjoys their company, he does play rough with them. If your resident cat does not like to rough and tumble play or wrestle, then Dennis is probably not the best match for you.

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

Confine Dennis to one cat-proof room in your house preferably not a bathroom. Provide Dennis 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. Dennis 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 Dennis 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. Dennis 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 Dennis'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 Dennis get comfortable with his carrier will make it easier when it's time to visit the vet.

### We're here to help!

We want Dennis 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 Behavior Modification Manager.

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