

Cat: Carrier Introduction



It is important for your cat to understand that entering her carrier does not mean bad things will occur. This can be achieved in several ways, specifically by making your cat's carrier a part of her daily routine.

Familiarize your cat with the cat carrier. Keeping the carrier visible in your home at all times helps to acclimate the cat to its presence. The first step in getting your cat used to the carrier begins long before her first trip to the vet. It is key to familiarize your cat with the carrier slowly and gradually.

- Make the carrier inviting by placing a fluffy warm bed inside.
- Start feeding your cat inside of the carrier. Leave the door propped open, and place a bowl of tasty canned food at the very back. If the cat doesn't go in on her own free will, don't force her. Simply leave the food in the carrier for 10-15 minutes, then remove it and store it so it won't spoil. Try again later. Feed her all meals in the carrier.
- Sprinkle catnip on the bottom of the carrier, and toss a few toys like ping-pong balls inside. The sound they make when batted about the floor of the carrier will attract your cat's attention.
- Take pipe cleaners and thread them through the slats of the carrier so the ends are sticking out inside and high above the cat's head. Twist the pipe cleaners around to hold them firmly in place, and then attach a lightweight feather toy to the end. The toy floats high above the cat's head, and she can bat at the toy when she feels comfortable enough to stay inside the carrier.
- Spray the inside of the carrier with Feliway Spray, to make the carrier more inviting.
- Once the cat is comfortable with going inside the carrier, close the door for about 2 minutes, then release your cat. Give kitty a favored treat. Do this about twice a week. Increase her time of confinement to equal a car trip to the vet.

Before taking your cat to the vet, there are a few things you can do to further calm your cat and prepare her for the trip.

Instead of putting your cat carrier directly on the floor or on the seat of your car when transporting her to the vet, prop it up on a soft pillow (to cut down vibrations) and cover the carrier with a towel only when it is not so hot outside that the cat will end up suffering. Place the carrier in the best position you can, away from any sun that might come shining through the windows. If it is a hot day, leave plenty of air space and put the cloth from front to back, leaving plenty of holes on the side for air to pass through. Before placing the cat inside, spray the carrier with Feliway Spray.

At the vet you want to keep your cat as calm as possible and try to minimize any traumatic effect. You can achieve this by:

- Keeping the cat covered with the cloth while in the waiting room to help reduce the stress and minimize the odors/noise she may encounter there.
- Keeping your cat off the floor and away from curious dogs.

Tips

- Line the bottom of the carrier with wee-wee pads to catch any accidents that may occur due to high stress.
- Place the cat inside the carrier, lock the door, and cover the carrier with a dark cloth.
- Secure the carrier with the seatbelt before driving.