

Cat and Their Carriers - Making Travel Less Stressful For Cats

With some time and patience your cat can be helped to feel less nervous and more comfortable with their carriers and trips in the car. Having your cat comfortable with his/her carrier can be important for visits to the veterinary hospital, but also in case of a fire or emergency requiring quick and controlled exit from the home. Try the following steps to help increase comfort with the carrier:

- 1. Start conditioning to the carrier at an early age.**
- 2. Choice of carrier** - I prefer carriers that open from the front and top and that have a top half that comes off easily.
- 3. Help your cat become very comfortable with the carrier.** Choose a location to place your cat's carrier in the home with the top removed. Best if this is in one of his/her favorite areas away from noise and excess activity.
 - * Place a familiar blanket, toys and treats in the base of the open carrier.
 - * Begin feeding beside the carrier and eventually place the food bowl inside.
 - * Use praise and treat rewards as encouragement for spending time in the carrier base.
 - * A facial pheromone like Feliway may be helpful. It is best used 20 - 30 minutes before exposure to the carrier. As well, Zylkene as a nutraceutical supplement may help during the adjustment phase.
 - * Slowly begin to close the carrier door for increasingly longer periods of time.
- 4. Slowly expose your cat the transportation within the car.**
 - * Gradually increase the exposure to the car from one minute, without the car running, to short trips and then home again.
 - * Covering the carrier with a familiar towel or blanket can help and can be started prior to the trips in the car.
 - * Rewards and patience work best for cats. ☺