



Introducing Your Cat to a New House

Most cats are not big fans of change and like to stay where they are most comfortable. However, if a move is to take place, make the transition as stress-free as possible. By doing this you can reducing and/or eliminate the risk of fear-based house soiling, hiding, escape attempts and aggression.

Moving a cat to a new house involves three basic aspects: pre-move preparations, the move itself and settling into the new home.

Preparation

- Allow your cat time to get used to his carrier so it is less stressful when it's time to move. Leave it sitting out with the door open and a comfy bed inside. Occasionally leave a couple of cat treats in it so your cat can find them on his own. Start feeding your cat in the carrier. Then, over a week or two, gradually move the dish toward the back of the carrier so your cat has to step a little further inside each day. Eventually, place the dish at the very back of the carrier so your cat must go all the way into it to eat.
- Put out your moving boxes a couple weeks before you need to start packing so your cat has time to get used to their presence. If your cat is nervous while you're packing, he'll probably be happier closed in a quiet room, away from the activity and noise. It's also a good idea to confine your cat if you think he might try to hide in one of the boxes.
- Try to keep your cat's daily routine as stable as possible. Stick closely to his regular schedule for feeding, play and attention.
- If your cat is very skittish, nervous or easily stressed, speak to your vet about using anti-anxiety medication to make the moving process easier on him.

The Move

- To prevent your cat from dashing out the door while movers are going in and out, close him in a bathroom with food, water, a bed and litter box
- Feed your cat a very small breakfast on moving day to reduce stomach upset



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- While in transit, resist the urge to open your cat's carrier to soothe him. A scared cat may try to dash out. Only open the carrier in a secure area and when absolutely necessary.

Settling into the New House

- First, cat-proof the new house. Tuck away electrical cords, plug up nooks where a cat could get stuck, and make sure that all windows have secure screens. Immediately take your cat to a room that will remain relatively quiet. Before opening the carrier, set up your cat's food and water dishes, litter box and bed. Place some cat treats around the room to encourage your cat to explore.
- Keep your cat in this one "home-base" room for his first several days in the new house. This will allow him to gradually get used to the sights, sounds and smells of his new home without feeling overwhelmed. Keeping your cat in one room will also make it easy for him to find his litter box, food and water.
- Spend time with your cat in his home-base room, at first doing low-key activities like reading or watching TV. When he begins to explore, offer your cat attention, treats and playtime.
- When unpacking is over, gradually give your cat access to the rest of the house, one room at a time.

Moving can be stressful on us humans, but try to make it less stressful on your pet. Follow these tips and you will have a more safe transition into your new home.