

Moving With Your Cat

Household pets thrive on routine, as do most of us, but cats are especially attached to their territory so moving can be most traumatic. For the well-being of your feline pet, here are some precautions you can take before, during and after your move to minimize the shock.

BEFORE THE MOVE

- **Long before moving day, teach the cat to come when called.**

Should the cat exit during the excitement or escape from the new house, calling her back may be the only hope. To teach the cat their name, simply call the name and immediately reward them with a tasty bit of food. Keep doing this – across the room, across the house and then across the yard. To reinforce the training, call the cat every time you feed her so the animal will associate their name instantly with food.

- **Statistics show that most cats travel to their new homes by car.**

Statistics also indicate that the drive can be the most traumatic part of the move. It's a wise idea, therefore, to accustom the cat to travel long before moving day. To do this, first get kitty used to riding in a cat carrier.

Introduce the cat to an open carrier many weeks prior to a first car ride, praising the cat while inside and rewarding them when they stay there. Then experiment by closing the door for a minute or two at a time, gradually increasing confinement time and always rewarding the cat for staying calm. The goal is to make the cat feel that the carrier is home sweet home. When this is accomplished, it's simply a matter of getting the animal acclimated to the sounds and motions of the car.

MOVING DAY

- **As moving day dawns, keep kitty, along with their familiar toys, bed and dishes, in a separate room away from the chaos.**
- **When it is kitty's turn to make the actual move, put the cat inside the carrier before leaving the house.** (A lot of nervous cats have jumped from their owner's arms on the way to the car.)
- **Upon arrival in your new home, don't be surprised if the animal shows behavioral changes – hiding, nervousness or lack of appetite for a few days.**

To ease the cat's adjustment, keep the cat in their carrier for a few hours. Leave them in a quiet room that can be closed off from the rest of the house (although you should visit often and offer plenty of reassurance). When the carrier is opened, have the familiar litter box, toys, food and water bowls ready and waiting nearby.



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After the pet feels comfortable in this room, open the door to one additional room. Once the cat feels secure here, open the door to another room, and so on. This way, the animal always knows where “home base” is and can return to it should they ever feel frightened or uneasy.

Depending on the temperament of the cat, it will take from a week to two months for the cat to call the place their own. But with time and lots of love, the family feline will eventually come to realize there’s no place like home, wherever that may be.