

# CARRIER TRAINING YOUR CAT

There are so many benefits to carrier training your cat. Happy car rides, vet clinic visits, and a safe place for them to find comfort and safety. Here are some tips to make carrier training successful!



## THE RIGHT FIT

- ✓ Hard shelled carriers are best.
- ✓ They should be big enough for your cat to stand up, turn around and lie down comfortably. A general rule is that the carrier is 1.5x the size of the cat.
- ✓ Purchase a carrier that can be taken apart. This makes carrier training easier.

## MAKE IT POSITIVE

Once you have chosen a carrier for your cat, you can begin making it a safe and calming place to be. Keep training sessions short, 2-3 min once daily.

- Make the carrier a familiar place at home by leaving it in a room where your cat spends a lot of time. Elevated surfaces can even be considered so long as the carrier is sturdy.
- Take the carrier apart. Begin using the base of the carrier to start. Place a familiar bed in the bottom of the carrier and sprinkle treats onto it. Do this for a couple of days until your cat goes into the bottom of the carrier willingly. You can also spray the bed with Feliway for added comfort.



- Once your cat is comfortable going into the bottom of the carrier you can place the lid on. Keep the door off for now.
- Cover the top with a Feliway sprayed towel and keep the door off.
- The “crate fairy” can appear multiple times a day. Hide toys and treats in the carrier for your cat to find when they choose to enter. This is something to continue daily until you see your cat investigating the carrier for treats daily.
- When you notice your cat spending more time relaxing in their carrier you can place the door on and leave it open, and repeat the above steps.

## SIGNS OF STRESS



Possible signs of stress related to the carrier can include; dilated pupils, excessive vocalization, ears back, tail tucked, pawing at the door to be let out, and/or the inability to lay down and relax.



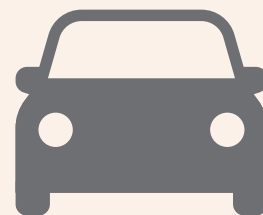
## KEEPING IT POSITIVE

- While your cat is laying down in the carrier begin closing the door for short periods of time. Start with a 2-second duration and increase your duration by a few more seconds every session so long as your cat isn't displaying any sign of stress.
- Toss treats through the door of the carrier, or through the slats in the side of the carrier. Once your cat is finished with its treats, open the door.
- Increase the duration of time your cat is in the carrier with a closed door. Always place treats into the carrier while your cat is enjoying their extended stay.
  - With the door closed, start picking the carrier up and moving it around. Always pick the carrier up from the bottom, not the handle on the top of the carrier. This is a more secure way of transportation and less worrisome for your cat. Using a lickimat or food toy can help with increased duration in the carrier while you begin to move it around.
  - You can also work on teaching the cat to come out of the carrier, so they are happy to do so in the vet clinic. Place a trail of treats outside the carrier door. Once you open the door, they will eat the treats as they come out of their carrier.
  - When your cat is comfortable during these short sessions with duration and movement, you can begin bringing them into the car. Feed treats while the carrier is in the car. Keep these sessions 1-2 min.
  - If your cat can take treats and is displaying calm body language; laying down, ears forward, tail loose and away from their body while in the carrier in the car, you are ready for your first trip!



## YOUR FIRST TRIP

- Short and successful, aim for 5 minutes in the car or less.
- Playing calming music such as “Through a Cat’s Ear” can block noise and help alleviate stress.
- Ensure your cat has some toys and treats in their carrier for their trip. Cover the carrier with a blanket to keep your cat comfortable and calm.



## CARRIER APPEAL



[SPRAYING FELIWAY](#) onto the bed in your cat carrier and the towel to cover the carrier can help them acclimate to their carrier more quickly.

ITEMS YOUR CAT LOVES: Giving your cat an activity to do like a food puzzle toy or lickimat, placing honeysuckle, catnip or other familiar toys and items can help them make a positive association with the carrier. This can be done while picking the carrier up and moving it around the room, during car rides and trips to the vet.