

# Making the Move With Your Cat.

Tips for making the transition; it's possible!



## Plan ahead to avoid surprises

- Check the local laws: Find out if you need a new license and what the laws are.
- Find a new vet: Don't wait until your cat gets injured or sick. Do some research to find out if they'll need any new vaccinations or preventative medications. Does your new area have ticks or other diseases?
- Get your cat microchipped and be certain your cell phone number is on their collar.
- Make sure your cat has identification. We've all read the wonderful stories about cats who were lost during a household move and eventually found their way home across country. This is so rare that it's always news. Better to have an ID tag on the pet's collar and have your pet microchipped for permanent identification.

## Prepare your cat for the trip

- Get your cat used to the crate you'll be needing for the move. Most cats dislike crates, so no one wants to be forced into one for the first time on moving day. Keep it out and occasionally put a treat or two inside so they aren't afraid to be inside the kennel/crate.

## Packing up

- Makes suitcases not scary! You may have noticed your cat getting nervous the last time you pulled out a suitcase for a trip. Imagine how they'll act when the whole house is being packed up! Condition them by having a few boxes and suitcases out ahead of time, so they don't associate those objects with you leaving or all their hiding places disappearing all at once.
- Make sure you're stocked. Before you leave stock up on all the pet supplies you'll need for the trip. That means cat food, pads, lining for crates, pet cleaners, disposable boxes, you name it. If you want to get to your new location in a timely manner you don't want to be making too many stops to clean up after your cat.
- Start training now: your cat might need to live by different rules in your new home, especially if you are downsizing from a single family home to an apartment. Define behavior goals ahead of time and working toward them before the move.
- Prepare them for what's ahead: Even before you move you can start getting your cat used to the new world by taking simulating new noises.
- Ask your vet about calming medication for the trip, and try them out ahead of time.

## What to do with your cat on moving day

- Give your cat a break at a pet sitter's home. During the hustle and bustle of the move, boarding cats for a few days with a pet sitter is a great idea.
- Pack for your cat: In addition to the basics of food and water, have a few favorite toys, extra towels and bedding.
- Don't clean their blankets or towels: You might want a fresh start, taking the smell of the old house to the new one will do a lot to ease your cat's anxiety.
- Prepare for the worst: Bring medical records, microchip numbers and a current photo in case the unthinkable happens and your cat does get separated. Make sure your microchip information is updated to your new address and a correct phone number.
- Keep them safe in the car. Make sure they always have ventilation and are secure. They will most likely be very uneasy in the car, so it is best to keep them in the crate. Some cats may get frightened by passing cars and leap around the vehicle, which could cause an accident.
- Feed them lightly, especially if they have sensitive stomachs.
- When you stop for breaks or to eat at a restaurant, keep them short. Especially in the summer with the dangerous heat levels in a sitting car. It may be best to pack meals or eat in the car so your cat doesn't feel abandoned and doesn't overheat. If you are stopping at a hotel, make sure you check ahead on your route to find pet friendly hotels.

## Helping your cat adjust to their new home

- Pet-proof your new place: Make sure doors aren't left open as your cat won't be sure of their new home right away and may run out an open door. Make sure there aren't any areas where your cat may escape or hide and get stuck or cause harm to themselves.
- Keep your cat in one room: It will take time for your cat to learn where they can and cannot be inside your new house. It is best to introduce them to the new house room-by-room. Make sure in the room you keep your cat in they have easy access to a litterbox and food and water. You may also have potentially dangerous items like cleaning supplies or human food out before you've totally unpacked.
- Create a familiar space: Arrange beds, crates and toys as close to your old setup as you can. Stick to their previous feeding.
- Make their new world fun. Use mental stimulation to tire active acts. Hide food around the house (only where you want the cats to be) and feed them from food-dispensing toys. Brain games help too.
- Don't expect perfection. Some cats don't take well to change right away, while others adapt fairly easily to new situations, but there is a lot to take in. Stay calm, reinforce positive behavior, and spend more time interacting with your pet.

## If you're flying

- Always do thorough research to find an airline with a good safety record for transporting animals. Once you find one, call the airline to ask about their pet policies. Can your pet travel in the cabin together with you – usually only small cats and dogs are permitted – or will they need to fly in checked baggage or cargo? What are their pet travel carrier or container regulations (they vary by airline)? What paperwork do they need?
- Be aware that airlines usually allow a limited number of animals on any flight. If this means switching days so you can travel on the same flight with your pet, it is recommend you do this. And try to book a flight with no stopovers.
- In some cases, especially if you're moving overseas, it may be easier to hire a pet transportation company to handle your pet's move. They'll handle a lot of the stressful stuff for you: book your pet's flight, advise you on the shots and paperwork needed (and check to make sure it's accurate), pick up and transport your pet to the airport, and pick up your pet at the other end and deliver her to her new home.

Moving with your pet is completely possible. It may take a bit of hard work at first for everyone to make the adjustment, but it will get better and your furry friend will settle into your new home.

If you're moving into an apartment make sure you reach out to local friends or family, search in the internet and local newspaper, and even local social media pages for pet-friendly apartments in various price ranges. Part of your commitment to getting a pet is making sure you're willing to take on the extra financial cost that may come with have a pet. This includes possible pet rent or deposits when living in apartments. Speak with landlords to make sure you understand their pet policies and what they expect from you as the owners.