



Teaching Your Cat to Go Into Their Carrier

Helping your cat feel comfortable with their carrier will not only provide a less stressful experience going into it, but it also helps them (and you) feel more calm and relaxed during travel! Here are a few easy steps you can take to make their carrier feel like a safe space.

Carrier Tip: We recommend using a hard carrier with a removable top and door. These carriers provide better structure and safety for the cat and are easy to clean!

Desensitizing the carrier: The process of helping your cat become more comfortable with their carrier over time is called desensitizing the carrier, and the steps are below.

1) Leave the carrier in an open space inside with the carrier door open at all times!

- a) Remove the top and front door of the carrier.
- b) Allow your cat to ignore or sniff and explore the carrier. Never make a big deal.
- c) Make the carrier a “den” or hangout spot for your cat by placing their favorite bed and toys inside and surrounding the front with catnip, and even putting a little inside!
- d) Try using a calming pheromone spray, like Feliway, sprayed on the blanket.
- e) Make sure they are comfortable before rushing to the next step. This may take a few days or even weeks!

2) Create positive association with the carrier over time using your cat’s favorite treats!

- a) Place your cat’s favorite treat in front of the carrier.
- b) Gradually place the treats further inside the carrier to lure the cat inside.
- c) Use a “jackpot” treat (something extra tasty that your cat loves) when they choose to go into their carrier on their own! This will help positively reinforce the behavior and they will continue offering this behavior knowing they will receive a yummy treat!

3) Once the cat is comfortable with being inside the carrier, reattach the carrier top when the cat is not around.

- a) Repeat step 2 again. Make sure they are comfortable before rushing to the next step. This may take a few days or even weeks!

4) Once the cat is comfortable being inside the carrier with the top on, reattach the door when the cat is not around.

- a) Repeat step 2 again leaving the door open. Make sure they are comfortable before rushing to the next step. This may take a few days or even weeks!



5) Once the cat is comfortable being inside the carrier with the door open:

- a) Gently shut the door for a few seconds while the cat eats inside. Then open the door. If your cat becomes stressed, end the session and try again later.
- b) Gradually over several days/weeks, build up the amount of time you keep the carrier door closed with the cat inside.
- c) Once your cat is comfortable being inside the carrier for a few minutes with the door closed, pick the carrier up and then place it down.
- d) Next, with the cat inside, carry them into another room. Place the carrier down and open the door, allowing the cat to exit.
- e) Repeat this several times over the next few days/weeks and if they become stressed at any step, end the session and try again later.
- f) Once your cat is comfortable being inside the carrier for 7-10 minutes, you're ready to try taking them out for a drive. Use step 2 to lure the cat into the carrier. Cover the carrier with a towel or blanket to help reduce stress. Then place the carrier in the car and go on a brief drive.



Training your cat to go into their carrier on command:

Cats are incredibly smart and can learn just like dogs! Once your cat is comfortable going into their carrier, you can take it a step further and train your cat to go into their carrier using **positive reinforcement training**.



This type of training uses the *luring* method along with a clicker, then adds in a verbal cue like “carrier” or a hand gesture.

Investing the time and energy into training your cat to go into their carrier provides a far less stressful experience for everyone in the long run!

Check out this great [step-by-step video](#) from The Jackson Galaxy Project.

Training Tip: Try training before mealtimes when your cat is hungry.