



Teaching Your Cat to Ride in a Carrier

A cat carrier is a vital tool for every cat owner. It allows you to transport your cat safely to and from the vet. It is also very helpful to have in emergencies. An ideal carrier is made of sturdy plastic and has a metal door (avoid doors made of plastic as they are more prone to breakage). Soft-sided carriers are popular but may not be ideal for a large cat and some cats are smart enough to get through zippered enclosures. The carrier should be large enough for your cat to turn around in. Always inspect your carrier for any defects or loose parts so that your pet stays safe during travel.

If your cat isn't comfortable in his or her carrier, it will be difficult or impossible to get him or her into it, and your cat will be stressed out when confined to the carrier. Considering the importance and usefulness of a cat carrier, it pays to work toward making the carrier a pleasant experience for your cat. With a little patience, you can help teach your cat to ride in a carrier. The key is to make sure that all of your cat's experiences with the carrier are positive, which will make traveling with your pet more pleasant and comfortable for everyone.

Step One

- Place the carrier in a place where your cat already spends time. Prop the carrier door open. Place comfy bedding and a favorite toy in the carrier. You might also cover the carrier with a blanket or sheet. You can also spray the carrier with Feliway®, which has been shown to have some effect in relieving stress in cats.
- Put your cat's food bowl in front of the carrier and start feeding him there. If your cat has been afraid of his carrier in the past, he may not want to eat right next to it so in that case, move the bowl a bit further away from the carrier until he starts eating. Then, over several meals, gradually move the bowl toward the carrier.



1. Feed meals near the carrier.

Step Two

- When your cat eats his food comfortably right in front of the carrier, place the food bowl a little deeper into the carrier.
- Gradually, over several meals, move the food bowl towards the back of the carrier so that he has to go completely inside the carrier to eat. Give your cat *every* meal in the carrier.
- Leave tasty treats in the carrier for your cat to find throughout the day. The cat should gradually become more comfortable exploring the carrier on his own.



2. Feed meals in the carrier.

Step Three

- Once your cat is comfortably eating all his meals in the carrier, practice gently closing the carrier door for a few minutes while your cat is eating.
- Once your cat is comfortable with being in the closed carrier, practice moving the carrier around, even just in your home. This will help your cat get used to being in the carrier while it is moving. Offer yummy treats while the cat is in the carrier and reward your cat after any practice sessions with play time or treats.



3. Practice closing the door.

Final Tips

- Be patient! If your cat isn't making progress, go back to the previous step.
- Cover the carrier with a blanket or sheet during travel. This will help your cat feel more secure.
- Remember...**Never** open the carrier during travel. Always wait until you are in a securely enclosed indoor space.
- Continue feeding meals in the carrier to make sure the next carrier ride is a successful one.



Happy Travels!