

CAT CARRIER TRAINING – FOR KITTY-K

Cats are typically turned off to carriers because they associate being stuffed in the carrier with a nasty experience, that dreaded car ride to the vet office.

The goal of Kitty-K is to change that perception. But we need your help to make that happen.

Purchase your carrier at least ten days before the first class. Any cat carrier will do, but we recommend a soft sided carrier which opens on the sides (in addition to opening on the top, which most carriers do). And believe it or not, you can teach your kitty to simply walk into it.

About seven to ten days before the first Kitty-K session, take the carrier out and simply set it near a food dish. Open it up so curious kitties can hop into it if they want to, and reward them with praise and/or kibble for doing so.

After a few days of the carrier being as innocuous as a chair or any other piece of furniture, feed kitty from here. Most cats will immediately chow down their food from inside the carrier; however a small percent will demand you take their food dish and place it into the carrier.

After a day or so of the carrier becoming associated with food, you can drop a treat inside...Give a command, "Check it out," "Go inside" or whatever you want to say. And within days your baby will be trained to go into her carrier when you ask her to. You'll never have to chase around the sofa to catch a terrified screaming kitty to stuff inside a carrier again.



After kitty has enjoyed in-carrier dining for two days, leave only about 20 per cent of the meal inside the carrier. When kitty goes inside to eat, zip up the carrier or close it with kitty inside; and then simply carry kitty to another room or a few feet down the hall. Set the carrier down and unzip or open the carrier, letting the cat hop out. A half hour later place another 20 per cent of food inside the carrier, when kitty goes inside, again relocate kitty into a nearby room or down a hallway and then again calmly unzip or open it. Repeat until 100 per cent of the meal is finished. You're teaching the cat that toting her about in the carrier means nothing.

The overwhelming majority of cats will look at you strangely when you first move the carrier with them closed up inside, but will certainly finish the food. A miniscule per cent will complain loudly, acting pretty upset. If your cat is among that tiny per cent, add just a tad of salmon or tuna to the kibble and be sure not to tote kitty more than a few steps at a time. You never want to let the cat out of the bag as a reward for her complaining.

If you're able to before the first Kitty-K class begins – and assuming your kitty isn't vocalizing about the carrier – simply take her for a quick car ride or walk down the block inside the carrier. For the best results, do this before meal time. Instead of offering her a lot of food inside the carrier for a car ride (we don't want car sick cats) just offer a tidbits of a very special treat.

It's encouraged to begin the socialization process (assuming your kitty is vet checked), before the Kitty-K class even begins. You can tote your kitty to the local dry cleaner, or perhaps a pet store. However, to insure safety, please use a leash and harness when she's not inside the carrier.

By Steve Dale

