

How Can I Make Move Easier on My Cat?

CatChannel expert Jeanne Adlon, professional cat sitter, gives advice on easing your cat's transition to a new home.

By Jeanne Adlon

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Q: How can I make moving to a new home easier for my cats?

A: I am asked this question often, so I am always on the lookout for ways to make moving day a smooth transition for all. I once had a client who traveled a lot on business, and was always very good about giving me plenty of notice for the dates he would be away, so I take care of his cats. One day he informed me that he was getting married and would be leaving New York, but he did not know when.

The next time I was scheduled to care for his cats, I thought he was away on business as usual. Imagine my surprise when I arrived and found the apartment nearly empty. I immediately started searching for Missy, a cute black female kitty, and Sherman, a longhaired orange male. I became very concerned when I could not find them and called my client's mother, who is also a client. She informed me that her son had decided to move out of New York earlier than expected and was shocked that he hadn't canceled my visit. My feeling is he was probably too involved with wedding and moving plans and just forgot. The good news is Missy and Sherman went with him, but I was sorry I didn't get a chance to say goodbye to them. I do get attached to the kitties I care for.

Moving can be very stressful for all of us, and with cats involved, it can be even more worrisome. There are some things to ease the pain though. On moving day, have a designated room in your old home for your cat, with her litter, food, toys and something with your scent to lie on. Secure the door and put a sign on it that says "Do Not Open — Cat Inside!" You do not want movers disturbing her during the process, or take a chance on a panicky kitty escaping.

When it is time to move, place your cat in the carrier while still in the room. Put a toy in the carrier as well. Once in the new home, put her in a preselected room that is out of the confusion as much as possible. Make sure the room has already been set up with litter, food, toys and something familiar to lie on. Keep her there until everything has quieted down. Give her extra treats and buy some new toys (and a new scratching post) to make her feel special and above all, be patient. Let her come out and explore her new home when she is ready.