

## My Cat Is Afraid of the Carrier

**CatChannel expert Jeanne Adlon, professional cat sitter, offers advice for helping cats take the carrier in stride.**

*By Jeanne Adlon*

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**Q:** My cat is terribly afraid of the cat carrier. What can I do?

**A:** My orange kitty Simon was the same way until I started showing him that the carrier does not always mean disaster. He's a feisty big boy with strong opinions and the carrier was one of them. I always found that carriers with the opening on the top are easier than ones with front openers, particularly with reluctant cats. However, when it came time to take Simon to the vet recently, I remembered I had loaned my top opener to a friend and it hadn't yet been returned.

My only choice was a front-opening carrier and the ensuing battle wasn't pretty. I finally got Simon in rear-end first and it wasn't until I was at the vets that we noticed blood on the carrier. It was mine. Simon had landed a deep scratch before his undignified transport.

I have found that most cats do not like being in confined spaces and since many of us only bring out the carrier to take them to the vet, it becomes double trouble in their eyes. I finally cured Simon of his carrier concerns by making it another part of his normal environment. I found a quiet place in one of my rooms where I could leave it open and let him explore. After putting in some bedding and a favorite catnip toy, he soon started to look on it as another place to have a snooze. We no longer have carrier wars.

If you cannot leave your carrier out full time, I suggest you bring it out in the open a day or two before putting your cat inside. You can also try taking your cat on a short trip that does not end at the vet's office, and when returning home, rewarding her with plenty of treats. Also, please make sure your carrier is big enough for your cat to stand up in, lie flat and turn around.

One of my clients has four cats and has made very cute cat condos out of her cat carriers. When I arrive to take care of her kitties, I go over to a large window where she has them stacked two-by-two, with bedding and toys on the inside, and a great view of Manhattan outside. Needless to say, when she travels to her country home with her cats, they are happy to go.