

On the Move

Cat owners face a challenge when finding a home to rent. Here's how to make your cat attractive to landlords.

Marty Becker, DVM, and Janice Willard, DVM

I think it is a matter of responsibility, Wiler said, who, a decade later, has become a landlord and rents to people with pets. I look at the way potential renters interact with their pets as an indicator. If they take good care of their pet, can show me they get regular veterinary care and have a good relationship with their veterinarian, I find them generally to be responsible people.

The Purr-Fect TenantIt's never been easy to find a rental for my fur-family and myself, said Kathy Matejka of Colorado Springs, Colo. However, there are some proven strategies that have always been useful to me.

First, Matejka said that she creates a resume for her cats, which includes photographs, details about the cats, a record of previous landlords going back at least 10 years and a history of rent payments and good tenantry. She also said that she collects business cards and documents from her veterinarians to show that she's serious about her cats well-being.

Second, when Matejka moves, she asks her landlords for reference letters that address her pets' behavior. I've always made it a point to leave a dwelling in the same or better condition than I've found it in, she said. I've taken my pet ownership responsibilities seriously.

Third, it is imperative to keep tabs on your cats behavior. The sooner you address problems, the better, said Pam Johnson-Bennett, cat behaviorist and author of *Cat vs. Cat*. You can't take a cat you have allowed to tear up your space for five years and expect to turn it around overnight when you have to move. The earlier you start training and getting good habits established, the better off you will be.

Your Home is Their WorldBasic biological needs for an animal go beyond just food and water. Stressed animals may try to remodel their environment to one that more suits their needs or respond with other stress-related behaviors. The best way to prevent cats from damaging a home is to understand their needs and provide for them.

You have to look at whether the rental unit is even a suitable place to rent to someone with pets, Wiler said. This keeps everyone happy.