

Making Cat Carriers Less Bad

Better Carriers

It can be helpful to start fresh with a new carrier. Look for top entry, solid sides and bottom, Tons of ventilation. band ease for you to carry it steady (like a birthday cake) to avoid jostling kitty. Avoid bags, zippers, and plastic bubbles for most cats and wheels on bumpy terrain

Keep it Around Year Round

Most cats are terrified of being trapped, especially in something they've not seen in a year. ESPECIALLY if it smells like scary vet (yes, even a year later). Keep carriers out and about in kitty's living space. Tuck it in a corner or under a blanket if it's too ugly or make it more special by facing it toward something nice (ex: a window)

Make it Great

Put a soft bed inside that smells like home. Keep or prop doors open for easy in/out exploration. Find a great new treat (NOT their food) and put some around carrier (or in a bowl nearby). When you notice treats are gone refresh once in a while. Eventually add some just inside until those disappear. Eventually add some fully inside. Keep adding occasionally long term.

The Steps

1. Any time you notice them inside, give treats. They'll likely dart - do NOT interfere with escape. Just leave treat inside for later.
2. Repeat until they remain inside and eat treats as you put them through carrier air holes.
3. Eventually, wiggle the door a teeny bit before giving treats, repeat until step 2 is achieved
4. Eventually close the door without latching, repeat until step 2 is achieved
5. Eventually latch and quickly open door, repeat until step 2 is achieved
6. Repeat steps 1 & 2 weekly from now on
7. Same process, but shut door for 3s
8. Same process, but pick carrier 1" off ground and immediately replace
9. Repeat step 5 weekly from now on
10. Same process but pick carrier up and put down
11. Same process but walk around a bit
12. Same process but get in the car

Slower is Faster

If you skip steps or proceed too soon, you will have to start all over. Head's up: you may be stuck at a step for 6mos!