**Carrier Tips**

**We all understand that bringing your cat to the vet can be stressful. Putting your cat in the carrier and into the car can be traumatic for not only your kitty, but you, the owner, as well. Since we cannot teleport your kitty to our office, we have provided some tips to help your kitty become more comfortable with their carrier.**

1. Start by purchasing a carrier that is suitable for your cat’s size. If your cat already has negative associations with your current carrier, you may want to purchase a new one.
2. Build a positive association with the carrier by keeping it out in the open in your home. This allows the cat to get used to seeing it, not just when a trip out is impending. You can spray it with a pheromone spray, like Feliway, but wait thirty minutes before introducing the carrier to the cat, so the odor isn’t too strong.
3. Place the carrier in an area that your cat can easily get to, and where they feel safe.
4. Put a soft blanket or towel in the carrier that your cat would enjoy sleeping on. Take the door off of the carrier, so they have easy access in and out of the carrier.
5. Place one of your cat’s favorite toys or a special item in the carrier to encourage them to go inside. If they choose not to, don’t force them. Allow them to enter on their own.
6. Start giving your cat’s treats next to the carrier and then gradually in the carrier. This can be an everyday event. They will then recognize the carrier as a positive place to go for treat time.
7. Once your cat is comfortable with their carrier you can start taking you cat for walks in the carrier. Close the carrier with your cat inside and take walks around your house inside and then graduate to outside. If your cat gets scared, stop, don’t force the issue, and just try again another time. Be patient, it may take time.
8. You can then take small trips around your neighborhood to get your cat used to the carrier and riding in the car. Place a towel over the carrier if needed.
9. When bringing your cat into the vet place a towel over the carrier before you leave home. You can also spritz your home, around the carrier, and your car with Feliway pheromone spray (remember spray thirty minutes ahead of time). This will help calm your cat down.
10. Finally, you, as the owner, need to relax as well. Cats can sense your emotions and when you are tense and stressed your cat will assume that there is a problem and become anxious themselves.
11. When you return home, place the carrier down and open the door. Allow them to come out or stay inside. You can also reward them for their good behavior by placing a few treats inside their carrier. Put the carrier back in the same location and take the door off. Keep it there, and continue giving treats inside their carrier. You can also continue taking walks and short car rides. That way your next vet visit will be stress free.

MEOW! (aka Good Luck!)