

Moving house

5 minute guide



with your cat

Why is moving house stressful for cats?

Moving can be traumatic for cats. Their security and ability to relax stems from the familiar sights, sounds and scents of their own territory. Being removed from this leaves them feeling exposed and vulnerable.

There are two options for moving with your cat:

- 🐾 You can place your cat in a cattery. This best suits those not moving a great distance; *or*,
- 🐾 You can take your pet with you, which requires some planning, as per below.

How do I prepare my cat for the move?

🐾 Once you start packing up, allocate a secure room for your cat away from all the upheaval. This should be one that removal men will not need to access, and which can be locked or secured.

🐾 About a week before the move, place your cat's bed in this secure room, along with his scratching post, litter tray, toys, and, so it becomes familiar, his cat carrier. You can also start to feed him in there so that he becomes accustomed to this safe retreat.

🐾 On moving day and before the removal men arrive, feed your cat a small meal, clean the litter tray, then lock the door. It is a good idea to place a temporary quick release collar with his new address on it for the journey. Ideally, he should also be microchipped; remember to inform the central database of your new address.

How do I settle my cat into the new home?

🐾 Once you arrive, take your cat to a designated secure room with all his familiar belongings. This will help him feel a little less stressed about being in a strange environment. You can also give him something that smells of you, such as unwashed clothing, along with a bowl of food, water and a clean litter tray.

🐾 Make sure the removal men know which room to avoid, as you don't want him to escape at this point.

🐾 It's a good idea to leave him in this room for a few days. He needs to get used to this small area first before having access to the rest of the house.

When can I give my cat access to the rest of the house?

A cat will let you know when he feels more confident by his behaviour. Cats vary in the time it takes to become settled: bold cats adapt more quickly, while timid ones take longer. Once your cat shows its own characteristic pattern of behaviour, such as eating normally and playing, you can gradually allow him into the rest of the house. Before doing so, however, make sure all doors, windows and cat flaps are securely fastened. It is vital that cats feel relaxed and secure in their new home before being allowed outside. *It is advisable to keep a cat indoors for at least two to three weeks in a new home.*

What about letting him outside?

🐾 The best time to start letting your cat outside is shortly before a mealtime, when he is hungry.

🐾 Open the door and step outside, encouraging him to go with you. Do not pick him up—it is better if he makes the decision to go out, himself. In addition, he will be able to follow his own scent back more easily if he makes his own way out.

🐾 Leave the door open, or, alternatively, leave the cat flap tied up, so that he can get back in quickly if he is afraid.

🐾 When he has been outside for a short time, call him back in with his favourite—preferably strong-smelling—food.

🐾 If the first expedition is successful, you can start letting him out for longer periods each day before calling him back in for food.

If your cat does not wish to go outside, don't force the issue. He'll go when he's good and ready.



Cats and people – Living in harmony

Helpline: 08702 099 099 Web: www.cats.org.uk

17 Kings Road Horsham West Sussex RH13 5PN Charity No. 203644