



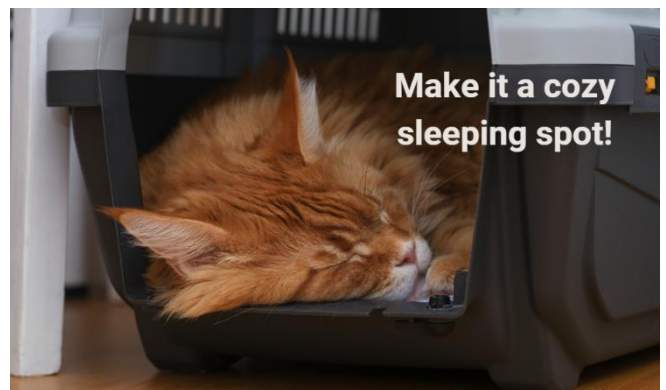
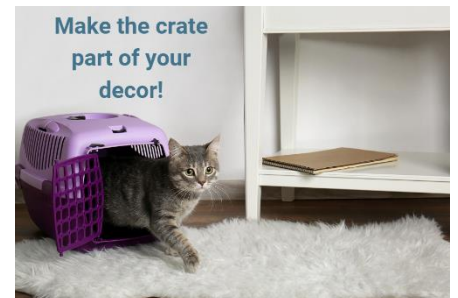
Transport Tips: How to Crate a Cat

Whether you are taking your cat to the vet, to a new home, or exiting during an emergency, chances are you will need to use a crate at some point in your cat's life. For many cats, crates are scary places that predict things they don't enjoy. But it doesn't have to be that way! Through the power of classical conditioning, your cat can learn to love their crate, or at least feel neutrally about it.

Our goal: Make the crate a predictor of positive experiences!

We want to make the crate a fun part of your cat's daily routine, so that we can easily ask the cat to go inside rather than the appearance of the crate always predicting something scary like a vet visit. Our goal is to help make the new crate a place they CHOOSE to be! Here are a few ways you can do that:

- **Finding a new crate** if your cat has negative associations with the one you currently have. There are many sizes and styles to choose from. If you previously used a cloth crate for example, try an airplane crate (hard plastic sides) or a wire crate.
- **REGULARLY pair your crate with super fun experiences.** This might mean bringing out the crate every time you bring out your cat's favorite toy, or when they get an extra tasty treat, such as a Nulo or Churu stick, turkey neck, or wet food lick mat. Habitually pairing the crate with things your cat loves can create the same type of association that dogs feel when their owner picks up a leash—something great is about to happen! You can use these food or toy reinforcers to crate your cat on the day that the crate is needed without your cat being wary, since you've made it a predictable routine.
- **OR: Consider setting up the crate as an inviting part of your decor.** If the crate is a permanent feature and is set up as a cozy spot, your cat will be much more likely to use it and feel comfortable there. There are many ways to make the crate more visually appealing, such as covering it with a decorative blanket.
- **Consider placing a heated bed inside.** This is one way to encourage its use. There are many options, starting at around \$35.



For more information or to request behavior assistance, visit eastbayspca.org/behavior.

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Make sure to get one designed for pet use! Heating pads get TOO HOT and are not designed to be plugged in long term.

- **Try including the crate in play!** Make your cat's favorite toys move around on top of and inside it. You can even tape newspaper strips inside for them to bat at on their own.
- **Try feeding daily meals inside the crate, always keeping the door open.** If that becomes their "normal" eating spot, it will be much easier to get them inside on a day they're headed to the vet. Our goal is to build up such a positive history with going inside that it won't be irreparably damaged by the occasional scary experience.
- **On the day you need to crate your cat, MAKE SURE YOU COVER THE CRATE while transporting your cat.** This can make the experience less scary and overwhelming! We recommend a familiar smelling blanket or towel.

Crating your cat doesn't have to be a scary experience or a fight. With a little effort on the front end, we can set the process up for success!