

Moving can be a stressful experience, especially for the furry family member . Whether you're moving a pet across the street or moving pets overseas, change can be stressful for cats and dogs alike. Pet owners need to consider that their animals may be sensitive to such a big change and plan accordingly.

Cats can be especially anxious about clutter and new scenery, while skittish dogs can also be susceptible to emotional stress throughout the moving process.

This guide on moving with your pet will explain how you can work to ensure your four-legged family members have a safe, happy transition to their new home.



Is the New Home Safe for Your Pet?

A good indication of a pet-friendly home is a pet-friendly neighborhood. As you're reviewing your new surroundings, take note of your neighbors. Are others out walking animals? Do you see cats in the windows? Are there pets roaming around their fenced-in yard? When evaluating a new home, pet owners should consider the following:

- For dogs, homeowners should ensure that there is available space outside for going to the bathroom and exercise. A fenced-in backyard is an added bonus, keeping your pets in, and others out. Even the most well-behaved dogs may find

something outside that spikes their natural curiosity, especially in a brand new environment.

- In some moving scenarios, it's not always possible to have yard space for your dog to call its own. If you're going to be walking your dog regularly, consider the safety of your neighborhood, as your dog is going to need to get fresh air day and night. Make sure you are comfortable with your surroundings in your new neighborhood for both your safety and that of your pet.
- Cat owners need to be especially mindful of places throughout the home that can be wiggled into by these curious creatures. Make sure all vents and passageways are closed off and be weary of homes with open staircases or "catwalks" that can easily be misinterpreted as a dangerous launching pad by cats.
- You'll want to consider the space needed to accommodate your pet. Dogs typically need more square footage than cats, but both animals can benefit from a safe, quiet space in the home they can retreat to when life gets overwhelming.
- For renters, make sure your landlord is accommodating and knows that you are a pet owner. You may have to pay an additional fee for having a pet, so communication with your landlord is key.

After considering these points, your work to ensure a pet-friendly home isn't done. There are several steps that should be taken immediately after moving.

- **Find & Fix Problem Areas:** Steep staircases may be a deal-breaker, but unsecured window screens are something that can easily be fixed and shouldn't deter you from a home. Identify any danger areas for your pet and make these updates before allowing your pet near them. This includes "petproofing" easily accessible areas, like cabinets that may contain chemicals or human foods you don't want your curious pets consuming.
- **Make Sure House Plants Are Safe:** House plants carry a certain feng shui promoting a positive energy flow in your home. Unfortunately, many house plants are toxic to our pets. Watch out for lilies, aloe vera, ivy, jade, palm varieties and dieffenbachia. Consider artificial plants that look just as nice, but have a much lower chance of sending you to the emergency vet.
- **Avoid Dangling Wires:** When you get around to setting up your new home, make sure that wires from televisions, lamps, gaming systems, etc. are inaccessible to your pets. Not only can they chew and ruin these items, they also pose a strangling risk.

- **Keep a Good Environment For Your Pet:** A new home is a fresh start. Keep your home tidy, toilet lids closed, garbage lids covered, furniture vacuumed and pet food and pet toys easily accessible. For cat owners, consider a scratching post to keep your kitten's natural instincts from ruining your new furniture, carpet or hardwood floors. Make sure fragile items, such as vases and art are located in high, hard-to-reach places to avoid an expensive mess.



Prepare Your Pets Ahead of Time

Moving day (and the adjustment period after) will be much easier on your pets if you have properly prepared them. This, like crate training or learning a new trick, is a gradual process.

- **Get The Boxes Out Early:** Our pets can detect change. They can be put on alert by something as simple as taking a suitcase out of the closet. Acquire a few boxes for packing early on in the process and place them around your home. Don't make a big deal about them and try to create a positive association with the boxes. If your pet starts sniffing the boxes, you can give them a treat. This may help calm some of your pet's pre-moving anxiety.

- **A Regular Routine Is Important:** As you pack up your home, you will be busy, so make sure to set time aside to spend time with your pet while you prepare for your move. Continue with regular walks, feeding schedules and playtime just as you normally would to maintain your routine and normalcy.
- **Use Pheromones Or A Plug-In Diffuser:** These methods can help promote a calming, positive environment for your pets and can be used to help minimize disruptions that may naturally occur in their routine. Likewise, a pheromone collar can be used immediately leading up to and during the big move.
- **Acclimate Your Pets To Their Crate & New Neighborhood:** Many pets associate their carrier with trips to the vet and painful shots. Make an effort to make travel a positive experience for your pet by taking them on new trips to new places. Reward your pets with treats and perhaps some scenery leading up to moving day. You can also take your dog for a walk through your new neighborhood before you put down roots to get them used to the sights and scents.

Checklist for Moving with Your Pet

While you're preparing your pet's psyche leading up to moving day, you also need to plan for the move itself and how to properly acclimate your pet to its new home. These tips help assure a healthy, happy & safe transition to your pet's new home.

- **Take Your Pet to the Vet for a Checkup & Obtain Their Health Record:** If you're moving across country with pets, you'll need to terminate your relationship with your existing vet. A few weeks prior to your move, it's a good idea to schedule a comprehensive exam for your pet, including any vaccinations to make sure they are healthy for your upcoming move. Also, the last thing you want are fleas penetrating your brand new home on moving day, so make sure your pet is checked for fleas during their final exam as well. Finally, obtain your pet's health record which you can then send to your new veterinarian.
- **Locate A New Veterinarian & Transfer Records:** After your pet's final visit with your old vet, it's a good idea to start thinking about where you will be taking your pets in the future. Since your pet should be current on shots and have a clean bill of health, you may not need to schedule an appointment immediately upon arrival. However, it is important to be aware of emergency clinics in your new area should the need arise. Look for referrals from new neighbors, social media or online research to get an idea of who is in your new area.
- **Update Your Pet's Identification & Microchip Information:** The thought of a lost pet is overwhelming. Take preventative measures and make sure your pet has a new identification tag made prior to the move and that their microchip information is updated online right before you hit the road. It's important to make

sure your pet wears its identification throughout the entire moving process, just in case they were to get out.

- **Make A Transportation Game-Plan:** When choosing how to transport pets when moving, decide on whether you are driving or flying to your new destination.
 - Avoid transporting your pet in tight or what could be considered dangerous areas, such as the cabin of a van or bed of a truck. Whether your pet is being transported in a large crate or a small carrier, make sure they are comfortable throughout the ride. Some pets may fare better with a blanket covering their carrier throughout the ride to keep a consistent and secure environment. Be sure to take scheduled stops for your pet to go to the bathroom and take breaks in safe locations as you continue along your journey. Outside of leashed breaks, consider leaving your pet in their crate until you reach your destination. You may also want to do a couple of test trips prior to your travel day to get a feel for how your pet will react.
 - A plane may be the best way to transport pets long distance, but extra care needs to be taken if you choose to fly. If flying, check with your airline for their policies on pets. This may include providing health records and meeting kennel sizing requirements. Airlines have the right to refuse you to carry on an animal for any reason and air travel needs to be pre-arranged. Confirm with the airline 48-hours prior to boarding what their regulations are regarding pets to ensure they can make the trip. For larger animals who cannot be carried on, we highly advise considering ground travel instead, as storing them in cargo is highly stressful and not guaranteed to be safe. If a pet must be stored in cargo, avoid peak travel times and plan your trip with as few transfers as possible. You can also speak to your relocation consultant about available pet transportation options for more ideas.
 - If your trip takes more than a day, research pet-friendly hotels along the way to get some much needed rest together.
- **Consider Boarding Your Pet Upon Arrival:** Your pet may be on edge as you prepare your new home – especially after a long period of travel. Because of this, you may want to consider sending your pet away to doggy daycare upon arriving at your destination. A few weeks prior to your move, you can research boarding facilities near your new home. Your pet may be stressed at a strange place like this, but many boarding facilities provide ample playtime to help get your pet's mind off of what has already been a stressful time. This allows you time to get your home in order, so when your pet comes home they can feel at home with familiar surroundings. If this is not possible, you can make efforts to segregate your pet to a quiet area of your new home, with toys, food and water. Take time out of moving to keep up with your previous routine, including walks and regular feeding schedules.

- **Purchase Supplies:** As time allows leading up to your move, a big trip to the pet store may be in order. This not only prepares you for the journey ahead, but for a fresh start in your new home. For your trip, make sure you have:
 - Ample Food
 - Pee Pads (just in case!)
 - Extra Towels
 - Baby Wipes
 - Treats & Chews
 - A Window Shade for your car
 - A Collapsible Water Bowl
 - Updated Identification

This is also a good time to pamper your pet. Maybe you've had your eyes on that robotic litter box or a new set of food bowls. Go ahead and make sure your pet is well equipped in your new home!

- **Check Your Destination's Pet Entry Regulations:** Moving pets overseas or even moving cross country with a dog or cat can pose unique challenges from your current location. Depending on your destination, there may be unique laws regarding pet entry. Some countries may require shots or a quarantine period upon arrival. For international moves, you may choose to seek out pet relocation services to help consult you through the process.



The Best Way to Move Pets Across The Country

Moving with pets can be overwhelming, but over time, your pet will adapt to its surroundings and love your new home just as much as their previous one. Below are some additional helpful tips to make the best of your move with pets:

- **Prepare an Overnight Kit:** It's a good idea to pack an overnight kit for your pup or kitten to prepare them for their first night in their new home. Make sure that essentials, such as food, litter, toys, treats, and grooming tools are packaged separately and can easily be unloaded right away in your new home.
- **Keep Your Pets Out of the Action:** If you've ever tried moving with a cat (or received any package delivered to your house, really,) you know that cats love boxes. When the movers are there to pack, it might be wise to have your pet in a secure location like their pet carrier or crate. When you move, you will likely have a lot of boxes to unpack. You probably are also aware that some cats may not handle change particularly well. It's understandable that you're in a rush to let your pet roam their new surroundings right away and spend time with you, but keeping them separate from the settling in process can be beneficial and more relaxing for them.
- **Keeping an Eye on Your Pets:** Make sure to monitor your pet's outside activity, even if you have a fenced-in yard, as they can be curious or even scared in a new environment. Keeping them in a room where they can hear you, but not see you may be best.
- **Let Them Adjust Slowly:** Realize that moving with pets can be difficult both for yourself and your animal. It will likely take time for them to adjust to your new home, especially if the size of your new home significantly differs from that of your previous residence. It's advisable to gradually introduce your pets to new rooms as they become more comfortable rather than giving them free reign of their new home right away. Toys, food and familiar scents are all tools that can be used during this adjustment period.

Special Considerations For Moving with a Dog

When you move cross country with a dog, you may notice destructive behaviors, such as symptoms of anxiety, indoor accidents, and an increase in chewing or barking.

Some dogs may be comfortable after a move within a few days, while others can take weeks or even months to fully adjust to their new way of life. When moving with a dog, consider these tips:

- **Keep A Routine, Even When It's Inconvenient To You:** Dogs are creatures of habit. Attempt to make their new normal resemble the old normal as much as possible.
- **Make Sure They're Exercising:** Playtime keeps your dog's mind at ease, and, when they're worn out, they're more likely to just sleep easier. Plan to maintain your dog's previous energy levels or push for a little more immediately following your move.
- **Give Them Loads of Attention:** Affection and treats can help reassure your pet that everything is OK.
- **Stay At Home As Much As You Can:** Plan to take some extra time off work, or, if you're moving for a new job, consider negotiating a delayed start. This not only benefits you, because moving is stressful on people as well, but also provides more together time as your pet settles in.
- **Speak with Your Vet, If All Else Fails:** If your dog has a history of being anxious, you may wish to speak with your veterinarian about medications to help calm them down. Other drug-free therapeutic options include investing in a thunder shirt or pheromones.
- **Be Patient:** It takes time to teach an old dog a new trick, and it takes even more time to get a dog acclimated to new surroundings. Be patient with your pet, as this may take a few weeks. With extra love and attention, your four-legged friend will be back to its old self in no-time!

How To Move With A Cat: Special Considerations For Your Feline Friend

Moving long distance with cats can be easier than moving with a dog, but felines, while good about hiding their emotions, are also creatures of habit who don't like their routines altered. Like dogs, moving with a cat is all about stress reduction.

- **Make Sure Your Cat Is Comfortable In Its Carrier:** Cats can be fussy when traveling, especially if they're not used to being confined. While some cats don't like traveling, most love cozy, quiet spaces to relax. In the time leading up to the move, you can leave their carrier open around the house, giving them an extra place to wind down. When moving day comes, that action can help reduce difficulty getting them to come along for the ride.

- **You Can Let Them Play With Your Moving Boxes:** Did we say cats love cozy, quiet spaces to relax? Well, let's tell you about boxes. Cats LOVE boxes. When it's time to start unpacking, you can let your cats explore your boxes. If they're not quite sure about them, you can spray some catnip on them, or hide treats in them to make it a fun game.
- **Deep Clean Your New Home:** Cats can be very susceptible to smells, and your new home will inevitably smell different than your previous one. If the previous owner of the home had animals of their own, this can be a source of stress for your cat. Consider shampooing carpets, vacuuming thoroughly, and disinfecting hard surfaces to help your kitty feel more at home.
- **Food & Litter Accessibility:** Make it easy for your cat to find their litter box and food in their new home. This will be their safe space, and a source of familiarity.