Crate Training Your Cat

Learn how to make your cat love their crate!

Initial Crate Training Sessions

1. Prepare the crate:
   - Line the crate with soft bedding.
   - Cover it with a blanket for maximum privacy.
   - Spray the blanket with Feliway spray twice daily.
   - Sprinkle some catnip onto the bedding inside.
   - Leave a small flat dish inside with about a teaspoon of wet food or baby food.
   - Place a few high-value treats both inside and in front of the crate.

2. Leave the crate out on the floor against the wall of your cat's room where they most often hang out. Go away and give them at least an hour to check out the crate and its treasures.

3. Check on the crate and replace any eaten treats. If none of the treats have been eaten, try other treats of higher value. Occasionally replace the catnip.

4. If you see your cat in the crate, don't approach them. Just hang out in the room nearby, maybe tossing treats into the crate or near the crate exit. If they exit the crate when you approach, you're too close!

5. Eventually, your cat will be comfortable enough that you can feed them wet food on a spoon or hand them treats in the crate. Make sure that they are this comfortable for at least four training sessions before you start preparing to close the crate door.
6. After you are sure they are comfortable with you handing them treats in their crate, hand them a dish with a tablespoon of wet food in it. Then gently touch the crate door with your hand. Take your hand away before they stop eating, then give them another helping of wet food and touch the door again.

If they are comfortable with this after five repetitions, try wiggling the door back and forth in between portions of wet food. After five more repetitions of this, you can gradually start closing the door more and more, until it is touching the opening of the crate, each time rewarding them with the wet food.

When you can finally close the door, do it very momentarily, immediately opening it again and giving them more food in the kennel. Gradually increase the time the crate is closed until you can crate them for five minutes at a time without them running out when you open the door.

**Maintenance Crate Training**

It's very important to make crate training a part of your regular routine with fearful cats. This will ensure that kenneling them for transport is always a quick and stress-free experience.

After the initial crate training sessions, take the crate away. Once a week or so, put the crate back out for one day and randomly put treats and catnip inside to remind your cat that the crate is a good thing. Don't forget to continue to practice giving them treats when they are already inside and reward them for staying in the crate when you fiddle with the door.

Want to find out more about cat behavior?
Check out friends4life.org/behavior