

Getting a Cat into a Carrier

Tips & Tricks from The Etobicoke Humane Society



METHOD 1: LURE WITH FOOD

This works much better with more socially confident cats, the type to greet you at the door, and rub between your legs. It's the more positive way to get a cat into a carrier, but unfortunately this method won't work with most.

1. Ideally leave the carrier in with the cat the night before to allow them time to adjust to its presence.
2. Lure them in with a good smelling food/treat.
3. If they only go half in, you can always give them a firm nudge to go the rest of the way.

METHOD 2: PLACE THEM IN

Have someone else hold the carrier at a 45° angle

1. Pick up the cat, hold their bottom feet together with your left hand, and their top feet together with your right.
2. Lower them into the tilted carrier, tail first, while holding their paws firmly so they can't grab onto the edges.
3. Try to be quick with your movements; any hesitation will only serve to create more anxiety for the cat.

METHOD 3: BLANKET

This method works best with a less socially confident/fearful/potentially aggressive cat.

1. Acquire a thick, large, blanket - the blanket should be large enough to completely wrap the cat, with some extra fabric left over. If you are dealing with a potentially aggressive cat, a thicker blanket will work well as a barrier.
2. Feel free to remove other things that may become a hindrance in securing the cat (i.e. cat trees, chairs, etc.)
3. Place the blanket over the cat - focus primarily on ensuring their face is covered. This will protect you from being bitten/scratched, and stop them from running away. Approaching from behind is typically easiest and avoid hesitation.

Step 4 may take some time, especially if you're dealing with a cat that runs, try to be patient. There may be situations where you do need to throw the blanket quickly over their head, catch them off guard while they're sleeping, or move extremely slowly/calmly as to not scare them. Each situation will be unique depending on the cat's temperament.

This will not always go smoothly, most cats will freeze when the blanket is over their face but some may try to run. If this is the case, use the blanket almost like a net, and secure the edges to the floor. Allow them some time to calm down prior to picking them up.



METHOD 3: BLANKET CONT'D

4. After their face is covered, wrap the rest of their body snugly with the blanket, like a little purr-ito.

While you're doing this it's very important that you always are aware of where their head is, so you don't have an escape artist. For the majority of cats, the second they can see, they'll bolt, and then the process will have to start over again.

5. Have someone else hold the carrier and place the cat in, with the blanket still covering their face.
6. Keep the carrier door just open enough to have a hand in, and pull out the blanket. Or, at the very least, always ensure that their head is out so they can breathe/move freely in the carrier if you are unable to retrieve the blanket.

METHOD 4: CUBBY

Can be used with cats that have a tendency to hide and may be difficult to catch.

1. Confine a cat to a room with very little furniture. Remove as much as possible from the area (cat trees, chairs, scratching posts, etc.)
2. Place 1-2 carriers in with them, and cover the top with a blanket to make it dark.
3. Leave the area for a short period of time.
4. Hopefully, by the time you've come back they've sought comfort in the "cubby" and you can just close the carrier door.

The same concept can also be applied a soft, actual cubby. If you notice that the cat is already in one you can block off the exit, pick up the entire cubby, then guide them into the carrier.

METHOD 5: HERDING

Herding may be necessary for a cat with a tendency to run, who you are unable to catch or is potentially aggressive. This method can be a stressful one for the cat, and it isn't always successful as you don't have nearly as much control - it normally involves a lot of chasing/sometimes luck. Typically, it's best reserved as a last resort.

1. Expect this to possibly require 2-3+ people.
2. Block off the cat's surroundings (use cat trees, people holding blankets to create a wall, chairs, etc to your advantage.)
3. Have someone else hold the carrier firmly at the only exit of the blocked off surroundings. Essentially, you're then making the carrier their only "escape".

Sometimes cats will want to jump over the carrier, rather than go into it; having someone hold a towel or blanket to create another wall above the carrier can be beneficial.

4. Use something to guide them into the carrier (thick towel, wand toy, bite-proof glove, etc.)

Do not use your bare hands, when a cat is completely cornered it is very likely that they will do anything they can to protect themselves; practice safety above all else.

Note that you can combine any of the above tools to guide the cat.

