

A GREENWICH CAT GUIDE

Moving With Your Cat

*Timelines, checklists and quiet counsel for the most unsettling week
in a cat's calendar.*



The Greenwich Cat

THEGREENWICHCAT.COM

The walls change. Their life doesn't.

Moving is disruptive for everyone, but cats experience a move differently than we do.

We may see a new house, a better kitchen, a bigger yard or a fresh start. A cat sees something else: familiar smells disappearing, furniture moving, boxes appearing, doors opening, strangers coming in and out, and eventually an entirely new territory.

Cats rely heavily on familiarity, routine and a sense of control over their environment. Veterinary feline-care guidelines note that abrupt changes can contribute to stress and unwanted behaviors, and the ASPCA recommends keeping routines as normal as possible during a move and introducing a new home gradually.

The goal is not to make your cat instantly love the new house. It is to make the new house begin to feel familiar.

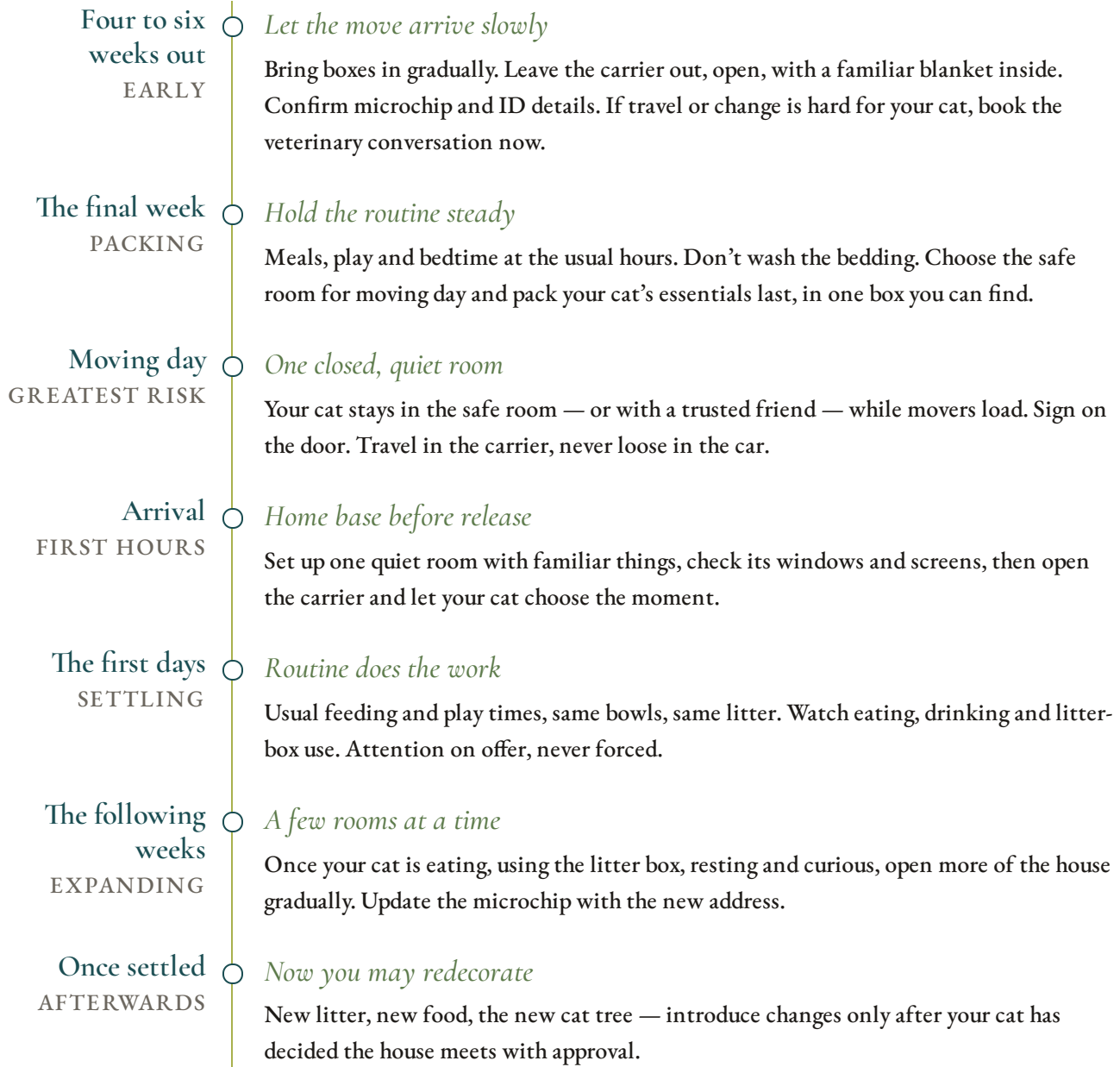
This guide turns that idea into a plan: a timeline you can pin to the refrigerator, a checklist for each stage, a door sign for moving day, and a page for the phone numbers you will not want to be searching for at the time.

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- The timeline, at a glance
- I Before the move: protect the routine
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- A door sign for moving day

At a glance

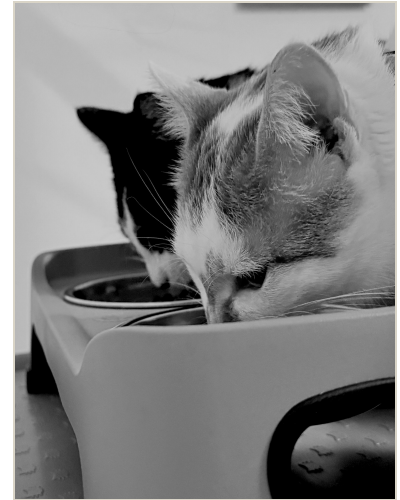
Every move and every cat is different, so treat these windows as a guide rather than a schedule. The principle holds throughout: *change as little as possible, as slowly as possible.*



I

Before the move: protect the routine

The move starts for your cat long before moving day. Boxes arrive. Closets are emptied. Furniture disappears. People become busy. Keep the anchors of the day where they have always been — and resist the temptation to wash everything. A blanket, bed or scratching post that smells like home will be enormously useful when the new house smells like absolutely nothing your cat recognizes.



In the weeks before

- ☐ Bring moving boxes out gradually so your cat can get used to them
- ☐ Leave the carrier out and open so it becomes familiar furniture, not a warning
- ☐ Confirm microchip and identification details are current
- ☐ If your cat struggles with travel or change, ask your veterinarian about anxiety *well before* moving day
- ☐ Look up a veterinarian and emergency clinic near the new house

In the final week

- ☐ Keep feeding, play and bedtime at their usual times
- ☐ Keep familiar bedding, toys and scratching posts rather than replacing them
- ☐ Leave the bedding unwashed — its scent is the point
- ☐ Choose the moving-day safe room and print the door sign (page 10)
- ☐ Pack a single cat box last: food, bowls, litter and box, bedding, toys, any medication

II

Moving day: one safe place

Moving day is the point of greatest risk. Doors are open, movers are walking in and out, furniture is shifting and there are unfamiliar noises everywhere. This is not the day for your cat to supervise operations.

The ASPCA recommends keeping cats in a closed, quiet room — or safely with a trusted friend — while movers load and unload.

The safe room kit

- ☐ Food and water
- ☐ Litter box, in its usual litter
- ☐ Familiar bedding
- ☐ The carrier, open
- ☐ A few favorite toys
- ☐ Something that smells of you

The day itself

- ☐ Cat in the safe room before the first mover arrives
- ☐ CAT INSIDE — DO NOT OPEN sign on the door
- ☐ Tell the movers, and anyone helping, which door it is
- ☐ Safe room emptied last
- ☐ Travel securely in the carrier — never loose in the car

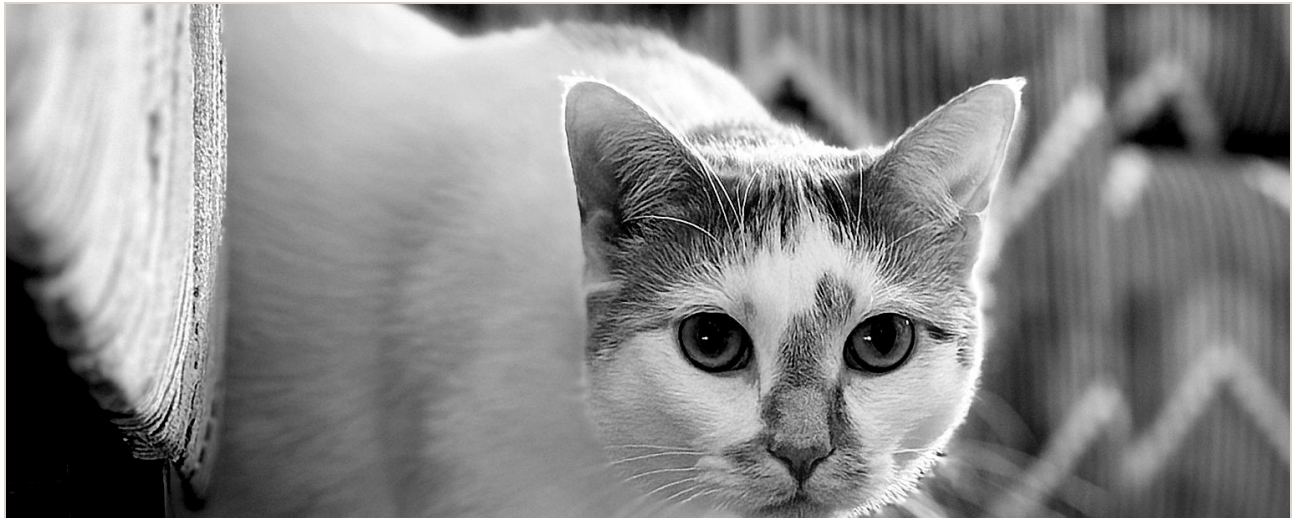


For particularly anxious cats, talk with your veterinarian before moving day, rather than waiting until your cat is already distressed.

III

At the new house: start small

The instinct is to open the carrier and let your cat explore the beautiful new house. Don't. A large, unfamiliar territory can be overwhelming. Make one room your cat's home base and let your cat decide when to emerge. For some cats that takes hours; for others, days. *There is no prize for being the first cat to tour the guest wing.*



Home base

- ☐ A quiet room, set up before the carrier opens
- ☐ Familiar bowls, food and water
- ☐ Usual litter box and litter
- ☐ Bedding, toys, scratching surface
- ☐ A hiding place and somewhere high
- ☐ Feeding and play at the normal times

The safety sweep

- ☐ Windows closed or secured
- ☐ Screens checked, every one
- ☐ Exterior doors closing properly
- ☐ Toxic plants removed
- ☐ Exposed cords tidied away
- ☐ Pest-control products cleared out

IV

The first weeks: expand the territory

Cats establish security partly by learning where resources and escape routes are. They need time to map a new territory — and a few rooms at a time is usually better than opening every door at once, particularly in a large home.

Ready for more of the house?

Open the next rooms when you can tick all four.

- ☐ Eating normally
- ☐ Using the litter box normally
- ☐ Resting comfortably
- ☐ Showing curiosity rather than fear



As the territory grows

- ☐ Place a familiar cat tree, window perch or favorite chair in each newly opened room — an anchor in unfamiliar territory
- ☐ Keep hiding spaces and elevated places available
- ☐ Stay vigilant with exterior doors while contractors and deliveries come and go
- ☐ Update the microchip registry with your new address and number

DON'T REDESIGN THE CAT AT THE SAME TIME

A move already creates enough change. It is not the moment to introduce a new litter, new food, new feeding schedule, new cat tree and new location for every resource. *You can always redesign your cat's life after your cat has decided the new house meets with approval.*



The walls changed. Your life did not.

Watch for stress

Cats do not always advertise stress dramatically. Changes in the household, including a move, can contribute to stress-related behaviors such as urine marking and litter-box problems.

Quiet signs to notice

- ☐ Hiding
- ☐ Reduced appetite
- ☐ Unusual vocalizing
- ☐ Overgrooming
- ☐ Irritability
- ☐ Changes in litter-box habits
- ☐ Simply seeming less like themselves

When to call the vet

A little caution or hiding can be normal while a cat adjusts. Significant changes in *eating, drinking, elimination or behavior* deserve attention.

When in doubt, call your veterinarian. That is what they are for.



Numbers to keep close

Veterinarian

Emergency clinic, new area

Microchip registry

Microchip number

New address

Cat sitter

MOVING DAY

Cat Inside

PLEASE DO NOT OPEN



This door stays closed until the last box is out.

Thank you.

Print at 100% and tape to the safe-room door.

IN TIME

A new house eventually becomes their house

One of the lovely things about cats is watching them slowly take possession of a space. The unfamiliar staircase becomes their staircase. The new dining chair becomes their chair. A window they had never seen before becomes the place where they spend every morning.

You cannot rush that process. But you can make it much easier by giving them what cats value most: *familiarity, security, routine and time.*



WHEN YOU NEED SOMEONE



Julianne

FOUNDER, THE GREENWICH CAT

I look after cats in their own homes in Greenwich, for families who would rather know the person with the keys. If a move is on the calendar — or a trip once you've settled in — I would be glad to hear from you.

The Greenwich Cat

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