

Reducing Anxiety at the Vet: Helping Your Cat Feel Less Anxious Before and After Appointments

Vet visits can be stressful for cats, but preparation and gentle handling can make the experience much calmer. Reducing anxiety starts long before the appointment — through familiar routines, positive associations, and a predictable environment that helps your cat feel safe and in control.

Carrier Training

- Keep the carrier out year-round as part of the home environment.
- Add soft bedding, treats, and toys to create positive associations.
- Practice short “in and out” sessions with rewards.
- Avoid forcing your cat inside — use calm encouragement.
- Place the carrier in different rooms so your cat learns it’s a normal part of daily life.

Preparation Before Appointments

- Spray pheromones inside the carrier 15 minutes before leaving.
- Cover the carrier with a light towel to reduce visual stress.
- Play with your cat earlier in the day to help reduce tension.
- Keep car rides quiet and smooth.
- Bring a familiar blanket or item with your cat’s scent for comfort.

Stress-Reduction Techniques

- Hold the carrier securely and avoid swinging.
- Keep the carrier elevated (bench or chair) rather than on the floor.
- Request a quiet room if your cat is highly anxious.
- Allow your cat to exit the carrier at their own pace.
- Ask the clinic about cat-friendly handling or low-stress techniques.

Recovery After the Visit

- Provide a quiet space for decompression at home.
- Offer treats, gentle affection, or play if your cat enjoys it.
- Maintain calm routines for the rest of the day.
- Monitor for lingering stress or behavior changes.
- Give your cat access to familiar hiding spots to help them settle.

Creating a Low-Stress Vet Routine

- Schedule appointments at quieter clinic times when possible.
- Practice short car rides between visits to build confidence.
- Keep your own energy calm — cats pick up on human stress.
- Use consistent carriers, blankets, and routines for predictability.

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