

Moving – Tips on making a safe and smooth transition for your pet.

Moving to a new home may be stressful to your pet.

Try to be patient and understanding and provide lots of affection.

Here are some pointers to help you and your pet settle in safely and sanely.

General Tips and Things to Keep in Mind:

Keep your pet away from the moving-day activity by confining him to a room where he feels safe, otherwise your pet could become frightened and bolt out of the door unnoticed. It's difficult to pack, move furniture, and keep an eye on your pet at the same time. Maybe you have a friendly place where your pet can stay during the packing and moving, like a neighbor, friend or boarding kennel. As much as possible, try not to disrupt your pet's daily routine.

Unpack and settle in a bit before turning your pet loose in the new house. Keep the doors to your extra rooms closed and slowly give your pet access to them as they become accustomed to their new home.

During transitions from an old home to a new home, pets can easily escape or become stressed.

Try to remain calm and provide as much routine, comfort and security as you can for your pet.

Cats - Let's start with the pet that will take the most adjusting. Maybe there's something to that phrase "scaredy cat"?

1. Introduce your cat to the new home gradually, restricting her to one or two rooms at first. Place the litter box, bed, scratching post, food and water in the room with her. This gives her the chance to become accustomed to the sounds and smells in your new home. It also gives her a room of her own to use later as a refuge or if she feels uncertain.
2. Put her favorite bed, blanket, toys or any item that is familiar to her in the room. The smells of "home" will help her adjust to her new surroundings.
3. Keep doors and windows closed and make sure there aren't any crawl spaces or holes where she can escape to and that you can't access.
4. Let her explore on her own. If she decides to hide under the bed, let her be. She'll eventually come out when she feels safe.
5. Now is the perfect time to make your cat an indoor-only pet. Indoor-only cats live longer and healthier lives free of disease, injury and parasites. Resist attempts by your cat to go outdoors. If your cat hasn't established an outdoor territory, he or she is less likely to be interested in going outside. Accessories such as window perches can ease the transition. If you play with your cat and supply lots of attention, your cat should have all he or she needs indoors.

6. If you plan on allowing your cat outside, make sure you keep her indoors for at least two weeks so that her new home is familiar to her. After two weeks, take the cat outside with you and let her explore a bit. Cats form a bond not only with the people in the home but also with the home itself. They are very territorial. After ten minutes or so, take her back inside. Each day increase the amount of time until the cat feels safe and knows the area. Also make sure that kitty is properly vaccinated, spayed or neutered, and tagged with your new address and phone number. Make sure your microchip information is updated as soon as possible.
7. Remember, we highly recommend you keep cats indoors only. Indoor cats can be very content and happy if you provide enough stimulation and fun.

Dogs - Dogs also require special care and handling. This is especially true if you're moving from a home to an apartment or from a large house to a smaller home. Room to move around and exercise can be critical to a dog's contentment. So, to help your dog adjust, follow these tips:

1. When taking Fido outside for the first time, keep him leashed and allow him the time to explore his yard or his neighborhood. Like a kitty, your dog should be introduced to the area around your home slowly. It's a good idea to explore it a block at a time, just to see who else lives in your neighborhood. Strange dogs can pose a threat and cause your pet unnecessary stress.
2. If possible, allow yourself some time before you start your new job. This will give you time to help your dog adjust. During this period of adjustment, start spending time away from the house, doing so in small increments just to see how your dog will respond. Eventually, when you do start work and you have to spend all day away, your dog should be adjusted to the home and feel comfortable being alone there.
3. If you have to start work right away, you may want to consider hiring a pet sitter to come to your home. They can usually cater to individual needs and requests and they charge by the hour. Although it may add up in fees, you can ask the sitter to spend more time with your dog initially and then slowly wean him back until he's used to being alone.
4. Knowing your animal and the kind of pet they are - confident, social or shy - will help you determine what their individual needs are.
5. Keep your dog confined when you get to the new home. A dog can easily escape during the moving process. Let your dog roam freely in the house only if all the doors and windows are closed. Allow him to become familiar with the house a little bit at a time.
6. Use your dog's familiar bowls, bedding and toys. Put them in a location similar to where they used to be.
7. Accompany your dog outside until he's familiar with the area.
8. Try to stick to your dog's regular schedule in the first days after the move.
9. Locate a vet in your area. Make an appointment and take your dog's records in.
10. Establish a routine for your pets after moving – this will give them a sense of security and predictability.