

Managing Feline Stress: Before, During and After a Veterinary Visit

Managing stress in your cat: Managing stress in cats is important for their well-being. Here are five small but effective tips to help reduce stress for your feline friend:

- **Create a Safe Space:** Set up a quiet, cozy area in your home where your cat can retreat when they're feeling overwhelmed. This could be a secluded room with their favorite bed, toys, and a litter box.
- **Consistent Routine:** Cats thrive on routine. Try to feed, play, and clean the litter box at the same times each day. Predictable schedules help your cat feel more secure.
- **Interactive Play:** Regular playtime with interactive toys (like feather wands or laser pointers) helps release pent-up energy and reduces anxiety. Play also strengthens the bond between you and your cat.
- **Use Calming Products:** Consider using pheromone diffusers (like Feliway) or calming collars that release natural calming scents to help your cat feel more relaxed.
- **Minimize Loud Noises and Changes:** Avoid sudden, loud noises (like vacuuming or construction sounds) and limit big changes in the home (like moving furniture or introducing new pets) that might stress your cat.

Preparing your cat for a vet visit: Preparing for a vet visit for your cat starts at home to make the process less stressful for both you and your feline friend.

- **Familiarize the Carrier:** If your cat isn't used to the carrier, leave it out for a few days before the visit. Place cozy bedding, treats, or their favorite toy inside. This will help make the carrier seem like a safe, familiar space rather than just a transport tool. You can spray or wipe down the carrier with a synthetic feline pheromone (like Feliway) to help calm your cat. It mimics the natural scent cats use to mark places as safe.
- If your cat is particularly stressed by car rides or visits, consider giving them time to relax with some petting or quiet play before the trip. It's generally recommended not to feed your cat right before the trip. This reduces the likelihood of motion sickness.
- Make sure the carrier is secure in the car and doesn't move around.
- Covering the carrier with a light towel can provide a sense of security.
- Avoid loud noises or sudden movements. Playing calming music can also help.

Tips on how to control cat on cat aggression after a vet visit:

- **Separate them temporarily:** If there's immediate aggression, it's a good idea to separate the cats and give them both some space to calm down. This can help prevent the situation from escalating and also gives them a chance to cool off and decompress.
- **Gradual reintroduction:** After giving them a little space, you can start reintroducing the cats slowly. You can do this by swapping bedding or using a scent swap method where you rub a cloth on one cat and then the other to help them get used to each other's

scent again. Afterward, you can do short, supervised interactions and gradually increase their time together.

- Use pheromones: Feliway diffusers can help with reducing territorial aggression. It's a good idea to use them in areas where the cats spend time to make the environment feel more calming for both of them.
- Positive reinforcement: Reward both cats for calm behavior around each other. This can include treats, petting, or praise. If they are interacting peacefully, reinforcing that with something positive will encourage them to continue the behavior.