

Becoming Cat-Friendly

Feline-friendly practice setup and processes:

Now that your practice is encouraging cat owners to make regular visits, let's make it easier on them.

Having calm and low-stress appointments can encourage clients to return again and again. It also shows owners that feline patients are just as important to your practice as any other species.

Some of these tips require the owner's participation. Be sure your staff members are trained to provide this instruction verbally prior to the appointment. In addition, post these tips on your website or social media platforms. You can even create email instructions to send with appointment reminders.

Show cats your love! Make your clinic's commitment to cats obvious by:

- Displaying a range of cat products, photos or posters with cat breeds.
- Posting photographs of clients' and staff members' cats.
- Providing cat magazines and information for clients to browse.
- Announcing in-house clinics, lectures or cat-information evenings.



Pre-appointment tips:

- If possible, develop a separate waiting area for cats where there is the least human and animal traffic.
- Cats should be placed in a cat-friendly consult room as soon as possible.
- Install soft lighting.
- Try to prevent noises from examination rooms reaching the waiting area.
- Keep towels on hand to cover the carrier to reduce audible/visual stimuli.
- Minimise waiting times.
- Provide elevated platforms in the waiting area for placement of carriers above the reach of dogs.
- Use calming synthetic pheromones in the waiting area or examination room.
- Be flexible with appointments to allow for complex conditions.

Create a cat-friendly consultation room:

- Warm the room and table.
- Install nonslip surfaces.
- Keep it quiet – no loud noises or sounds that could mimic hissing, like whispering.
- Use cat-sized equipment.
- Be aware of cat security and ensure cats cannot escape through doors or windows.
- Respect cats' sensitivity to smell by minimising exposure to odours like perfumes or room fresheners, disinfectants or alcohol.

Promote cat-friendly handling:

Provide owners with carrier/car ride training instructions, as well as travelling safety tips.

