



Make a Difference in Feline Medicine. Become a Cat Friendly Practice®

Think cat-friendly changes are costly? Don't have a separate waiting area for cats? No problem—there are many creative, cost-effective ways to implement the AAFP's **Cat Friendly Practice®** (CFP) program's designation requirements—becoming a CFP calls for creativity not a construction project. Check out these simple solutions from actual CFPs!

Create a “Kitty Parking Area” in Lieu of Separate Waiting Area for Dogs & Cats

It's a misconception that the CFP program requires a completely separate waiting area for dogs and cats. A simple piece of furniture like this inexpensive IKEA piece (under \$100) is not only just the right height to keep cats above the line of vision of most dogs, but very easy to clean and has cubbies that hold clean towels to cover the cat carriers once placed on top of the unit. When the hospital's Client Care Specialists see cat owners coming in with their carriers, they are immediately directed to the KITTY PARKING AREA to place their carriers on top of the unit. Cat owners then retrieve a clean towel from the cubby and cover the carrier, helping their cat to feel protected and lowering their stress.

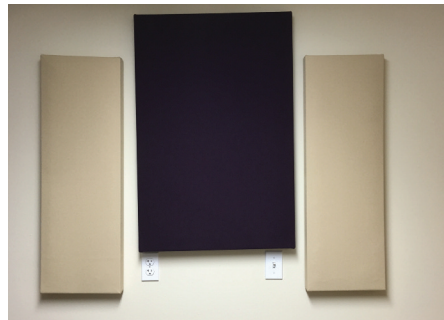
Dr. Paige Garnett, Care Animal Hospital, Arvada, CO



Install Sound Panels

Cats feel unsafe just by being out of their territory; the smells, sounds and sights of the practice will add to this, cats very anxious and fearful. Sound panels can help to reduce internal sound, such as mellowing out sharp or loud noises, which can in turn reduce the stress of the visit for feline patients. Also teach staff to use low, calming voices with cats.

Dr. Shawn Clark, Redmond Veterinary Clinic
Redmond, OR



Create a Cat Concierge Service

Take cats directly to an examination room so they do not need to wait in the reception area with other patients. Consider using an unused examination room, large storage area, or unused office for the cat waiting area if they cannot be brought immediately into the examination room. Another method is to create a “Cat Concierge Service” and ask the client to call upon arrival and wait in their vehicle with their cat for staff to contact them or even go out and greet them personally upon directly examination room availability. Not only does this reduce stress, but it makes clients feel extra special.

Dr. Roy Smith, Central Texas Cat Hospital
Round Rock, TX





Place Cardboard Boxes in Cages

Try reducing stress for hospitalized or boarding patients by keeping them in an area separate from dogs. Spray cages and towels with Feliway® prior to arrival, and ask the owner to bring a piece of clothing with their scent on it so the cat has something familiar with them. Provide hiding boxes inside the cages for cats to hide in and make them feel more secure. Cardboard boxes are inexpensive and easy to recycle after use. For kitties requiring additional privacy, hang a curtain over the lower half of the cage door.

Dr. Yvonne Laurence Lemieux
VCA Riverside Veterinary Hospital, Boscawen, NH



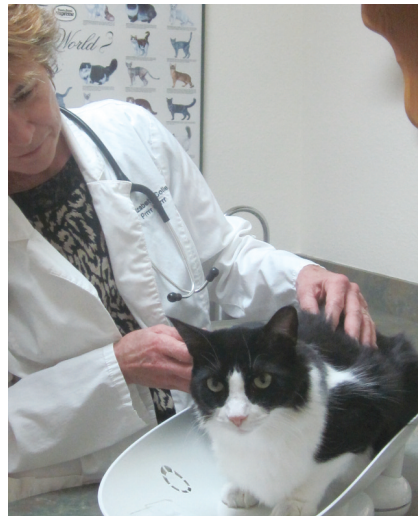
Set-up Your Feline Exam Room

Think about the examination experience from a cat's perspective. Be sure to have everything you need in the room prior to the appointment so you don't have to go in and out of the room. An exam room designed for cats can be outfitted with furnishings, wall hangings, equipment, and instruments specifically for the size of these patients. Examination tables can be small or eliminated. Surfaces can be covered with towels or other washable, soft fabrics more comfortable for the feline patient. An infant scale for accurate weight recording can replace large dog scales. Comfortable seating can allow alternatives to tabletop exams. A smaller room will provide enough space for a cat to explore and become acclimated and therefore less fearful.

A feline facial pheromone diffuser can be plugged in upon arrival in the morning to help reduce stress and arousal. The absence of dog smells is helpful in that

regard as well. The small size of feline patients is an important consideration when selecting supplies and equipment. A critical evaluation of the room from a cat's perspective is essential to remove or alter components that might increase stress. Choose seating that will not block easy access to a cat trying to escape or hide. Consider benches secured to a wall to keep floor space open, for example. Look for and close off potential spaces that are accessible to a cat-sized patient such as cupboards, gaps between cabinet and wall, or space behind a computer.

Finally, this space is a concrete visual commitment that the practice is making to feline patients. Owners will recognize this and appreciate the effort and investment being taken on behalf of them and their beloved cats. Art and resources with cat themes and content will reinforce this perception and provide a welcoming environment for the owner.



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