

Pacific Animal Foundation

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Calming the Waters ideas to soothe stressed cats!

by Lana Simon

All cat guardians can likely identify with this topic! Whether it's putting kitty into a cat carrier, increasing your cat family by introducing a second kitty into your home, or trying to help your recently adopted kitty adjust to its new home and family, you may have witnessed your cat exhibiting stressed behaviours.

The following suggestions may help your kitty (and you!) cope with the anxiety resulting from any of these situations. Cat rescue groups deal with large numbers of felines all the time and have learned a few tricks to reduce tension and nervousness for the cats who exhibit stress. If you can incorporate some or all of these tips you may be able to ease the atmosphere for your four-footed friend.

MUSIC – but not just ANY music . . . classical music! Twenty years ago when fostering cats, we noticed that their whole demeanour relaxed and calmed if we tuned the radio station to classical music. It was though the cadence of the musical score lowered their anxiety and quieted their nervous system. Years later in 2008, we learned of a company called "Through a Dog's Ear"* which produced a series of musical CD's specifically to help calm dogs exhibiting stressed behaviours caused by various situations such as thunderstorms, fireworks, car rides, fear, aggression and separation anxiety. And recently the company has produced a CD to help cats adapt to new environments or stressed situations they face. If you can quiet the surroundings for a stressed cat (or dog), the health benefits for them will be noticeable. And play the CD in the car if you are on the way to the veterinary clinic! (*Through a Dog's Ear - throughadogsear.com)

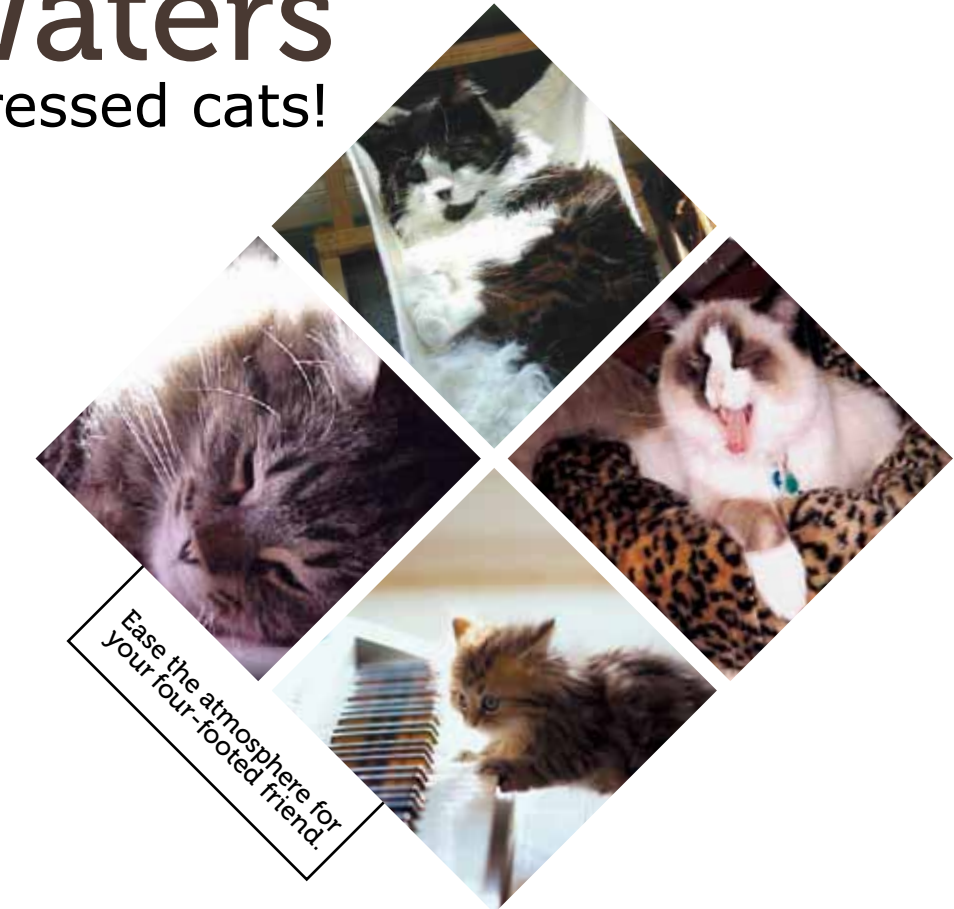
RESCUE REMEDY – can usually be bought at a pet or health food store but some veterinary clinics also carry it. It has a

stress relieving formula used to create a calming atmosphere. It comes in a room spray or liquid and we put a few drops in water bowls or spray a room or cat carrier to calm the environment. For more information, visit their website*. (*Bach Rescue Remedy - bachrescueremedypet.com)

FELIWAY – A quote from their website states "Feliway is a synthetic copy of the feline facial pheromone, used by cats to mark their territory as safe and secure." Again, Feliway room spray or diffuser is another tool in our box to help reduce territorial and/or stressful situations for cats. Check out pet stores or veterinary clinics to purchase Feliway*. There is helpful information on their website to address multiple different problem cat behaviours. (*Feliway - felipay.com)

FAMILIAR OBJECTS - sometimes supplying familiar objects to the stressed cat or dog can comfort them. Placing a familiar blanket, clothing object or toy with them can help lessen anxiety. Having their primary caregiver with them or known family members also helps in any troubled environment. A quieter tone of voice can have a calming effect as well.

PRIVACY - If you are taking your cat to the veterinary clinic in a carrier, place a towel or small blanket over top of the carrier in the car and while you are sitting in the waiting room. This gives your little one some privacy and a buffer from the noise of traffic and unfamiliar people close by. If you are



Ease the atmosphere for your four-footed friend.

introducing a new cat into your home, start them off in a secure room with a litter box, food, water and a comfy bed or blanket and give them a day or two to get used to their new surroundings gradually. Having a quiet room (with a CD or radio playing classical music) will help a shy cat gain confidence and self assurance that it is safe in its new home. It is especially important to place a new cat into its own room to start with if it will be joining a multi-cat household. It can be quite common to see territorial aggression from one cat to another at the beginning of a relationship. Make sure you do your homework on the best methods for integration

BEFORE bringing another cat home if you are considering adding another kitty to your feline household. Maximum privacy for each cat is essential and only short amounts of supervised interaction are recommended when you start this process. There is helpful advice on the internet for integration tips.

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