







BODY LANGUAGE BASICS—CATS

Cats use a combination of vocalizations, body postures, and facial expressions to express their emotions and needs. It's important to remember that cat body language can vary from one individual to another, and context matters. Observing your cat's behavior over time will help you better understand their unique signals and respond appropriately to their needs and emotions. When interpreting your cat's body language, always consider the overall context and combine multiple cues to get a more accurate understanding of their feelings.









EARS

-  **FORWARD** Generally, this indicates a curious or friendly mood.
-  **SLIGHTLY BACKWARD** Your cat may be feeling relaxed.
-  **FLATTENED AGAINST THE HEAD** This suggests fear, aggression, or irritation.




EYES

-  **SLOW BLINKING** A slow blink is often a sign of affection and trust from your cat.
-  **DILATED PUPILS** Enlarged pupils can indicate excitement, fear, or aggression.
-  **HALF-CLOSED EYES** Your cat might be relaxed and content.




TAIL

-  **UPRIGHT AND QUIVERING** A tail held high with a slight quiver indicates a happy and excited cat.
-  **TAIL STRAIGHT UP** THIS is a sign of a confident and content cat.
-  **PUFFED-UP TAIL** An erect, puffy tail often suggests fear, aggression, or extreme agitation.
-  **TUCKED TAIL** A tucked tail usually means your cat is frightened or submissive.
-  **LASHING TAIL** Rapid side-to-side movements of the tail often signal irritation, annoyance, or agitation. The faster the tail lashes, the more upset the cat may be.
-  **SWISHING TAIL** A swishing tail can indicate a variety of emotions, including annoyance, impatience, or mild agitation.
-  **STRAIGHT OUT TAIL** When a cat holds its tail straight out behind them, it may signal intense focus, hunting behavior, or alertness.
-  **TWITCHING OR VIBRATING TAIL** A tail that twitches or vibrates can indicate a heightened emotional state, such as excitement or frustration.



WHISKERS

-  **FORWARD AND RELAXED** Whiskers that are forward and relaxed usually indicate a calm and content cat.
-  **PULLED BACK** Whiskers pulled back against the face may signal fear, aggression, or irritation.
-  **STIFF AND BRISTLED** Stiff, bristled whiskers often suggest that the cat is agitated or feeling threatened.

BODY POSTURE

-  **RELAXED AND LOOSE** A cat with a relaxed body is generally at ease and content.
-  **HUNCHED OR LOW TO THE GROUND** A hunched posture can signal fear, anxiety, or submission.
-  **PUFFED-UP FUR ALL OVER** This is a defensive posture, typically indicating fear or aggression.

VOCALIZATIONS

-  **HISSING AND GROWLING** These vocalizations are signs of fear, aggression, or irritation.
-  **PURRING** While purring is often associated with contentment, cats may also purr when in pain or distress.

KNEADING

Cats knead with their paws, often on soft surfaces or your lap, as a sign of comfort and contentment. It's a behavior they may have carried over from kittenhood when they kneaded their mother's belly for milk.