

# FELINE BODY LANGUAGE

While your cat cannot speak as you do, she does relay her feelings and emotions through a series of body postures, gestures and vocalizations. Her body language can be subtle and wide-ranging, but with a little practice you can learn and understand it. Your cat will use her ears, eyes, tail, legs and general body movement/postures to communicate to you. She may also use vocalizations.

Learning to read your cat's body language will help keep you, your cat and other people safe. It will also allow you to recognize when she is stressed so you can act accordingly to do what you can to make her feel better. Being able to communicate with your cat will strengthen your relationship and bond with her as well.

Because all cats are individuals, there is not a hard and fast rule for interpreting body language. The important thing to remember is to look at the entire body of your cat - not just one part - and take note of the current context/situation in which the body language occurs.

## CONTENT OR RELAXED

- Sitting or lying down
- Eyes half-closed, pupils narrowed, slow blinking
- Tail mostly still
- Ears slightly to the side and forward
- Purring
- Kneading
- Rubbing on person or object

## CURIOUS OR ALERT

- Whole tail swishing side to side
- Ears erect and straight up
- Straight legs
- Upright posture

## PLAYFUL

- Ears forward
- Tail up
- Whiskers forward
- Pupils somewhat dilated
- Tail twitching
- Note - Playing is hunting behavior so when your cat stalks her prey (a toy, a housemate or you), she will crouch down with her rear end slightly raised. She may wiggle her butt and then pounce. She will grab the prey, bite it, wrestle it to the floor and kick it with her hind feet.

## IRRITATED OR OVER STIMULATED

- Pupils dilated
- Ears turned back
- Tail twitching or waving
- Growling or putting her teeth on you
- Note - Intense play can quickly turn into overstimulation in some cats, resulting in biting and scratching.



## NERVOUS OR ANXIOUS

- Ears sideways or back
- Pupils dilated
- Tail low or tucked between legs
- Slinking close to floor
- Turn body or face away

## DEFENSIVE

- Crouched body
- Ears flattened
- Whiskers back
- Tail between legs or wrapped around body
- Bent front legs, stretched back legs
- Pupils dilated
- Meow loudly, growl, hiss and/or spit

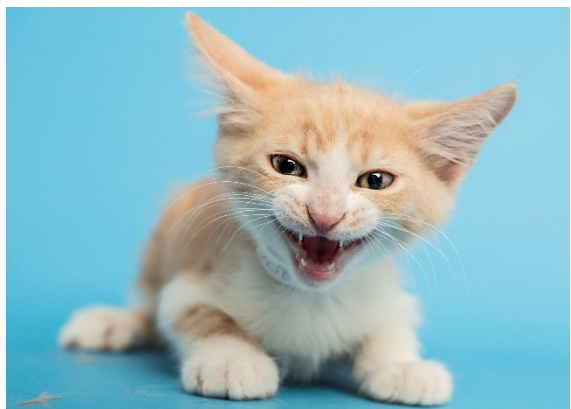
## FRIGHTENED OR STARTLED

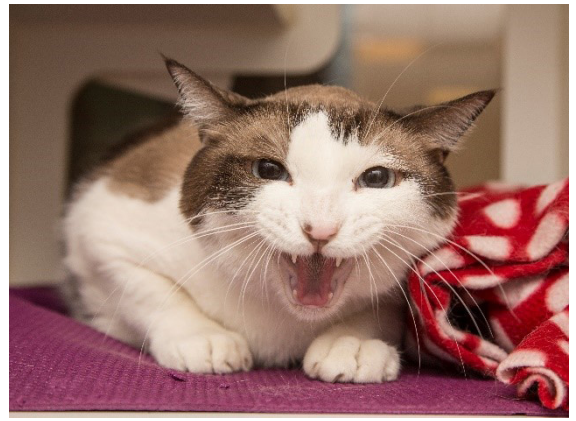
- Ears back and flat against the head
- Whiskers back
- Back arched
- Fur standing on end
- Tail erect or low
- Yowl, growl, hiss and/or spit

## ANGRY OR AGGRESSIVE

- Ears back and erect
- Pupils very constricted
- Tail may be up or down with the fur standing on end
- Hard stare
- Yowl, growl, hiss and/or spit

**THE CATS PICTURED BELOW ALL HAVE BODY LANGUAGE INDICATING THEY ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THE CURRENT SITUATION.**





**THE CATS BELOW ALL HAVE BODY LANGUAGE INDICATING THEY ARE RELAXED AND COMFORTABLE.**

