

UNDERSTANDING YOUR CAT'S BODY LANGUAGE

Your cat is communicating with you all the time. It's important for you to listen. They use their body to show you when they're feeling calm and relaxed, and when they're feeling stressed out and anxious. Try to avoid labels like "fractious or grumpy" and instead describe the behavior and body language you are seeing. Labels don't describe behavior, can't be tested, gives a false understanding of the problem, increases the use of ineffective training and not addressing the function of the behavior, provides excuses for people to get rid of their animals, and more.



THE GREEN ZONE

When your cat is in this zone, they're feeling calm and secure. They're likely resting or exploring an environment they feel comfortable in.



SLEEPING / RESTING

EYES: Closed to open
HEAD: On surface or over body
TAIL: Extended or loosely wrapped
EARS: Normal or forward
SOUNDS: None or purr



RESTING

EYES: Open, relaxed
BODY: Lying on belly or sitting
HEAD: On surface or over body
TAIL: Extended or loosely wrapped
EARS: Normal or forward
SOUNDS: None or purr



PERKED AND INTERESTED

EYES: Looking directly but not intensely
BODY: Back is horizontal
HEAD: Head slightly down
TAIL: Closer to body, may flicker slightly
EARS: Perked forward
EYES: Pupils slightly dilated



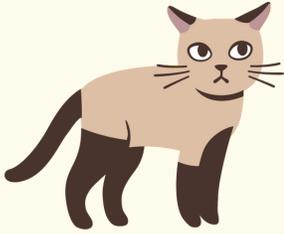
EXPLORING

EYES: Open, staring but not intensely
BODY: Back is horizontal
HEAD: Over body
TAIL: Up and winding or loosely down
EARS: Normal or perked
SOUNDS: None or "meow"



THE CAUTION ZONE

When your cat is in this zone, they're feeling moderately anxious and stressed. While in this zone, they're alert and likely uncomfortable in their current environment. When your cat is in this zone, consider whether you can remove or redirect them.



AROUSED / MILDLY ANXIOUS

EYES: Wide open, avoiding eye contact

BODY: Shifted away

HEAD: Turns head away

TAIL: Closer to body, may flicker slightly

EARS: To the side

EYES: Pupils slightly dilated



FRIGHTENED

EYES: Fully open, pupils dilated

HEAD: Little or no movement

TAIL: Tucked, hair standing

EARS: To the side

BODY: Flat, tense / tight

SOUNDS: None



TRYING TO FLEE

EYES: Pupils dilated

HEAD: Turned toward stimulus

TAIL: Close to body, hair standing

BODY: Poised to flee, back arched

SOUNDS: None, meow, hissing



THE RED ZONE

When your cat is in this zone, they're over threshold, they're stressed, terrified and may exhibit offensive or defensive aggressive behavior due to this. It is critical that you remove the trigger and if that isn't possible, remove them (by luring) into a safe, comfortable space to calm.



FIGHT / TERRIFIED

EYES: Fully open, pupils fully dilated

HEAD: Lower than body

TAIL: Tucked, hair standing

EARS: Forward

BODY: Leaning forward, thrashing

SOUNDS: Growling, hissing



FIGHT / TERRIFIED

EYES: Fully open, pupils fully dilated, staring

HEAD: Lower than body

TAIL: Tucked, hair standing

EARS: Forward, back

BODY: Pulled back, arched back

SOUNDS: Growling, hissing