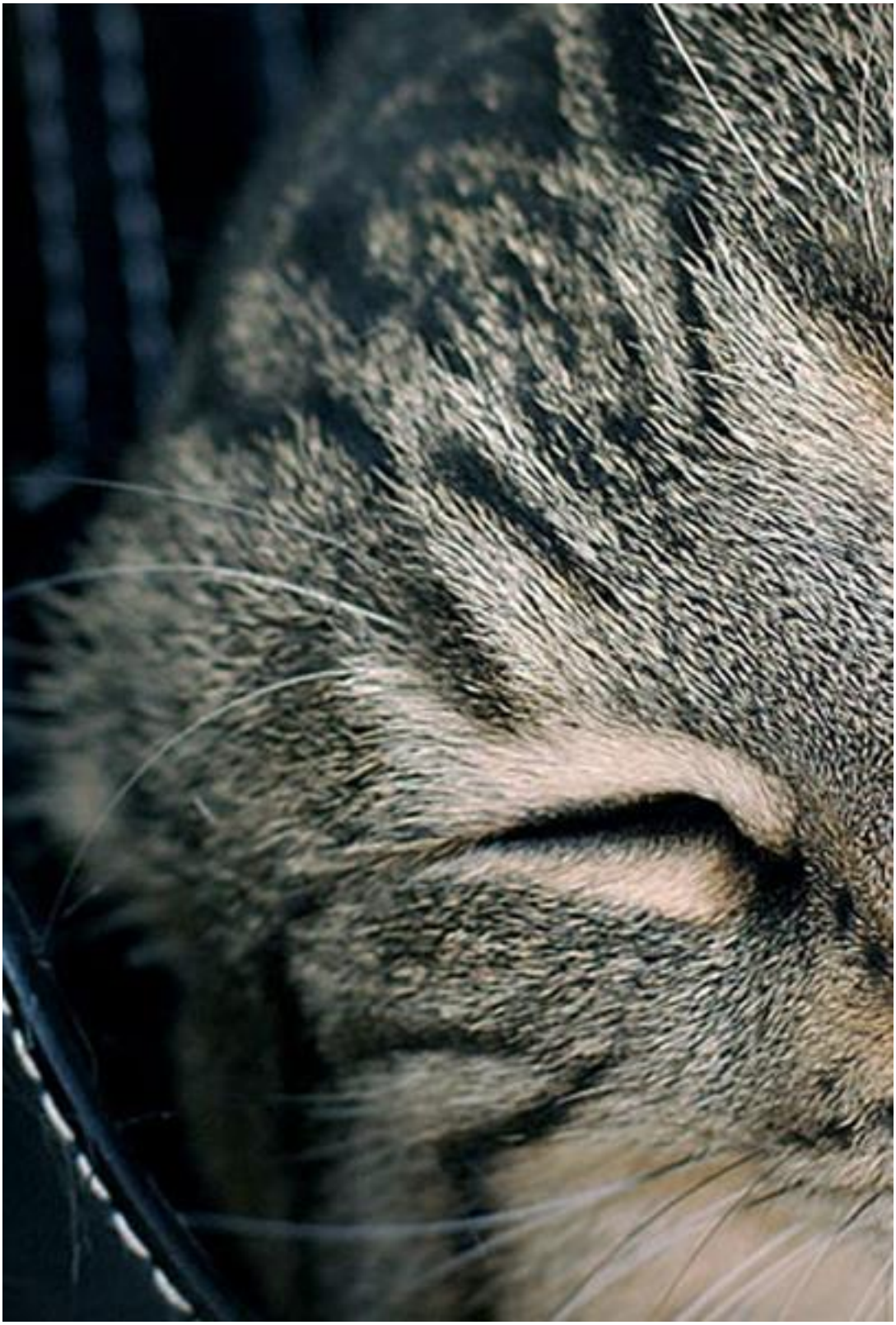
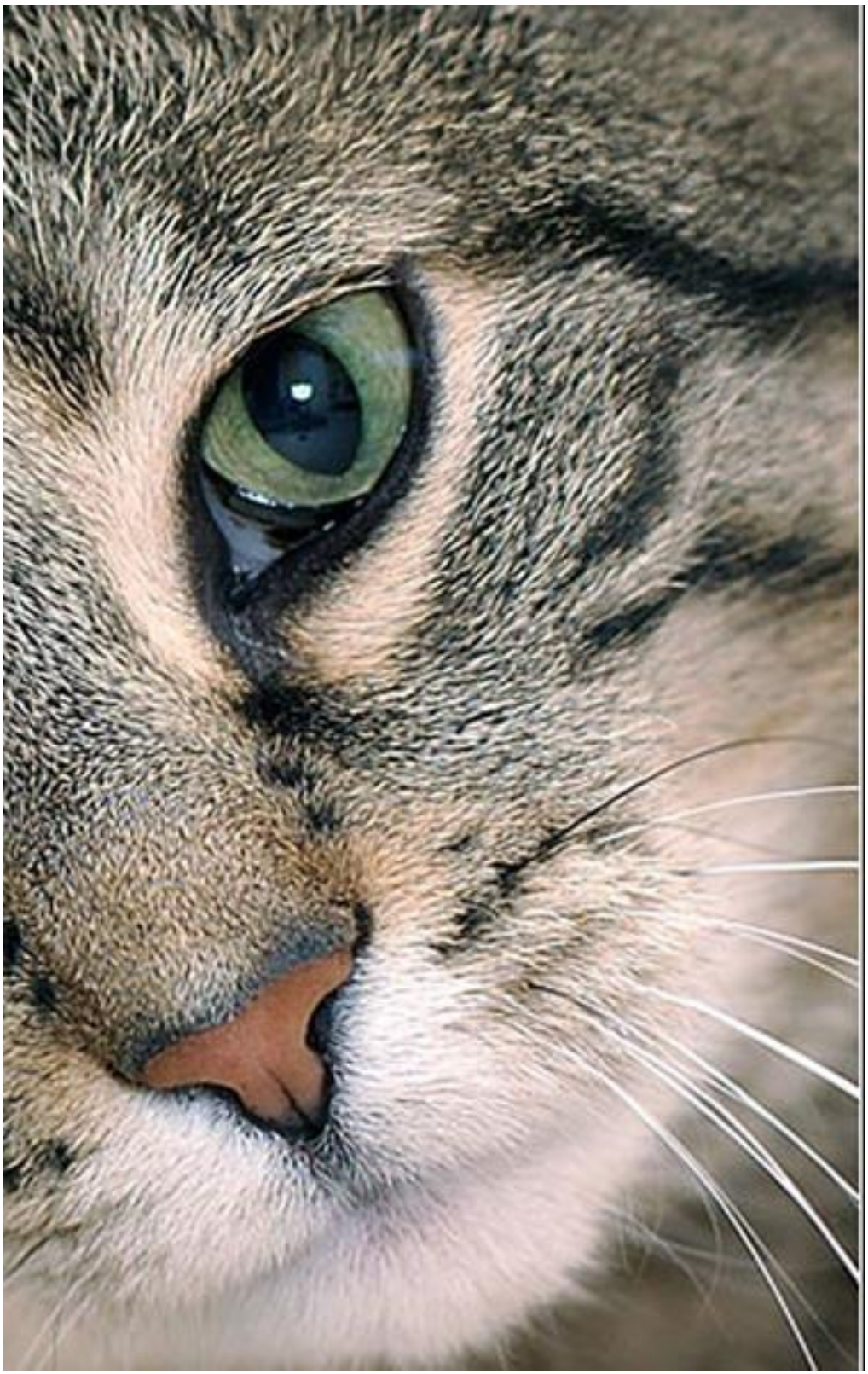


Get Inside His Mind:
What is he thinking Next!



Purrfect Cat Behavior:

Undestand Your Cats Mind & Solutions To Common Problems

,

Get Inside Your Cats Mind

"Cats know how to obtain food without labor, shelter without confinement, and love without penalties." - Walter Lionel George 1882-1926

An information product for Cat Owners seeking an understanding of and solutions to problem behaviors such as inappropriate urination/ defaecation, marking (spraying), litter box, and feline aggression problems.

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Simply Cats Vet Clinic & Petstoreo
12 Front Street, Fencehouses
Durham, DH4 6LP UK

https://www.purrfectcatbehavior.com
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Cat Behavior

Welcome and thank you very much for purchasing our new Cat Behavior E Book. This is a new venture for Sarah and I and the project was born out of three aims / problems we had.

1) In our day job as vets, many of the problems we saw all had a behavioural component in some way. This was either a major or minor component mixed in with various medical problems but it was always important. What was even more obvious was that if the behavioural problems were not addressed the cat took much longer to get better and had many more complications. Remember the behavioural issues also involved the client to a much greater degree than did the medical problems! In a busy vet practice it was just not possible to give the amount of behavioural support needed in many cases, thus we decided to produce our own book based on our experiences.

2) We also found it very difficult to find a book with the correct balance between theory (which is very important) and practical solutions to common and not so common problems. Thus this E Book was born!

3) It was obvious that a poor understanding of Cat behavior was causing major disruption in many human cat relationships/ households. Thus, instead of pure pleasure the relationships were fraught with tension and stress. The aim of Purrfect Cat Behavior is only attainable with an understanding of how your cat thinks.

Although a labour of love, like bringing any child into the world, it has been a mixture of excitement and depression and lots of hard work. We have used all the research facilities at our disposal including the Internet, The Feline Advisory Bureau (now ISFM), and many books too numerous to mention, both veterinary and more lay behaviourally based text books. The most important addition to the mix though was our personal experience as veterinary surgeons and cat owners. This enabled us to sort Facts into Knowledge!! The internet for example is full of facts but true knowledge and experience is in much shorter supply.
A major addition to our book was has been the addition of your questions and the answers we have supplied in real world problem cases. We started a so called “Ask Campaign” on the Website http:// www.purrfectcatbehvior.com @ 3 weeks prior to the launch and asked you, the general feline owning public with cat related problems to submit a question you would most like answered. We promised you would in many cases get a personal reply and brief plan on how to solve your problems, and a discount on the book when it was finally launched.

We were astounded by how many of you submitted questions and attempted to answer as many as possible, though time constraints meant we were unable to answer them all.

The clear majority of the questions were on **Feline Aggression**, followed closely by **Inappropriate Urination / Defecation** (spraying / middening). However the questions were very wide ranging and touched on almost every topic covered in this E Book

It was also obvious that many of the problems had a multiple number of causes and the most important fact of all was not to punish the cat but to work out the individual problems involved and deal with each of them in turn. This was not always easy as in many cases it involved changes in people’s lifestyles and habits and it took time! There is no quick fix in dealing with cat behavior problems, you and your cats should be in for the long haul!

However, the results in most cases are very rewarding and even more so as some cats were close to being put to sleep due to the disruption caused by there abnormal (in human terms) behavior patterns.

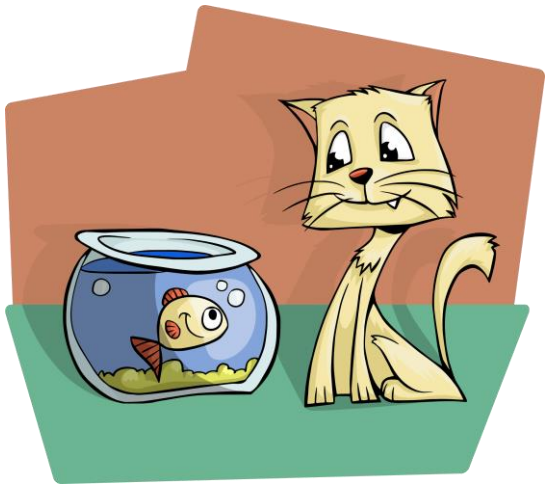
We have included all the questions in the ADDENDUM in an abbreviated form (to protect peoples' identities) covering all the major behavioural problems discussed and the solutions offered. Thus, if you want a quick overview to solve a particular problem have a look through these questions and answers. Then put some of the relevant solutions offered into place. Then READ THE E BOOK in its entirety, ideally twice ;-) to really start to get inside your cat's mind.

We feel it is very important for the long-term **success of the Human Feline Relationship that you understand the cats perspective in any given situation. This is not always intuitive as the chapter on so called "Close Contact Aggression" demonstrates. Thus, ultimately we get to the point of having a cat with Purrfect Behavior.**

We hope you enjoy this book and we will continue to add to this as we discover new knowledge and discoveries in the field of Cat Behavior. We would like to help you get inside your cats mind!!

Please contact us if you would like any further assistance via our web site at:
http://www.purrfectcatbehavior.com
However, we are unable to answer all queries personally due to time constraints as we are both practising veterinary surgeons. But we do try to answer as many questions as we can and hope to start a Subscription Based Private Behavioral Mentoring Service soon for a selected number of behavioural cases that are complex and need personal attention to detail. It is often much easier to solve complex problems together with a knowledgeable friend and confident.

To a cat, "NO!" means "Not while I'm looking"



"He will kill mice, and he will be kind to babies when he is in the house, just as long as they do not pull his tail too hard. But when he has done that, and between times, and when the moon gets up and night comes, he is the Cat that walks by himself, and all places are alike to him. Then he goes out to the Wet Wild Woods or up the Wet Wild Trees or on the Wet Wild Roofs, waving his wild tail and walking by his wild lone."
- Rudyard Kipling

Table Of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction to Cat Behavior

Chapter 2: Cats Scratching Walls & Inside Surfaces

Chapter 3: Cat Spraying & Inappropriate Urination / Defecation

Chapter 4: The Nervous Cat

Chapter 5: Feline Pica (Cats Eating Inedible Objects)

Chapter 6: The Older Cat

Chapter 7: Cat Dating (Cat Introductions)

Chapter 8: Aggressive Behavior In Cats

Chapter 9: Cats & Babies

Chapter 10: Cats & Disease

Chapter 11: Transporting Your Cat

Chapter 12: Moving Home With Your Cat

Chapter 13: Cat & Human Overattachment

Chapter 14: Bereavement

Chapter 15: Miscellaneous Cat Behavioral Problems

Chapter 16: Indoor & Outdoor Cats

Chapter 17: Cat Communication

Chapter 18: Butt Rubbing

Chapter 19: The Vomiting Cat

Chapter 20: Loss of Appetite

Chapter 21: Specific Case Studies

Chapter 22: Customer Submitted Questions & Answers



Chapter1: Introduction to Cat Behavior:

Where your cats mind originated.

"I purr, therefore I am." – Anonymous

Knowledge of normal feline behavior is a must to appreciate how problems with behavior can arise and understand what issues affect cats. The social structure and associated behavior of cats is very different to other domestic animals like dogs, sheep and cattle. These animals tend to live in large groups with a hierarchical structure – a group leader with subordinates. Dogs are more attached to their owners and other dogs in general than to the physical place they live in. Cats however have evolved from the small wild cats – solitary hunters of small prey. They don't need the help of others to hunt and don't need a group for survival. There is no dominance hierarchy and no need to stay in a particular area or with particular individuals. Cats will often move house if the conditions at home are unfavourable.

Domestication of cats involves an association between cats and people rather than a domination of cats by people. This means cats are more independent than other domestic species.

Cats don't go looking for company but can accept it on a system of mutual tolerance. Individual cats obviously vary – some can spend a lot of time being affectionate to other cats or humans in the household while others will never be seen and spend a lot of time alone. Feral cats can live in large colonies often sharing duties like grooming and raising kittens. Resources have to be plentiful however so conflict is avoided. Food is acquired on first come first service rather than by hierarchy so there must be sufficient to accommodate all cats for the sake of harmony, the same is true for resting areas and shelter. Resources are not actively defended.

Resources in the home environment may be lacking leading to conflict between cats in the household. Cats are often acquired for their looks or as strays without due consideration given to their personalities or whether there is adequate space for them. In the home environment, there should be sufficient resources for each cat to have a separate eating, littering, resting and sleeping station so no cat has to share the same resource at the same time. Often cats in a household will use the same sleeping area at different times. Provided there is an alternative, conflict is unlikely and by sharing scent, cats within a household can acquire a form of 'group sense' that other animals achieve through group activity.

Most feral communities consist of related female cats with a resident male. From a domestic point of view, keeping groups of female cats may be preferable to keeping groups of males, especially if they have been raised together from a young age.

Cats are often more attached to their territory than to their owners. A female cat's territory normally includes her house and garden and neighbouring gardens if there are no resident cats. The home area is marked with faecal deposits around the periphery. A male cat's territory is often 3 times the size of a female and may overlap several female home ranges. An entire male can have a very considerable territory.

Cat's personality traits are largely inherited from the father. Bold fathers produce bold kittens. Affectionate male strays are often re-homed and neutered, the remaining toms are less social and more aggressive – a trait that will be passed onto their offspring. Stray kittens must thus have been well socialised during the important period between 2 and 8 weeks if they are to become amiable pets. This critical period of development allows kittens to accept normal everyday life occurrences – bonding with their own species as well as humans, children, dogs, rabbits etc. Early human socialisation is important for kittens to learn to accept displays of human affection like stroking, hugging, carrying etc. After 8

weeks, kittens tend to be more suspicious and don't like to accept things other than 'normal' – this can extend to new food tastes and textures – preferring to partake of more familiar items.

Kittens should be raised with exposure to varied and interesting occurrences. This part of a kitten's development falls largely with the breeder and breeders should be asked about their socialisation programme when a kitten is obtained.

When considering a behavioural problem, it is important to remember that the problem is often a result of complex interactions with people, the environment and other animals that the cat encounters. There is rarely a simple fix and often the problem may not completely resolve unless all of the underlying issues are exposed and dealt with which in some cases cannot be achieved.

"Just wondering where my mind came from, mum did tell me....."



Chapter 2: Cats Scratching Walls & Inside Surfaces

Make your mark in the world ……. or at least scratch in each corner

IMPACT ON OWNER – damage to surfaces and cost of repair / replacement (you can guarantee your cat won't pick areas to scratch that are easily repaired or replaced!!).

CAT'S PERSPECTIVE – totally natural behavior!!

- can indicate an underlying issue / upset

Vertical and horizontal scratching of surfaces, especially those with raised textures. Cat scratching functions for many reasons. (if you are a cat)!

1. Claw Maintenance

Removal of the outer nail by scratching reveals the new sharper growing nail. Scratching outdoors generally occurs on trees, fence posts, sheds and wooden gates as they provide a perfect level of resistance to the action. Indoor cats still need to perform this natural behavior and will find what they think is a suitable surface to scratch. Most common surfaces include soft woods, fabrics, textured wallpaper and carpet.

2. Habit/Pleasure

Scratching can become enjoyable due to the texture of the surface and can also be associated with excitement and play.

3. Boredom

Wallpaper scratching often follows on from a minor defect in the paper giving rise to a fun and rewarding game of paper removal. By giving your cat attention, albeit angry, this is still seen as a positive reward from your cat's point of view.

4. Communication/Territorial Marking

Strategically scratching in important outdoor locations will indicate a cat's presence both visually with the scratch marks and by smell from the scent gland between the cat's pads.

5. Security

When cats feel vulnerable, they will try to rub their own scent on prominent places in a room so that they feel more secure. If the cat is trying to increase its feeling of security, many surfaces may be scratched,

particularly those in strategic places such as edges of chairs and areas nearest to doorways. Secretions of watery sweat from between the cat's pads leave a scent message on top of the physical marks, reassuring your cat of his own environment. Your cat can feel threatened even by the sight of another cat through a window.

THE SOLUTION

Please remember most importantly, your cat is not trying to be destructive! In an indoor situation, your cat is either trying to display a natural behavior or something is upsetting him and he is trying to cope. Punishment in both cases is counter**p**roductive.

1. Claw Trimming

Accustom your cat to having his paws held and nails trimmed. Most cats hate having this done at first but before you rush off for your reinforced chain mail gloves and face protection remember the old proverb 'Rome wasn't built in a day'. Your cat is highly unlikely to tolerate a full manicure at the first sitting but with gradual time and patience you should find he will tolerate it … up to a point. A good technique is essential and consists of gently holding your cat's paw in one hand with your thumb on top of the paw and forefinger on the pad. Gently squeeze your thumb and finger together to push the claw clear of the fur so it can easily be seen. Practice this a few times over a few days. The best time to clip claws is when you cat is relaxed or sleepy and not after a round of energetic play!



The inside of the claw is pink near its base. This is the sensitive living tissue and should never be cut. The clear tip of the nail can be cut with dedicated cat nail clippers - the slightly opaque region that outlines the pink tissue should be avoided. This will avoid cutting into areas that would be painful or bleed. The desired effect is simply to blunt the claw tip. Many people hold the clippers at right angles to the nail, thus cutting across the nail. This tends to make the nail more subject to splitting or fraying. It is better to hold the clippers in a vertical position—that is, up and down, so that the claw is trimmed from bottom to top instead. If the quick is accidentally clipped it will probably bleed profusely but should stop quickly especially if the cat has been struggling, then allowed to calm down. Various preparations e.g. potassium permanganate can be dabbed on the bleeding area to stop blood flow (it will however stain hands and surfaces brown/yellow. Hand stains will resolve within 48hrs but surface stains may require cleaning with acetic acid) Many different types of nail trimmers are available in pet stores, scissors tend to bend the nail rather than trim it so should be avoided.

2.Provide a Scratch Post

There are many commercially available scratch posts and activity centres available, e.g. on Amazon



Alternatively you may want to make your own - an interesting take on this can be found at www.wikihow.com/Make-a-Cat-Scratching-Post



Your cat's paws can be wiped down the post to leave some scent on it and show the cat what to do. If you see your cat scratching elsewhere, carry him to the post and encourage him to scratch there instead. Catnip (a mint scented plant containing a volatile oil that cats find stimulating) is often incorporated into the scratch post to encourage interest. Catnip does not appeal to kittens younger than 5 months. The post should be positioned in an area your cat often frequents or in front of an area that has already been used for scratching. A scratch post near the cat's sleeping area is a good idea as most cats like to scratch and stretch after they have been asleep. Upright posts should be tall enough to allow your cat to scratch at full stretch. Scratch posts must be sturdy enough not to topple and frighten your cat. If the scratching post has several levels treats can be placed at different positions to encourage interaction. In multi-cat households, it is probably sensible to provide one scratching post per cat (plus an additional one for choice) positioned in different locations. Scratching panels or sections of carpet can be fixed to walls and Sisal twine can be used to create your own cat scratching equipment.

Making a Sisal Wrapped Scratching Post

Requirements

- One wooden post at least 10 cm diameter and of a height that will allow your cat to achieve full stretch (60-80cm)
- A length of non-oiled sisal rope of cm diameter
- Plywood for the base of approximately 50cm by 50cm for sturdiness
- roofing nails
- coated sinker nails

Instructions

1. Nail the beginning of your rope all the way around the top of the post

2. Wind the rope around the post tightly to the bottom

3. Nail the end of your rope all the way around the bottom of the post

4. Nail the base on to the post using about four nails and pound them through the bottom of the plywood base and into the bottom of the post.

The base can be sisal wrapped or have carpet fixed to it prior to post attachment and string from the top with a ball or toy attached can be used to initiate play.

4. Encourage Play

Increase energy expenditure of your cat to minimise destructive boredom by interacting more with your cat, providing toys which promote hunting aptitude and allow your cat access to multiple height levels for play and observation. Try not to encourage your cat by giving him attention when he is scratching somewhere other than his scratch post.

5. Improve security

Your cat may be signalling that he is feeling insecure by scratching at many sites. The cause of this stress or insecurity needs to be identified. Possible causes are other cats coming into the house, conflict between resident cats, changes within the household or fear of something outside.

Closing the cat flap and letting the cat in and out yourself or fitting a selective type which keeps strange cats out could help

Looking at the relationship between resident cats and providing separate resource areas for each cat for eating, toileting and resting are a must.

Restrict your cat’s access within the house and concentrate on making him feel secure in one or two rooms, possibly by providing hiding places and raised perches.

Cats use their cheek glands to mark their territory and the presence of these scents (pheromones) will make them feel relaxed. Research has shown that cats will not scratch or spray urine in areas where this pheromone is deposited. Wiping around your cat's face with a cloth can capture this scent which can then be transferred to areas that have been scratched. This technique is also useful after you have decorated a room where unfamiliar smells may make an otherwise happy cat feel insecure. Manufactured scents are also available e.g. Feliway (manufactured by Ceva Animal Health Ltd) and are available in spray and diffuser form.

Never punish a cat as he will end up being more insecure. This is very important!

6. Cleaning scratched areas

If the cat is using scratching as a form of marking his territory, he will continue to return to the scratched area as the scent wears off. If the area is suitable for cleaning an effective cleaning method involves scrubbing with a biological detergent to break down protein, then wipe with surgical spirit to remove fat. There are various products on the market that claim to remove all traces of cat odour but many do not live up to their claims

7. Minimise further damage

Double sided sticky tape, bubble wrap or tin foil can be stuck over the damaged area and this will provide an unpleasant (but not dangerous) experience when your cat next scratches there.

Remove all traces of the scratch marks by sanding down wood and treating the area with a thick layer of furniture polish once the surface is smooth again. Suitable posts or scratching panels should be located nearby.
Thin sheets of Perspex can be fitted over the damaged area of wallpaper making the surface unattractive to scratch since it is smooth and it is also easily cleaned to remove any scent deposits.
The use of "Soft Paws" - small vinyl pads glued over the cat's claws is a matter of some debate. They can require sedation by a veterinary surgeon to be applied, only remain in place for 6-10 weeks and scratching will still take place but damage should be limited. The cat's problem however is not addressed but could be a last resort while other methods are put in place. Soft paws can only be used in indoor cats as they interfere with the cat's main means of self defence. www.spuk.com or in USA http://www.softclaws.com

Cats protection statement

"To deprive a cat of its ability to scratch objects, by placing plastic caps over its claws could make a cat feel defenceless as well as prevent natural behavior that is part of being a cat. This, in turn, could lead to further behavioural problems such as the cat over-grooming himself or finding other ways to scent mark such as "spraying". We would recommend that plastic caps should only be fitted to cat's claws on expert advice for specifically diagnosed behavioural problems as a short term measure while the underlying reason for the unwanted behavior is addressed."



De-clawing ie the process of totally removing the claw and end bone of the toe is illegal in the some countries like the UK. Overall we think it is a bad idea and would like to deal with the problem non surgically as outlined in this book.



“Now tell me all about the shared resources...”

Chapter 3: Spraying / Inappropriate Urination / Defecation

“When I played in the sandbox the cat kept covering me up..”

“Do not meddle in the affairs of cats, for they are subtle and will urinate on your computer...”

IMPACT ON OWNER - offensive smells in areas of the house
- damage to walls and flooring
- difficulty in removing the offensive odours

CAT’S PERSPECTIVE possible medical problem
- reaction to underlying issue / upset
- insufficient or inadequate resources available to express natural behavior.
-



“Now what have I done wrong..”

Inappropriate urination: can consist of

Urine pooling in areas other than the litter tray or **urine spraying** onto vertical surfaces, people and possessions.

To **urinate the cat squats and deposits a volume of urine on a horizontal surface.** Common sites for inappropriate urination include carpet, settees, duvets, baths or sinks

To **spray urine the cat stands up, usually making a treading motion with its back feet, quivers its tail and a small amount of urine is sprayed backwards onto a vertical surface** such as a wall, leaving an obvious scent mark. Common sites for spraying include doors, windows, around cat flaps, curtains, electrical equipment and shopping or rubbish bags.

Once it has been ascertained which of the two the cat is doing it is necessary to take action to resolve the behavior.

Inappropriate defecation: is the soiling of areas outside the litter box. A common area that cats tend to use is the bath.

It is very important to rule out Medical Causes first, if unsure see your vet.

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MEDICAL

A cat that has suddenly started to urinate inappropriately in the house should be taken to the vet for a check-up. Ideally you should try to obtain a urine sample for the vet to test for the presence of blood, protein and crystals. The first test often done is called a dipstick test. A strip of paper with reagents on it, react with certain substances that may be in the urine and change colour. The degree of colour change can give a rough idea of how much particular substance is present. This test can detect glucose, red blood cells, haemoglobin, white blood cells, urine concentration, acidity levels, and also other specific metabolites such as ketones and bilirubin. A refractometer can measure accurately how concentrated or dilute the urine is. Looking at the urine under a microscope can also be useful. Urine is spun very fast in a centrifuge, and sediment can form which may contain different types of cells, crystals, pus, bacteria, fungi, or parasites. The urine can also be cultured to see if there are any bugs contaminating it, and what they are. Soaking a small amount of cotton wool in the urine and putting it in a plastic bag is one method of obtaining a urine sample. Other commercially available none absorbent litter with syringes and sample pots can be obtained from your veterinary surgery or pet shop or http://www.katkor.com

1. Cystitis

Cystitis (inflammation of the bladder) is usually associated with frequent visits to the litter tray and the passing of small drops of urine. The cause of cystitis may be infection (bacteria – most common in females) or inflammation including crystal formation (more common in males). Your cat may drink more than usual and you may even see blood being passed with the urine. IN ALL CASES IMMEDIATE VETERINARY HELP IS INDICATED – the main reason for this is the potential for your cat to 'block' either with stones, crystals, inflammation or debris which can be potentially life threatening.

2. PUPD (polyuria**, polydipsia)** – increased urination/increased thirst

This condition is rather a sign that something is wrong rather than an actual illness in itself. It can occur for several reasons eg infection, kidney failure, diabetes mellitus and other hormonal problems. The important point to note is that if a cat is drinking more he is also likely to be urinating more hence urinating in inappropriate places if 'caught short'. Again – if you notice these signs with your cat VETERINARY ATTENTION SHOULD BE SOUGHT. Your cat is likely to need blood samples.

3. Diarrhoea

Diarrhoea can lead to inappropriate defecation as the cat gets 'caught short'. In this instance, the cat may have attempted to get to the litter tray. The faeces will be watery and may smell more than usual. If it happens on more than one occasion or if there is blood present you should TAKE YOUR CAT TO A VET.

3. Arthritis

As your cat gets older he is likely to experience joint stiffness. The range of motion of your cat's joints can become so limited that he is unable to use the litter tray especially if it is of the high sided type. Other signs you may notice are him sleeping more and reluctant to jump onto and off surfaces. Your vet may be able to prescribe an anti-inflammatory to relieve your cat's pain.

4. Senility

As your cat becomes older changes can go on in his brain that can lead to confusion and an altered state of mind regarding toileting. Other signs could occur like yowling for food then walking away, only to demand more again or an alteration in activity level. It is worth having your cat checked by a vet.

BEHAVIOURAL

1. Territorial.

All cats, male or female, entire or neutered can spray. Territorial marking behavior is more common with entire male cats but any cat may feel the need to scent mark their territory usually as a means of communication to alert other cats of their presence and to boost confidence by surrounding themselves with odours that are familiar. Such behavior is usually manifest by the cat 'backing up' to the target and spraying or shaking a few drops of urine at said target. Typically this is 'vertical' marking (walls, table legs, televisions) and typically the targets are revisited at regular intervals. Cats often spray around a cat flap or doors to make themselves secure and to signal their presence to invading cats. In the un-neutered cat, the urine not only signals the cat's presence but its status. Females in season have high levels of oestrogen in their urine to attract toms and they leave a highly pungent spray which is a combination of urine and secretions from anal glands under the tail. Spraying indoors is a sign that the cat is feeling stressed and needs to make itself feel more secure.

2. Avoidance.

Avoidance behavior refers to those cats that are unhappy about the location or type of their current litter facilities. Some cats feel self-conscious about using the litter tray in front of people or other animals, especially if the tray is positioned in a prominent area. Cats dislike using their litter trays in areas that are associated with eating and may seek alternative locations. The actual litter type and smell may put some cats off using the tray especially if the litter is dirty, clumping, perfumed or insufficient in quantity.

3. Fear / Anxiety

A nervous cat or one that is kept entirely indoors may be threatened by changes to his environment like redecorating, moving furniture or even new people entering the house. Smells brought in on feet may be enough to trigger a feeling of insecurity and a need to spray. Redecorating effectively removes all the cat's subtle markings which have been carefully placed by rubbing and scratching, with the strong odour of new carpets, paint or furniture. Your cat has lost his 'furnishing' hence feels insecure and feels he needs to replace it. Sometimes if strangers are in a house a cat will urinate inappropriately rather than pass through a room with the stranger in to access the litter tray or outdoors.
Some cats feel intensely threatened by the presence of strangers and subsequently 'mark' an area with a strong, familiar and reassuring scent e.g. your bed!

3.Multi-cat territorial situations.

Adding new cats to an established household can threaten resident cats, or upset the balance in a multi-cat household and induce spraying. Status challenge within a group can occur as the younger members reach social maturity between the ages of 18 months and four years thus upsetting the group dynamics. Spraying under these circumstances is almost always accompanied by a degree of passive or active aggression and intimidating behavior that you the owner may not be aware of. There is generally a conflict over resources ie litter trays, feeding stations, rest areas or toys.

THE SOLUTION

1. NEVER PUNISH YOUR CAT

2. Always seek veterinary advice in cases of inappropriate urination in a cat that has normally been using a tray and/or going outside or if your cat is not passing normal solid faeces.

3. Once your cat has urinated or defecated at a particular location, its sensitive nose will encourage it to use that place as a regular toilet. Wash the area with a 10% solution of biological or enzymatic washing powder and then rinse with cold water and allow to dry. Spray the area (using a plant mister) with surgical spirit, scrub and leave to dry. Carpet is extremely absorbent and the urine often penetrates the full thickness of the carpet to the flooring underneath. If the area is badly soiled over a long period it may be necessary to cut out the section of carpet and underlay and treat the concrete or floorboards underneath before replacing.

4. Restrict access to the affected area until odours have dissipated and change the geography of the location by using pieces of furniture to block access.

5. Use synthetic pheromones (Feliway) or your cat's own facial pheromones on the area to discourage further attention.

6. Locate litter trays in quiet/discrete areas.

7. Consider use of covered litter trays for nervous cats. An inverted box with one side cut out or careful positioning of house plants may provide the necessary privacy. Some covered trays have flaps over the entrance and these can be one obstacle too many for the more insecure cat.

8. Accompanying your cat on visits to the garden may encourage it to eliminate outside and you could provide a sandy/peat area to appeal as a toilet for your cat. Chase other cats out of the garden to give your cat support outside.

9. Provide a selection of litter trays and litter and ensure in multicat houses there are at least 1 tray per cat plus an extra, the same goes for feeding stations, rest areas and scratch posts.

10. Ensure litter trays are cleaned regularly with a mild detergent and remove solid waste at least once a day. Avoid disinfectants that turn cloudy in water as these usually contain phenols which are toxic to cats.

11. Changing the consistency or type of litter may put the cat off using it. Hard wood based pellets may have been acceptable as a kitten but as cats get heavier there are some that object to walking on the uncomfortable surface. Cats prefer fine grain litter with the consistency of sand with no

scented deodoriser. If you want to change the type you use, mix the new one in gradually over a week to gauge the cat's reaction.

12. Get kittens used to a litter tray by keeping them near the litter tray then gradually expanding the area they can explore.

13. Use of a magnetic cat flap to keep out "foreign" cats can help, as can screening glass doors, transparent cat flaps or windows if other cats can stare in and intimidate the resident cat from any of these points.

14. In some cats converting an indoor/outdoor house cat to an indoor only cat can resolve the problem as the cat is no longer challenged when it does go out but the situation can get worse for a couple of weeks before it gets better with this as the cat reinforces it indirect counter challenge (i.e. spraying) efforts and not all cats will happily adapt to being indoor only.

15. Vertical marking can change to horizontal marking if physical environmental changes prevent a vertical posture being adopted. If absorbent surfaces are being sprayed, covering with a non-absorbent surface, particularly one that makes a noise when sprayed (e.g. tin foil can help). Deterrents however can cause further anxiety and delay understanding of the initial cause of the behavior

16. Using spraying areas as feeding stations can alter the cat's perception of the appropriateness of these areas as cats hate to eat and eliminate waste in the same area.

17. Providing a litter tray in areas where nervous cats seek refuge from strangers can provide relief for your cat.

18. After decorating, keep your cat out of these areas until strong smells have dissipated then rub facial pheromones around the room and consider the use of a Feliway diffuser. A piece of furniture or material eg a throw from another room can be put in the newly decorated room again to give your cat a feeling of familiarity in the new surroundings.

19. Limit the area your cat has to patrol to one or two rooms to help improve his feelings of security and reduce the desire to mark.

20. Use of behavioural modifying drugs eg Prozac, chlopramine, amitryptilline should only be used as a last resort and under strict guidance of a veterinary surgeon after all other options have been exhausted. The above techniques should help in most cases; some cats however need referral to behavioural specialist.



In a multicat household, if you are unsure which cat is urinating or defecating inappropriately you could

1. Separate the cats into different areas of the house. This is probably easier said than done and can affect behavior!

2. Use a video camera - either monitor the litter tray itself and eliminate potential offenders! Or, monitor the area that is most subject to the inappropriate elimination then you can catch the cat (or cats) in the act.

3. Obtain Fluorescein from your vet (this substance is often used to detect the presence of ulcers and scratches in the eye). If given orally in a capsule, it will change the colour of your cat's urine to vibrant green/yellow for 24hrs after administration but will not harm your cat. (Care must be taken however as the dye may permanently change the colour of your furnishings)

4. Shavings of nontoxic crayons can be used to determine which cat is defecating inappropriately. ONLY USE THIS IF YOUR CAT HAS NORMAL SOLID FAECES – NEVER USE IN A CAT WITH DIARRHOEA. Add half a teaspoon of a coloured grated nontoxic crayon to each cat's food but use a different colour for each cat. The shavings will pass out of your cat along with its faeces and you can conclude who is the inappropriate defecator!

"Why do you think it was me....."



Chapter 4: The Nervous Cat

"If cats could talk, they wouldn't." ~Nan Porter

IMPACT ON OWNER - anxiety as feel your cat is not happy
- disappointed with cat's contribution to household in being an unrewarding pet

CAT'S PERSPECTIVE – fearful of unpredictable situations
- previous frightening experience
- natural survival mechanisms taking over in anticipation of harm



It is normal to find a cat or kitten quiet and wary for the first few days or even the first few weeks after you obtain it until it gets used to you and its new environment. Whereas most cats are initially wary of unfamiliar noises, people or events, this is soon replaced by curiosity as immortalised in the saying about curiosity and the cat. Nervous cats remain fearful and this prevents them from investigating the disturbance and discovering it to be harmless. These cats may run and hide as soon as someone comes into the house, if there is a sudden noise or from common everyday sounds such as the television, washing machine or vacuum cleaner. Many such cats spend a great deal of their time hiding from the world either under the bed or on top of the wardrobe. Some cats are naturally more fearful than others genetically. Others may have had a previous bad experience. Most nervous cats however are those that have had a lack of experience of people and new situations in a crucial time of their development.

Kittens exposed to new people, animals and general situation of everyday life by the time they are eight weeks old will take almost anything in their stride and deal with it as a normal part of life. This is the making of a confident cat. Eight weeks seems to be a very crucial cut-off point for the kitten. Cats deprived of the important opportunity as kittens to face the challenges of contact with different things can develop into incompetent and reactive adults. Every new situation then is potentially frightening and stressful since there is no previous experience to teach the appropriate response. If it has not had these very early experiences, it will find life with humans very difficult to cope with. Such kittens will behave like wild animals and handling or confinement will cause acute fear. Although some people persevere with older feral kittens, it requires a great deal of time and patience to get them to respond and this lack of early experience is usually very difficult, if not sometimes impossible, to overcome.

A cat which hides under the bed at the slightest noise or activity within the house has removed itself from what it sees as a life-threatening situation and feels a flood of relief. This feeling is very strong and reinforces the fleeing behavior. Owners must be able to offer something even more rewarding than this feeling of safety and relief that the cat feels on following its instincts if they want to stop it running. This can prove to be very difficult.

THE SOLUTION

Your cat needs to learn that there is nothing threatening in the situation it is running from. In its safe "den" it feels safe and relieved. This feeling of relief reinforces the fleeing and hiding behavior. Getting under the bed with the cat or removing it from a cupboard will stress it even more as its safe den has been invaded. Unlike dogs, cats are not pack animals and cannot call on pack-mates to help it out if threatened. To survive, its reaction to danger is to find a safe place to hide until the danger has gone. While this makes sense when a cat is confronted by a predator, it is upsetting to family members who only want to pet the cat.

To overcome the hiding behavior, you need to offer it something even more rewarding than the feeling of safety and relief that it gets from instinctively running and hiding. This can be difficult because you are trying to overcome a hard-wired survival instinct. First, it needs to learn that the situation it is fleeing from is not actually a threat to it. In other words, it needs to be desensitised to the stimulus that makes it hide. To do this you have to expose it to the scary situation, but in such a way that it feels safe and cannot run.

1. Place a cage or kittening pen in a quiet corner of a room. Ideally the pen should be positioned in an elevated position with good views of all areas of the house. It can be covered on all sides except the front with a rug or blanket and should be large enough to accommodate a bed, food and water bowl and litter tray. Your cat should feel safe and protected here.

2. Put the cat in the pen first during a quiet period so that it can get used to it and relax. Rewarding your cat with treats when in the pen provides a positive experience. From the safety of this pen, the cat can see and hear all the normal household goings-on. Remember to walk around normally to get your cat/ kitten used to the normal sounds and movements of adult humans. Creeping around can create an air of tension rather than reassurance.

3. As days' progress, you can expose your cat to more things e.g. the TV, vacuum cleaning in the next room (not right up to the pen!), members of the household walking past etc. Make sure that you do not terrorise the cat within its pen - keep the fear item at a safe distance!

4. When your cat seems relaxed, ask a friend to visit. Normally the cat would run away when the doorbell rings, but now it must watch and listen, albeit from the safety of its pen. You want the cat to realise that the threats it perceived are not going to materialise. Ask your guest to feed the cat through the cage with a special titbit and offer lots of praise and soothing talk.

5. You can then graduate to having the cat in the room without the pen and inviting visitors in (again pre-briefed so they to behave quietly and prevent startling the cat). As the cat learns that everything is not a threat and that the rewards of staying around are indeed worth overcoming its fear for, you are gaining success.

Never lose your temper or try to force things too quickly - this will just reinforce the cat's previous fears. If the cat progresses, even slowly, you are likely to be dealing with an animal which is overcoming a fear rather than one which has missed out during its socialising period as a kitten. Build on your successes gradually. Remember that cats feel safe in high places so when you progress to letting the cat out in the room with you, provide it with a high perch where it can sit in safety and watch the world go by beneath. Use warmth, affection and food as rewards for being with you.

Cats can find direct approaches to be extremely threatening. It is important to realise that their abilities to communicate in close proximity are limited compared to that of the dog or the human. Owners often do not recognise that their cat is attempting to tell them to move away. Subtle signals, such as narrowing the eyes and turning the face away from a nervous cat can help to reassure him or her that the human is not a threat. Waiting for the cat to make the first move is even better!

Nervous cats fit better into some household situations than into others and what might be a problem in a bustling household might not be an issue in a quiet home.

Provide scratch posts, hiding places for times when feeling threatened (even something as simple as a cardboard box with holes cut out) and encourage play with predatory games ie catnip containing mouse on a string at the end of a stick. This will allow your cat to feel comfortable with his environment and see you as a source of entertainment and fun. By distracting your cat/kitten with a game, you can try to stroke him – starting at the head and moving across the body. Take care to ensure movements are slow and gentle – you don't want him to feel threatened in an excited state which could predispose to biting and scratching.

Dried catnip in your pocket can also be used to entice your cat nearer to you.

Once the stroking is well tolerated then concentrate on developing the concept of restraint. This involves gentle holding pressure for seconds followed by immediate release and more stroking. The gentle holding then progresses to taking the weight of your cat/kitten and then lifting for longer and longer periods of time. Ultimately the goal is to be able to pick the cat/kitten up and hold against your body.

Some owners have had good results with Bach Flower Remedies “Rescue Remedy” and remedies indicated for fear, stress or nervousness. The use of a Feliway diffuser can help make your cat feel more relaxed in their environment.

Many cats find direct eye contact very threatening so try to avoid this if at all possible.

It is a peculiar fact that sometimes the people whom have the best relationship with their cats are very busy and only able to spend small amounts of quality time with their animals, especially with nervous cats! In the cat world, this can be ideal. Keep an open mind and keep learning.



“Hey who’s nervous with all us cats around...”









Chapter 5: Feline Pica (Cats Eating Inedible Objects)

"Cat's motto: No matter what you've done wrong, always try to make it look like the dog did it." – Unknown

IMPACT ON OWNER – damage to clothes, fabrics and electrical wiring

- may need to take cat to vet if obstruction occurs

CAT'S PERSPECTIVE – natural hunting behavior to tear and pluck before eating

PICA is the term used for the craving of unusual articles. The ingestion of non-food items is occasionally seen in cats. Pure breed Orientals e.g. Siamese and Burmese are most commonly affected especially those that are kept solely indoors. Some cats only lick odd materials, others chew and rip but don't actually eat the material and others go the whole way and eat everything. Fabric-eating seems to start around puberty, most often with wool, but can progress to other fabrics and materials including cotton, nylon, wood, plastic, rubber and plants. Most of the time, the material will go through the cat without too many problems, but occasionally cats require surgery to remove these foreign materials. Any cat known to eat foreign material that becomes lethargic, off his food and starts vomiting or drooling saliva excessively should be taken to a vet ASAP as he may need surgical removal of the offending item.

Possible theories for eating inedible items include

1. Indoor cats denied the opportunity to hunt, stalk, pounce, and tear off feathers and skin and eat them. Since ordinary cat food gives no chance of tearing and ripping, the cat looks for this somewhere else.

2. Genetic predisposition especially in Oriental breeds.

3. Redirected suckling behavior in cats that were weaned too early.

4. Boredom and lack of stimulation.

5. Triggered by stressful event.

6. Overdependence on the owner, eating fabric when separated from them.

7. Obsessive compulsive disorder.

8. Insufficient fibre in diet.

"I think this is edible....."



9. The odour of lanolin in wool is similar to the odour of the fur around the nipples of the kitten's mother so provides comfort and security.

10. Medical disorders like hyperthyroidism, anaemia or mouth/tooth pain.

SOLUTION

Experts used to suggest feeding high fibre food, gristly meat and frequent meals in the hope that this would make the cats feel that their stomachs were full and they would have lots of opportunity to chew. Now they suggest supplying something for cats to tear and shred like they would in their natural environment. One solution is to feed dead whole turkey chicks, day old chicks or dead whole rats sold frozen by pet shops for reptiles. (NB day old chicks carry salmonella in their intestines The risk of feeding them is probably no more than the risk that your cat might pick up a salmonella bug from hunting mice or birds, but you should wash your hands after handling them and not allow your cat to lick you).These should make up the majority of your cat's diet but you could feed a small amount of dried food e.g. in a foraging toy to encourage your cat to work for his food. A cat vitamin supplement can be fed in addition to this as it will do no harm and may be beneficial. Cats which have been wool-eating for only a few months may recover completely on this diet. Cats which have been wool-eating for years may still occasionally wool-eat. Try the diet for at least one month before you decide it hasn't worked – sometimes it takes a bit of time for the cat to realise it doesn't need to continue eating wool.

Even if you have an indoor cat, encourage his hunting behavior using predatory games like fishing rod toys. Hide food for your cat to find and stalk and ensure he has access to a variety of toys.

As wool eating, may be hereditary, avoid breeding from such cats.

Sometimes denying the cat access to the fabric for as little as a few weeks is enough to break the cycle.

Letting your cat outside to hunt can reduce or halt the problem.

Applying offensive but nontoxic products to the materials that are being chewed can be useful eg bitter lemon, Tabasco sauce, perfume. Avoid substances like menthol and eucalyptus as this can upset the cat's sensitive mucous membranes of the eyes, mouth and nose.

Punishment e.g. water pistol rarely works in this case as the underlying problem is not addressed and you cannot punish your cat every time he tries to eat inedible materials so no continuity is achieved.

Behavioural modifying drugs e.g. Amitriptyline should only be used as a last resort and under strict control of a veterinary surgeon.



Chapter 6: The Older Cat

If there is one spot of sun spilling onto the floor, a cat will find it and soak it up. ~J.A. McIntosh

IMPACT ON OWNER – concern about cat's health

CAT'S PERSPECTIVE – ageing process , is not a disease in itself!

Veterinary advances and improved nutrition mean more and more cats are living to greater ages. Over the past 10 years, there has been a 15% increase in cats over the age of 10 years in the USA and this picture is likely to be seen here in the UK. Cats are considered to be 'geriatric' at 10 years old but many live to 14 and beyond.

CAT AGE	HUMAN EQUIVALENT
1	15
2	24
3	28
4	32
5	36
6	40
7	44
8	48
9	52
10	56
11	60
12	64
13	68
14	72
15	76
16	80
17	84
18	88
19	92
20	96

Older cats, in common with older people have changing metabolism and ways in which their bodies work. Ageing itself is not however a disease! Older cats are less active so their muscle tone reduces. This can inhibit their ability to run and jump. Stiffness of joints can occur. Appetite tends to reduce with age in line with deterioration of the senses of taste and smell. Dental disease is common in the older cat and can discourage eating. Weight loss and constipation can occur in the older cat as bowel function deteriorates and can reduce the amount of nutrients absorbed from food. Thirst can increase with disease but can also decrease in old age which can cause problems especially in cats with kidney problems. Sleep tends to increase. Old cats often have poor coats which may make them less resistant to the cold and wet.

Vocalisation appears to play a big part in the ageing process with cats becoming more demanding, especially at night. Several owners report that the calling stops when the cat is allowed to sleep in the bedroom. However often the cat will jump off the bed and wander off downstairs only to repeat

the behavior. Deafness seems to play a role in the harshness of the cry and it is possible that chronic cerebral hypoxia (deficiency of oxygen supply to the brain) could possibly produce symptoms of senility and short-term memory problems causing general confusion at night. Cognitive dysfunction may also be a cause of a change in the sleep/wake cycle causing some cats to be more likely to be awake at night. There is also a possibility that hypertension (high blood pressure) causing general discomfort, headache and disorientation could easily promote a distress response. Night-time vocalisation is often reported as one of the behavioural signs in cats suffering from hyperthyroidism. This is a condition seen frequently in the elderly cat; a tumour on the thyroid gland causes metabolic changes including increased heart and respiration rates, increased appetite and weight loss.

Old cats still like to play but generally the owner has to instigate a game and games should be less active than for a younger cat. Older cats still groom themselves but arthritic changes can limit the extent to which an older cat can reach especially around their back legs and along their backs. Many older cats start to have ‘accidents’ indoors often as a result of an increasing reluctance to urinate and defecate outdoors, either due to the presence of aggressive cats in the territory or an increased sensitivity to inclement weather conditions. The provision of an indoor litter tray invariably solves the problem but you should provide a litter tray with low sides and in an accessible position to accommodate arthritic joints and stiffness.

Chronic illness can affect behavior in old age

Arthritis –

Less active cat, unwilling to jump onto surfaces, reduced grooming activity, may show evidence of pain when being handled, may not be able to get into a litter tray resulting in inappropriate soiling of the house. Check out Flexicat to help your cat in a safe natural way, available on Amazon.

Blindness –

Cataracts, result of underlying disease causing hypertension eg hyperthyroidism, chronic renal failure. Colliding with furniture, especially if moved, reluctant to go outside, reluctant to investigate strange areas.

Chronic renal failure –

Increased thirst, weight loss, reduced appetite and vomiting.

Diabetes –

Weight loss, increased thirst, increased appetite, blindness

Dental disease –

Decreased appetite, saliva drooling, bad smell from mouth

Deafness –

Unresponsive and more vocal

Hyperthyroidism (overactive thyroid gland) –

Increased appetite, weight loss, an increase in activity levels, yowling, high blood pressure.

Senility –

Blank expression, getting lost in familiar surroundings, constant yowling, lack of grooming, continuous pacing, inappropriate toileting, all with no obvious physical cause

SOLUTION

1. Provide a number of warm, soft and quiet resting places where your cat can spend a significant proportion of its time. Ensure these places are easily reached for stiff cats. Older cats often like to stretch out - hammock beds on radiators are very popular.

2. Continue games to stimulate mental agility

3. Use a soft brush for daily grooming, carefully remove knotted fur from longer haired cats and avoid brushing bony prominences

4. Think carefully about introducing new younger animals to the household. After the loss of a companion, some cats appear anxious due to a change in routine rather than actual loneliness. Many cats prefer their own company!

5. Maintain routine

6. Provide indoor litter facilities within easy reach of your cat. Use a low sided litter tray.

7. As older cats drink less, wet food is preferable. In addition the cat should have plentiful access to fresh drinking water. In cats preferring dried food, a few biscuits can be offered as may help to reduce the build-up of tartar on the teeth. Some medical problems can be managed by feeding specially designed prescription diets e.g. kidney failure is common in elderly cats and a diet restricted in protein and phosphorus may be recommended.

8. Trim elderly cats' nails regularly - they are less able to retract and therefore more likely to get trapped in the carpet or actually to stick painfully into the pad.

9. Older cats are more prone to parasite infection so regular flea and worm treatments should be undertaken.

10. It may be necessary gently to wipe away any discharge around the eyes, nose or anus using cotton wool moistened in warm water.

11. It is tempting to think arthritic cats could benefit from pain relief similar to those used for humans. Unfortunately, cats are unable to process drug by products in the same way as humans making the usual painkillers from the bathroom cabinet lethal to cats. **NEVER GIVE YOUR CAT PARACETAMOL OR IBUPROFEN** – it will cause irreversible liver and kidney damage and will kill your cat.

12. Seek regular veterinary advice/ examination to keep a check on your cat's health. A physical examination to assess body weight, heart and lung function and presence of lumps should be performed at least once a year. This can also include blood samples for kidney function and thyroid tests. Regular booster vaccinations are still advised in old cats. Although unproven, it is thought that the immune system deteriorates with age increasing the cat's vulnerability to infections such as cat flu. Boosters stimulate the immune system and help the cat to fight these infections.

12 Carefully consider your cat's quality of life, in situations where this is poor, euthanasia is the kindest option



"Can't imagine what it is like to grow old....."

Chapter 7: Cat Dating (Cat Introductions)

Every man needs a dog who adores him …. And a cat to bring him back to reality

IMPACT ON OWNER – may feel cat is lonely if no other cats in household / indoor cat.
- want all animals to get on well with each other in the household.

CAT'S PERSPECTIVE – cats do not need to be social creatures – they are not pack orientated.
- may resent perceived competition for resources.
- may be frightened by animals to which they have not been exposed to before

Introducing a new cat or kitten to your resident cat or dog can be quite a stressful time both for you and your animals. It is not a simple case of expecting the resident animal and new arrival to just get on with it and sort themselves out – this can lead to conflict, development of behavioural problems and an unhappy house. The situation must be controlled so smooth introductions are achieved.

Cats are not socially orientated and do not need a pack to function happily. Some cats will live with another cat easily whereas others will barely tolerate a companion. Most cats will eventually accept the presence of another provided sufficient resources like food, sleeping areas and toileting facilities are present to minimise competition. A contented cat may form a close bond with another in such cases. But remember some cats just do not and never will get on!!

THE SOLUTION

It is up to the nature of the individual cats involved as to whether they will like each other but **careful introductions** make the difference between success and failure. If either cat feels threatened, excessive reactions can occur and conflict may take a long time to resolve, if at all.

1. Kittens are less of a threat to a resident cat than adults as they are sexually immature.
2. If adult cats are introduced it is best that the newcomer is neutered and of the opposite sex.
3. Cats should be introduced at times when the household is calm without anything else going on eg building work, decorating, and visitors.
4. Delay letting cats meet face to face until the scent of the new cat can be spread around the home and the scent of home spread to the new cat.
5. Keep cats in separate rooms and stroke each cat without washing your hands. Rub a soft cloth over the new cat's head to collect facial pheromones then wipe it around the home and furniture to get the resident cat used to the fact another cat is around.
6. Allow each cat to investigate the other cat's room without meeting.
7. Initial introductions should be done through a cage to allow the cats to see each other, sniff, hiss and yowl but prevent fighting and chasing. A kittening pen is ideal for this. The new arrival is placed in the cage in this scenario.

8. A large pen can be used as a base for a kitten to be kept initially – you can put its bed, food, water and litter tray inside making it feel secure and prevent it getting up to mischief while your back is turned!
9. Cat carriers/baskets can be used for initial introductions but are too small to be used as dens.

USING A PEN / CARRIER

Allow the resident cat to enter the room with the new cat in the pen/carrier. Give the resident cat calming reassurance. He will either investigate the pen or run away. If he runs away, do not force a meeting – these kinds of cats are unlikely to initiate aggression unless threatened but it may take some time for him to accept and associate with the newcomer. If the cats do show signs of aggression, throwing some keys nearby to distract them and then praise them with titbits for quiet encounters. If using a large pen, the resident cat can be allowed constant free access. There may be vocalisation and hissing but this should change over time to acceptance.

MEETING FACE TO FACE

After an initial period of about a week of contact through the cage, you are ready to try face to face contact. Wait until both cats are hungry. Feed them in the same room at opposite corners. Choose a room with sufficient furniture for the cats to hide and jump on if they feel they need to escape. Assess how the cats get on – they may find their own areas and curl up and go to sleep or you may need to keep separating the new cat and use meal times as a time when they get together. Over time you can start to use the whole house and will probably find the cats will accept one another as each performs his routine of eating and sleeping in different areas around the house.

It may take a few days or several weeks for cats to tolerate each other. They may never like each other's company but most cats will accept one another given time and adequate resources.

OTHER ANIMALS

1. The Dog

Cats and dogs are thought of as enemies but in many respects, it is easier to introduce a cat to a dog than it is to another cat. Cats, especially those that have been brought up with dogs, do not see the dog as competition. Dogs, after the initial excitement of having a new animal in the house, tend to see cats as part of their pack. A controlled meeting however must take place until the cat and dog are used to each other. Stroking both the cat and dog without hand washing can allow the exchange of each other's scents. Initial meetings with the cat protected by a pen or carrier are invaluable especially if the dog gets excited or is unused to cats. After this meeting, the cat can be allowed loose in the room, with an elevated perch and the dog kept on a lead. The cat can be encouraged to investigate the dog with the dog being restrained and kept calm. Patience and time is required and plenty of rewards for the dog when he remains calm. A sudden dash from the cat may initiate a chase – encourage the dog to remain calm and reward with food treats and provide a high level 'safe' place for the cat to escape to if the situation takes a turn for the worse. Extra care needs to be taken when introducing a cat to breeds such as terriers and greyhounds and puppies can get too excited wanting to 'play' with a new cat! Treats, praise and a positive association of calmness and presence of the cat is the ultimate goal.

2. The Rabbit

Again, as rabbits are an entirely different species to cats, they are not seen as a threat and can be well tolerated. They can provide some companionship and interaction, especially for an indoor cat without the worries about competition and conflict associated with the introduction of another cat. That said, a cat that hunts should not be trusted with a rabbit, especially small or young breeds of rabbit, as his predatory instincts will be triggered. An ideal rabbit companion would be an adolescent/mature medium to large breed rabbit. It is important to remember that rabbits have an instinct to chew – 'bunny proofing' your house is a must – especially around important and expensive wires …. like the modem cable (speaking from experience)!

The best way to introduce a rabbit to a cat is like introducing another cat. Put the rabbit in a cage/pen and allow your cat supervised access to the area. Your cat and rabbit can see and sniff each other but the rabbit is protected. Allow an area of the cage that your rabbit can retreat to without access to the outside by the cat so the rabbit doesn't feel terrorised by the cat watching his every move! If everything seems to be going ok, you can try opening the rabbit cage door and allowing him out to meet your cat. Be prepared to grab your cat if things start to go wrong.

It is not unusual to find cats and rabbits licking and grooming each other. They will often play together, usually with the rabbit chasing the cat!



This is a picture of "Larry" a one eared rabbit whom Sarah bought home after operating on it (its littermates had chewed her ear off) if you look very carefully you can see the fleshy stump of its left ear. The owner a pet store did not want it back as it was different!! She is now a permanent feature and gets on very well with our indoor cat Merlin.

3. Birds, Mice, Hamsters, etc.

Cats are predators and these creatures are their prey so never introduce these pets to your cat. Their presence in the home can frustrate your cat and your cat's presence will stress and terrorize them.



"I blame the quick dating idea, on that new E-Book mum got from the net last night and then spent all evening reading in bed..."

Chapter 8: Aggressive Behavior In Cats

"After dark all cats are leopards. — Native American Proverb"

"My other cat is a Jaguar. "

IMPACT ON OWNER – scratched and bitten hands

- reactive to cat's unpredictable behavior

CAT'S PERSPECTIVE – feeling vulnerable so attacks with defensive aggression

- frustrated as under stimulated
- over stimulated

All animals exhibit aggression in one form or another. Many forms of aggression are accepted as normal behavior eg a queen defending her kittens, a resident cat chasing a strange cat out of his territory and even a bite or scratch from a cat that has been provoked enough to retaliate. Cats seldom exhibit aggression to people as an unprovoked attack, however cats can be aggressive to people if they perceive attack, even though the person by no way meant to be a threat.

In our online campaign prior to launching this E Book this topic was the most popular question asked by owners of cats with behavioural problems!!

Possible causes of aggression include Medical and Behavioral aspects:

Always *rule out Medical reasons first and this might mean a visit to the vet.*

1. Pain

Common sources of pain include a developing cat bite abscess, developing arthritic change (especially along the back towards the pelvis and hips), ear infections and pad injuries. A cat that normally enjoys being stroked but suddenly becomes aggressive should be checked for signs of injury and probably taken to the vet for a check-up if the signs are not resolving in 24-48hrs.

2. Petting and Biting Syndrome (Close **Contact Aggression)**

When stroking your cat, he suddenly turns around and bites you or attacks your hand, grabbing your wrist with his front feet and kicking you with his back feet. Some cats will only do this if they are on their backs when you are stroking their tummies; others do it when you are simply stroking them on the head. This is generally due to conflicting feelings of security and fear – the cat relaxes when being stroked but by doing so feels vulnerable so reacts with defensive aggression and grabs the hand which is stroking them. Often the cat will then start grooming himself to calm down.

As stroking is a learned response rather than a natural behavior, some cats may be more reactive than others. Some cats get better as they get older but others that have missed out on human attention at a vital time in their development may never accept physical attention.

They key to successful stroking is to make your cat feel as secure and calm as possible and stop before the cat starts to react. Twitching, ears back, sudden tensing and dilated pupils are signs that your cat is feeing defensive so stroking should be stopped. Reward your cat with treats and praise for remaining relaxed and never punish a cat for defensiveness as this will only reinforce negative behavior and confirm to your cat that you are a threat.

3. Excess Energy

Sometimes cats perform proactive rather than reactive aggression. An example of this is a cat that attacks their owner's ankles as they walk past them. Often this aggression occurs in house cats as a form of redirected aggression as these cats have no way of releasing pent up energy or frustration eg after watching other cats or birds out of a window. The movement of the owner walking past triggers the cat into a hunting or aggressive defensive mode and they attack. Owners of such cats need to encourage predatory games with toys on strings, varied toys and objects for their cats to climb on and teaching their cat to find food around the house rather than just presenting it in a bowl.

4. Over Excitement

Kittens and young cats often get too excited when playing and attack anything nearby like hands and feet. If kittens are encouraged to do this when they are small they will continue doing it when they get bigger with stronger, bigger more painful teeth. Immediately remove attention from the kitten by walking away and leaving it alone when it bites you so you are not rewarding the behavior. Return to the kitten and give it attention when it doesn't bite but immediately walk away again and ignore it if it continues to bite. It may take some time but the kitten will eventually realise that it gets your attention by not biting better than it does by biting. Fishing rod type toys allow you to keep your hands and feet a safe distance from sharp teeth and claws.

5. Hand Rearing

Hand rearing can cause behavioural problems in most animals, not just cats. Although humans can provide nutritional support and nutritional weaning, behavioural support and weaning is sadly lacking. Queens teach their kittens how to cope when they are not able to get what they want, we are lacking in our ability to do this to anything other than out own offspring. Much learning is to do with coping with forced change. As a queen's milk dries up and the kittens demand more, she diverts them onto prey. A successful switch is accomplished and the kittens learn to be adaptable and deal with frustration. Most hand reared kittens do not learn this lesson early in life and react aggressively to frustration. The solution is to reward the behavior you want with attention and food and to ignore or prevent situations when aggression comes into play.

6. Presence of another cat

Aggression between cats is a common problem when new cats are introduced to a household. This is generally due to the perceived competition for resources such as food, territory etc

The development of behavior depends both on genetic and environmental influences. Genetics impart the potential of an individual to react in a certain way to certain circumstances. Experience in life influences whether that behavior is actually expressed and to what level.

INFLUENCES ON BEHAVIOR

Sensitive Period

The age range during which particular events are especially likely to have long-term effects on the individual's development is thought of as 2 to 7 weeks of age in cats. Social relationships that depend on familiarity are formed at this time. Encountering humans and other animals in this period in a positive manner means they will be accepted and responded to with affection in future life.

If a cat misses out at this important socialisation time, this does not mean however that the individual will never be friendly or cope with domestic life. With appropriate genetics, unlearned patterns of behavior can be modified by learning and other forms of experience later in development.

In one study kittens handled early beginning at 3 weeks of age were significantly more responsive and friendlier to people than kittens that are handled after 7 weeks of age. Kittens handled for 40 minutes a day showed more attachment to humans than those kittens only handled for 15 minutes a day.
An interesting finding in this study is that 15% of the kittens had a personality that was resistant to socialization. This shows up how genetics can affect a cats personality, something we covered in the first parts of this book

Observational Learning

Young cats learn a great deal from their mothers – they can learn by observing other's actions

Nutrition

Undernourished mothers produce kittens with behavioural abnormalities and delayed development. These include poor learning abilities, antisocial behavior towards other cats and abnormal arousal levels expressed in fear and aggression.

Neutering

Neutering both sexes at or around puberty has a profound effect on future behavior. Early castration of the male at this time will increase the likelihood of a home loving pet that will not develop the aggressive territoriality of the adult entire male.

Intensive Nursing

Intensive nursing during illness can be incredibly effective in increasing sociability and dependency in cats that have previously been independent.

Play

Social experience with siblings also seems to play a role in the development of later social skills. Kittens with no experience of siblings when young do eventually form social attachments but are generally slower to learn social skills than normally reared kittens. Solitary kittens also do not learn inhibition of bites in agonistic play behavior if they target human hands rather than siblings. A person cannot possibly teach the boundaries of acceptable levels of physical force as well as another kitten.
Social play becomes prevalent by four weeks of age and continues at a high level until twelve to fourteen weeks, when it begins to decline. Social play-fighting can sometimes escalate into serious incidents, especially during the third month. Play with objects develops at around the time when live prey is being introduced to the nest by the mother and kittens start to gain the eye-paw coordination that enables them to deal effectively with small, moving objects at around seven to eight weeks after birth.

Social play mimics agonistic social behavior and predatory behavior.

Personality

Adult cats and kittens show considerable individual variation in their friendliness towards humans, whether familiar or unfamiliar. Even kittens from the same litter can differ considerably in their friendliness. Differences in response to the various social and environmental stimuli give each cat its unique personality.

Certain breeds are described by temperament, for example Siamese are considered to be sociable, affectionate, sensitive and vocal, Burmese are assertive and outgoing and the Persian is placid. These descriptions must imply that these characteristics are inherited.



Chapter 9: Cats & Babies

IMPACT ON OWNER - worry about cat suffocating baby
- worry that cat will be jealous of baby and attack it

CAT'S PERSPECTIVE – there's something new in my house that smells differently, gets a lot of attention and produces unpredictable sounds and movements.

Most people view their cat as part of the family. It is not unusual for a cat to be treated as the 'baby' of the family but problems can arise when a real baby is introduced into the household. This is especially true if your cat is mature and has had no experience or bad experience of children and babies.

All cats will respond to a new arrival differently. The outcome will depend upon genetics (breed and parentage), personality and experience.

A. I want to get to know it better
B. I want to get to know it better but am a bit scared as I've never encountered anything like this before.
C. I'm not sure I want to get to know it better but maybe if it and its things start to smell like me and my things I'll feel happier
D. I don't want to get to know it better so I'll keep out of its way
E. I'm still getting my food and going out and about so what's all the fuss about!

Some people are unable to cope with the responsibility of a new baby and a pet and are inclined to rehome the animal. This does not have to be the outcome if careful thought and forward planning are applied.

THE SOLUTION

1. Maintain your cat's feeling of security by providing his resources eg bed, feeding station, litter tray, scratch post and toys in 'cat friendly' locations - private positions out of the way of busy traffic.

2. An elevated sleeping perch can help a cat feel more secure as the preferred feline method of dealing with something unsettling or a potential threat is to hide, preferably in a high, dark, secluded place from which there is a good view, so the situation can be assessed in safety. Igloo

beds or cardboard boxes can easily be adapted for this use, especially if a few tasty treats are hidden inside.

3. Feeding at a height or in an area secured by a baby gate (especially for older arthritic cats that are unable to jump onto surfaces easily) can allow a cat to feed in peace without being on the lookout for a mobile baby or toddler.

4. Stop your cat going into the room that is going to be the nursery long before the baby comes home. To reduce adverse reaction to this change and prevent 'barrier frustration', spray the closed door and its frame with Feliway or rub with 'facial cloths'

5. Remember that indoor cats will be more affected even by small changes to their environment and lifestyle than those with access to the outdoors. If you can, allowing your cat outdoors can help alleviate frustration. A covered garden could be the ideal compromise when a new baby comes to allow your cat extra space and interest.

6. New baby equipment brought into the house can upset a cat as the scent profile of his territory is disrupted. The equipment then becomes the target for urination or spraying. To help your cat, pheromone preparations like Feliway or facial rubbings from your cat can be applied to the new furniture and equipment before it comes into the house and before the baby arrives.

7. Create opportunities to reinforce positive associations when new equipment arrives by offering tasty food or playing a favourite game each time a new item enters the house.

8. Cats' hearing is very sensitive so the noises a baby makes can upset them easily. Tapes / CDs of baby noises like crying, gurgling, squealing and laughing can be played, initially at very low volume, to accustom your cat to the noise as well as rewarding calm behavior with food and play.

9. Carefully consider letting babies and children visit your home and avoid letting your cat be picked up or held by children as the experience may be too overwhelming. It is best to stick to hands-off interaction e.g. playing with fishing rod toys, balls or a torchlight against the wall, sitting quietly near a cat or giving him a gentle stroke or favourite treat if the cat concerned won't find that too intrusive.

10. If you and your cat have had a very close relationship, it is unfair to suddenly stop this attention and divert it to your new baby. Before the baby arrives, start to withdraw attention gradually but instigate times of structured play or grooming to suit your timetable. Cats like predictability so when the baby arrives try to set time aside for your cat and stick to his established routine.

11. Never punish or stop your cat running away from children – stress and fear could turn to aggression if he feels trapped.

12. Bring children up to respect your cat as a living creature, not a plaything.

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Various myths surround pregnancy and cats and many people will be keen to offer advice and opinions on the effect your cat will have on your pregnancy and baby. **Some of this advice though well-meaning can be scare mongering to the detriment of your cat – cats, pregnancy and babies can co-exist!**

1.Toxoplasmosis

Toxoplasmosis is an infection caused by the parasite *Toxoplasma gondii. The greatest risk of infection is from uncooked meat and unwashed vegetables but cats that hunt and eat infected wildlife can pass the parasite on in their faeces. Infection especially in the first trimester can damage a developing foetus.* Precautions can be taken to avoid the problem.

- Clean litter trays daily using rubber gloves.
- Keep cats off kitchen surfaces.
- Regularly wash your hands especially after handling raw meat.
- Wear gloves if you are gardening.
- Wash vegetables.
- Ensure meat is fully cooked before eating

2. Roundworms

Toxocara and Toxascaris are easily removed with regular worming of your cat. Only use wormers and flea treatments, recommended by your veterinarian for your specific cat and circumstances and note if your cat hunts regularly, monthly treatment may be required.

3. Suffocation myth

Cats love a warm spot and the cot in the nursery is usually very cosy but the old wives tale about cats sitting on babies and suffocating then is just that – an urban myth. The worry can be removed by ensuring the cat is not in the nursery when you leave the baby to sleep and if you want to leave the door or window open, put a cat net over the cot or pram. The only potential danger occurs when the baby is very small and cannot turn over or move. The myth that a cat will kill a baby due to jealousy is unfounded, as is the myth that cats suck the breath from infants due to the milk in their mouths.

Chapter 10: Cats & Disease

Zoonosis is the term applied to a disease that can be passed from animals to people and vice versa. Most feline zoonotic diseases are rare but many myths seem to exist regarding disease risk. In reality, more people become ill from food borne disease rather than contact with cats.

Practising common sense together with a good hygiene routine, including careful handling of litter trays, washing hands after contact with cats and before eating and routine treatment of cats for fleas and worms, significantly reduces the possibility of disease transmission from cats to humans.

1. Cat fleas

Cat fleas cannot actually live on humans but can bite humans and cause skin irritation. Cats should be regularly treated with a suitable product eg Frontline spot on every 5 weeks. Your house can be sprayed with for example Indorex spray – one application will last 12 months. Note different products are used in different countries, ALWAYS ask your vet. WITH FLEAS YOU MUST TREAT HOUSE & CAT!!



2. Cat bites

Wounds from cat bites require **medical attention** due to the large number of bacteria present in a cat's mouth especially Pasteurella multocida. They cause heat, pain and swelling, sometimes with abscessation. This can be particularly dangerous if a joint is involved. You should ensure your tetanus cover is up to date,



3. Ringworm

Ringworm (dermatophytosis) is a skin condition that can be passed to humans from cats. Affected cats may have circular areas of hair loss especially around the head with crusting of the skin. Ringworm is due to a fungal infection, not a worm. In people it is characterised by a red ring with a crusting edge, generally on the skin of the fingers, arm or face but it can affect anywhere on the body.





Your vet can test your cat for ringworm and instigate appropriate treatment. It is important to remember that fungal spores can persist in the environment for a long time (18 months +) Thorough disinfection of surfaces your cat has contacted needs to be undertaken with a suitable product eg 10% bleach solution. Vacuuming the area prior to cleaning is a must and most areas need cleaning 3 times before decontamination is achieved. You should use gloves to handle infected cats. New treatments are continually being developed so again if you have any doubts ask your Vet and or Doctor.
This can be a real problem in multiple cat households and among show cats so if you think your cat may have ringworm get it checked out!

4. Toxoplasmosis

Toxoplasma is a parasite found in uncooked meat, unwashed vegetables and cat faeces. Infection in people causes mainly flu like symptoms but rarely causes problems for people with a fully functioning immune system. If infection occurs in pregnant women, the developing foetus can be damaged. it is recommended that litter trays should always be emptied and disinfected on a daily basis (the eggs don't become infectious for humans until more than 24 hours after they are shed in the faeces) and that pregnant women either wear gloves to do this or get someone else to clean the litter tray. Meat should be cooked thoroughly and vegetables washed before eating.

5. Intestinal worms

On rare occasions, humans can become infected with the cat roundworm *(Toxocara cati)* or the tapeworm *(Dipylidium caninum).* These infections are very uncommon (canine roundworm infections are more common in people), but regular worming of cats for roundworms and tapeworms is important. Use either Drontal (tablet) or Profender (spot on) are useful in the UK and ask your own vet for equivalent products in other countries. The active ingredients are Praziquantel and Pyrantel (Drontal) and Praziquantel and Emodepside (Profender)

6. Campylobacter and salmonella

These intestinal bacteria can be a cause of severe gastrointestinal disturbances in many animals. Infection in human is usually from contaminated foodstuffs however, hygienic precautions eg regular hand washing after handling a cat should be employed, especially when handling cats with diarrhoea. If campylobacter or salmonella are identified in a cat with diarrhoea, your vet will want to carry out specific treatment and monitoring.

7. Cat scratch disease

Cat scratch disease is an uncommon disease caused by the organism Bartonella henselae commonly found in cats. Transmission between cats occurs mainly by fleas but transmission to humans via bites and scratches is very inefficient. Signs of disease in humans include swollen lymph nodes, fatigue, muscle pain and sore throats. Serious illness is very rare.

ALLERGIES TO CATS

Allergies manifest themselves in different ways. Some people are mildly affected, feel itchy, snuffly or sneezy; others have skin reactions and a few experience serious asthma attacks. During an allergic reaction a person's immune system reacts to foreign proteins with the release of chemicals to defend itself. Histamine is one of these chemicals which can irritate the lungs, nose and skin leading to sneezing, wheezing and itching.

The protein secreted in cat saliva and skin (not hair) is the main trigger for allergic reactions to cats. The protein is transferred to the coat when a cat cleans itself and is also shed in urine and faeces. All breeds of cat produce allergens, long haired seem to cause people to react more but even breeds with little hair like Rex and Sphynx cats may still cause reaction. ALLERCA has produced the world's first scientifically-proven hypoallergenic cats – these cats are genetically modified to remove the gene that produces the protein that people are allergic to. The current cost of these kittens is $ 3950 in the USA, $6950 to transport to UK.

If you are mildly allergic to your cat, keep it out of your bedroom and off the bed and keep the house (carpets, curtains and cushions) well cleaned - a build-up of allergens can trigger reactions. Wooden or tiled floors with washable rugs are also much more cleanable than wall-to-wall carpets. Vacuuming can stir up allergens. Some products claim to reduce allergy when applied to a cats coat – these are in general unproven.

Antihistamines may help an allergy sufferer and immunotherapy (process of injecting gradually increasing weekly doses of cat allergen into the skin) can help some individuals with symptoms reducing significantly after 6 months.

Chapter 11: Transporting Your Cat

"When a cat adopts you, there's nothing that can be done about it except wait 'til the wind changes." T.S. Eliot

IMPACT ON OWNER – occasions when you may need to transport your cat include taking him to the vets or cattery, moving house or going to the grooming parlour.

CAT'S PERSPECTIVE – can be a highly stressful experience if careful thought and planning is not carried out.

Causes of stress include

1. Knowledge that once in a cat basket the outcome is generally bad! Your cat either ends up at the vets or in a strange environment with different smells and sounds making him feel insecure.
2. Motion sickness – flashing lights, bumpy roads and cornering.
3. Discomfort – too little room in carrier / too much room in carrier.
4. Carrier too enclosed / too exposed.
5. Feeding just before a journey.
6. Lack of ventilation and overheating.

THE SOLUTION

1. Confine your cat

Never let your cat run free in a car when transporting him. He could cause an accident by becoming entangled with the driver and if a window or door was opened or an accident occurred, he could escape and become lost.

Use a carrier that is strong, secure and easy to clean – the solid plastic types are ideal but others such as wicker or plastic coated wire are adequate. Cardboard carriers are not ideal as they can collapse if become wet with bodily fluids and cats can easily escape from them.

Remember that to a cat, the larger the carrier, the more insecure your cat will feel. Your cat should fit comfortably on a bed in his carrier. It is generally not necessary to provide litter tray facilities as cats will seldom use them when travelling – it is better to provide an absorbent material on the carrier floor to catch any accidents that may occur on the journey.

If you have more than one cat, they should be transported in separate carriers

2. Make your cat feel secure

The inside of the carrier can be sprayed with synthetic feline facial pheromones (Feliway) about 30 minutes before you are due to travel.

Try not to allow a negative association to develop towards the carrier by not only using it for transport but also feed your cat inside it from time to time and hide some of his favourite treats inside for him to find. Make a cosy bed of familiar smelling bedding which can be used on the journey

Place the carrier in a seat below window level either on the seat and secure with a seat belt or in the foot well so the carrier does not roll.

3. Ensure adequate ventilation

Do not transport your cat in a removal van or boot of your car. Consider the weather you will be travelling in from departure to arrival. If it is likely to be very hot then use a basket which allows a good air flow through – if it is going to be cold then one which can provide draft-free warmth.

Check your cat regularly – ensure he is not panting or mouth breathing. Heat stroke can happen very readily in a hot car. If you have to stop, park your car in the shade and leave the doors and windows open if you have a picnic nearby or take your cat out of the car in his basket to where you are resting. Offer water regularly.

4. Feeding

Feed at least 3 hours before travelling to avoid vomiting en route. Offer water up to the time you leave and regularly during the journey. Some carriers have water bowls attached to the cage – they don't spill and can be easily filled without opening the cage.

5. Medication

Mild sedatives can be prescribed by your veterinary surgeon if your cat is an anxious traveller. These sedatives however can have an unpredictable effect, can exacerbate an underlying medical problem and can make your cat more agitated. An unsedated cat will recover more quickly from a journey in general; he may meow initially or throughout the whole journey to voice his dislike of the situation. This may drive you mad but it is unlikely that he is suffering!

Train Travel

Your carrier must be very secure, ideally with a solid base. You will probably be able to keep the cat in its carrier on your lap depending on the type of train and the space available.

Air Travel

You must plan ahead if you intend to travel by plane. Most airlines do not allow cats to travel with their owners and have to travel in a special part of the hold. Most cats do travel well but it is not recommended to send a pregnant cat or kittens under three months old by plane.
Not all flights are licensed to carry animals so your cat may have to travel on a different flight to you. If possible, get your cat onto a direct flight so that there is no need for him to be disturbed for transfer and prevents any problems associated with waiting around in a very hot or cold country.

The International Air Transport Association Standards say a container must be large enough to stand up in and turn around with ease – check with individual airlines on what they need.

Animals travelling by plane should not be sedated as they can not be monitored and are at risk of developing hypothermia as their blood pressure is lowered.

Chapter 12: Moving Home With Your Cat

“Cats are connoisseurs of comfort...” – James Herriot

IMPACT ON OWNER – stress of moving is exacerbated by presence of cat.

CAT’S PERSPECTIVE – stress of being taken out of a familiar environment with familiar smells, presence of different people and disruption to usual routine.

Planning ahead is vital to ensure a smooth transition into your new home for both your self and your cat.

THE SOLUTION

MOVING DAY

1. Placing your cat in a cattery for the day of the move can be less stressful than having to worry whether anyone has accidentally let him escape or rushing him to his new home before you’ve had time to prepare his area. If this is not an option, confine your cat to a room before the removal van arrives – a bedroom is most suitable.

2. Your cat’s carrier, bed, food and water bowls and litter tray should be put in this room and ensure the windows are shut and the door remains closed with a notice on the door of not to enter.

3. The bedroom contents can be placed in the van last with your cat locked in his carrier. The bedroom furniture should be the first to be installed in your new home.

4. Follow advice for “Transporting your cat”.

5. Face rubbings can be applied to the new bedroom before you unload your cat into it and a Feliway diffuser can be plugged in.

6. You should offer your cat some food and spend a little time with your cat in the new room while he explores.

7. Once the removal is complete, ensure all doors and windows are shut and allow your cat to explore the rest of the house. Be careful about areas with narrow gaps especially behind appliances or in floorboards as some cats will immediately retreat to such places.

SETTLING IN PERIOD

1. Outdoor cats should be confined indoors for at least 2 weeks to get used to the new environment. Regular small meals should be provided and lots of opportunity to engage in fishing rod games and provision of small amounts of raw meat for him to tear and shred if he is used to hunting.

2. Try to maintain the same daily routine as in your previous house to provide continuity and familiarity.

3. Continue using the Feliway diffuser and applying face cloth rubs around areas in the house, especially the corners or doorways, walls and furniture to ensure your cat becomes quickly familiar with his territory.

4. New environments can be particularly stressful for indoor cats so extra care should be taken in allowing them to settle in. Hiding dry food around the house to provide opportunities to 'hunt', providing plenty of high vantage points and scratching posts and regular predatory play sessions can enhance their wellbeing and help them settle in to their new environments more quickly.

5. Moving to a smaller property can be a source of tension between cats of multicat households due to the closer proximity of the cats to each other. This perceived increase in competition can be alleviated by providing each cat with adequate resources for sleeping, scratching and feeding.

OUTSIDE!

1. After about 2 weeks you can consider allowing your cat outside. Make sure he is identified with a collar with his name/address/contact number or alternatively an updated microchip.

2. Your cat should be fully vaccinated as he is much more likely to contact different cats in a new area.

3. Consider fitting an electronic or magnetic cat flap for ease of access to outdoors when you are out but avoids the risk of strange cats entering your home.

4. Chase strange cats from your garden to help your cat establish his territory.

5. Gradually introduce your cat to the outside – don't just carry him out and walk away. First leave the door open and allow him to follow if he wants then stay in the garden for a short period while he starts to explore.

6. Always keep the door open initially so that he can escape indoors if something frightens him.

7. If you are now able to allow a previous house cat outside due to your new location, this should be done gradually. If done carefully, your cat will have an enhanced emotional wellbeing and will be leading a more natural life.

RETURNING 'HOME'

Your cat may find familiar hunting roots that take him back to his old home if you have moved nearby. On leaving your old home you should alert the buyers to the potential that your cat may return and ask them to contact you if this is the case. It is important that the new occupiers of your home don't feed or pay attention to your cat as this can encourage and confuse him. Keeping your cat indoors for as long as possible can reduce the chance of a return but cannot be achieved in some cases. It may take many months of retrieval from your old home before your cat eventually settles down. If this process appears to be distressing him and he persistently returns to his old home across busy roads it may be kinder and safer if the new occupier or an old neighbour agrees to adopt him or you try to rehome him a long way from his familiar area.

Chapter 13: Cat & Human Over-Attachment

"Isn't there always a cat napping on whatever you're reading? "

IMPACT ON OWNER – emotional bond with pet that is so intense that neither party have good wellbeing.

can indicate underlying issues in owners own life experience.

can stop owner forming relationships with people in general.

inability to cope if cat dies or is euthanased.

CAT'S PERSPECTIVE – displays unusual inappropriate attention seeking behaviours.

develops learned helplessness regarding everyday occurrences.

A lot of people develop close relationships with their pets – they are seen as part of the family and they interact with family members. This relationship provides pleasure and reward for both owner and pet. Some owner-pet relationships can be so intense however that over attachment develops to the detriment of the physical and psychological wellbeing of both parties.

Some examples of over-attachment include;

1. Getting up in the early hours of the morning to prepare food for your cat because that is when he wants it.
2. Sleeping at a contorted angle because your cat is stretched out in your bed and you don't want to disturb him.
3. Offering several food varieties to see what your cat fancies at one occasion.
4. Declining invitations to meet friends and stay away overnight in case your cat is lonely.
5. Keeping your cat confined indoors for fear of something bad happening to him.

And yes – you very well may recognise some of your own traits in this list! Some more extreme examples include the lady who left her heating on all night to keep her cat warm but was unable to sleep herself as she was too hot or the lady so worried that her cat would hurt himself by scratching his ears that she left an Elizabethan collar on him for 18 months.

Various situations can present problems from the outset. Many people are in desperate need of having something to love and care for. Most over-attachment issues occur when the owners are women either living alone or with a partner they rarely see, in owners with physiological problems either on or off medication or having been through a major life changing event like divorce, bereavement or illness.

Owners tend to be anthropomorphic about their cats ie referring to them as if they were human. Most cats are house cats or cats only allowed outside under supervision for 'safety reasons'. Most people concerned are perfectionists and eager to please and their lives revolve around the needs of their cat.

Any cat can become over-attached but particularly susceptible breeds are highly intelligent sensitive Orientals like the Siamese and Burmese.

Over-attached cats can suffer from separation anxiety. Cats that have not developed good bonding as kittens, have been early weaned or orphaned or bought from pet shops are at most risk. Signs of separation anxiety include

1. Following the owner from room to room
2. Anxiety as the owner prepares to depart.
3. Vocalising as the owner leaves.
4. Inappetance
5. Inappropriate elimination
6. Overgrooming
7. Surface scratching
8. Exuberant greeting behavior

THE SOLUTION

1. Make a diary of the interactions and problem for a four-week period to try to see patterns of behavior.
2. Consider using a behaviourist – they are there to help not judge.
3. Seek professional help for yourself if you are feeling negative, low and disinterested in life in general – consult your GP – you may be depressed or have underlying issues beyond the scope of this text.
4. Try to establish the basis for the problems – are you over attached to your cat, is he over attached to you or have you both become mutually dependent as all three have different issues to address.

Cats are good at manipulating interaction with their owners. Attention seeking methods include inappropriate urination / defecation, surface scratching in owner's presence, yowling, grabbing feet and ankles, rubbing themselves on your arms and face when you are trying to type on a computer (!) and sitting on the item you are concentrating on be it book, newspaper or keyboard. All of these behaviours generally receive a reward for the behavior by attracting the owner's attention albeit in a negative way. Cats will show this behavior if they are bored – they've nothing else to do or interact with either because they don't like going outside or are not allowed, there is insufficient stimulus in their environment in way of scratch posts and games or they have developed an over- attachment to a particular family member. The combination of a manipulative sociable cat and a loving overprotective owner creates an intense relationship. By reacting to the attention seeking behavior initially and worse still further rewarding with attention/food/interaction by the owner after the behavior further increases the reward and drive.
The owner must realise the behavior is just as disruptive and stressful for the cat as it is for them. A routine should be set for the activities of daily life. You may want to consider allowing your cat outdoors to increase his activity and general interest in life and provide more stimulus than just yourself within the confines of the house. If this is not possible, it is important to employ daily 'playtime' to allow your cat to expend his energy and engage in activity at a time you have instigated. Best games involve toys on the end of stick to ensure your feet and ankles are well out of the way of an excited cat grabbing at moving fluffy objects. Avoid feeding on demand. Your cat can be fed meat twice a day at set times and you could leave

ad lib dried food out all day if required. Getting a cat to work for his food can add interest to the daily routine i.e. by hiding small amounts round the house in cardboard boxes cut in a bespoke fashion and placing catnip alongside. Scratch posts should be provided and you should ensure litter trays are clean and there is an elevated area for your cat to sleep on somewhere in the house.
The hardest part for an owner to do is not to react to overly demanding behavior. Interaction should be at the owners request rather than the cat. There may be a period of initial intense frustration where your cat will try even harder to get attention but you must be strong – avoid eye contact, don't speak and adopt a closed body language so your cat is able to understand a clear signal. The key to success is the non-reward of the undesirable behavior – even the slightest weakening will give confusing signals for your cat. *Ask any gambler how addictive a random reward can be!!*
In the case of separation anxiety, your cat needs to feel secure but also needs to be allowed to develop some independence. Environmental enrichment again is important with provision of a safe area to rest, scratch post and climbing frames to interact with, food stations and sometimes leaving a radio on to remove the silence. When leaving, the house don't make a big thing of going, don't overly interact with your cat and say 'bye, I won't be long' – they don't understand! Just go and come back as if there is nothing unusual about you not being in the house. On return, try to avoid immediate interaction especially if your cat is overly exuberant. Wait about 5-10minutes then interact with your cat in a calm manner. Some anti-anxiety medications can be obtained from your vet but are not licensed for use in cats.

It is important not to just ignore your cat totally as this will lead to frustration but by ignoring the attention seeking behavior and rewarding the non-attention seeking behavior with play and interaction, you will end up with a happier cat and a mutually beneficial relationship.



"Mum feels we might be getting too close..."



Chapter 14: Bereavement

No amount of time can erase the memory of a good cat, and no amount of masking tape can ever totally remove his fur from your couch. - Leo Dworken

IMPACT ON OWNER – grief due to loss of a part of the family

CAT'S PERSPECTIVE - often thought that cats don't grieve and seen as too independent to be affected by the loss of another cat

- do exhibit behavioural changes when animals were closely bonded, even by the loss of a feuding partner.

There is no way of knowing that a cat understands death. However, they do know when a housemate is missing and that the household has changed. The owner's distress can add to the ambience within the house that something is different.

Cats do not respond in similar ways when a fellow housemate dies. Some cats will appear unaffected, others may stop eating and become distant and others will behave more positively and happier than when the companion was around. Certain cats may undergo personality or behavioural changes some times lasting up to 6 months, which in some cases may be extreme.

THE SOLUTION

To help the grieving cat overcome the loss

1. Minimise change – keep feeding times and furniture position constant to minimise environmental upset.

2. Encourage eating by warming food, possibly applying gravy but try to avoid a change in diet as this may cause digestive upset. Sometimes sitting with your cat while he eats can provide reassurance. If your cat does not eat for 3 days, veterinary advice should be sought due to the danger of hepatic lipidosis.

3. Encourage play and spend more time grooming and stroking your cat.

4. Don't replace a lost cat immediately – your resident cat is already in a state of flux and will not be able to cope with an extra source of stress while he is unsettled – this can create further behavioural problems.

5. Time spent sniffing the body of your cat's dead companion can be a necessary part of the grieving process and you should allow your cat to do this.

Chapter 15: Miscellaneous Cat Behavioral Problems

“Dogs come when called. Cats take a message and get back to you... “

1. What does purring mean?

Kittens purr to their mothers when they are feeding. She purrs in return to let them know everything is ok. Sick or injured cats purr to comfort themselves and signal to others that they are unwell.
Contented cats purr to indicate they are feeling happy and social. Cats often purr in expectation of food.

2. What is “calling “?

The shriek of a female cat in oestrus is known as calling. Siamese cats are particularly vocal whereas Persians are sometimes so quiet that is may not be obvious they are in heat. Loud calls often occur at night and in combination with pheromones attract male cats to the female. Neutering or using injectable hormones stops calling behavior.

3. Why do cats knead soft surfaces?

This behavior is a comfort behavior originating from early life. When sucking, kittens knead their mother’s mammary tissue to stimulate the flow of milk. They are rewarded with a feeling of security and contentment – a powerful positive reinforcement of the behavior even in adulthood. In later life the reward is generally associated with human contact and stroking (when kneading a person’s lap) or the provision of a comfortable warm sleeping surface (bed or sofa).

4. What function does grooming serve?

Cats spend about 1/3rd of their time grooming and cleaning themselves. As a cat’s tongue is covered in tiny barbs, these can be used when licking to part and detat the hair. Grooming keeps the coat free from debris and smell, provides a smooth surface for water to run off, contributes to cooling in hot weather by the evaporation of saliva and helps with relaxation and the relief of tension. An unkempt tatted coat can imply a debilitated cat. Overgrooming where a cat obsessively licks and pulls out hair from its coat can be a sign of stress or skin irritation eg from parasites.

5. What is the green glow from some cats’ eyes?

Cats have tremendous vision in low light conditions – 6 times better seeing at dawn or dusk than humans. This is due to the special layer of cells behind the retina at the back of the eye that reflect light. These cells bounce light back from a camera flash so cats’ eyes look green in photographs (the different cells in Siamese cats’ eyes make their eyes look red).

6. Why do cats appear more active in the early hours?

Cats are crepuscular hunters – they are most active when their prey would be most active and when their eyesight would be superior over the small mammals they are trying to catch. This usually coincides with dusk or sunrise. Cats often try to wake you up in the early hours by feet pouncing or yowling!

7. Why do cats hunt even though they don’t eat what they catch?

Hunting is a normal instinct to a greater or lesser extent in all cats. They are designed to hunt and will do so even if they are not hungry. A cat that catches prey, brings it home but doesn’t eat it is just exhibiting normal predatory behavior. Cats that are either not permitted to hunt by being confined or not allowed to act out this normal natural behavior through play can become frustrated and behavioural problems can ensue. Games involving chasing objects rolled along the floor, catnip filled soft toys to toss and fishing rod games to encourage pouncing allow the hunting instinct to be acted out.

8. Why can’t cats be vegetarian?

Unlike dogs, cats lack certain chemicals in their bodies that break down nutrients from foods and change them to essential substances needed by the body. For this reason, the essential substances must be obtained directly from the diet – some of which are only found in meat eg the amino acid taurine.

9. Why do cats rub themselves on us and furniture?

As a cat rubs his head and body over us and our furniture he is transferring scent from his own glands on his face and body. This scent allows the cat’s environment to feel secure as everything smells familiar. Cats can feel insecure if new items of furniture or new people or animals are added to his environment or if he is removed from his environment of familiar smells.

10. What are the dark points of a Siamese?

The extremities i.e. the ears, feet, tail and face of the Siamese are cooler than the rest of the body and hair growth here tends to be dark. If an area on a Siamese is clipped eg for an operation, these hairs too will grow back dark (problematic in show cats) – in most cases they will revert to normal colour as the hairs are naturally replaced.

11. Do cats like sweet tastes?

Cats do not have the taste receptors for sweet hence they tend to avoid sweet foods and do not associate them with pleasure.

Chapter 16: Indoor & Outdoor Cats

“Cats like doors left open—in case they change their minds.”- Rosemary Nisbet

“You own a dog, but you can only feed a cat. “

IMPACT ON OWNER – outdoor cats perceived to be easier to look after.

- indoor cats perceived to be safe from harm.

CAT’S PERSPECTIVE – whether indoor or outdoor needs to be able to display natural behavior otherwise will become frustrated and problems can ensue.

Keeping a cat permanently indoors can seem like the best solution for an owner who wants to keep their cat safe away from disease and accidents. There will be no worries about their cat going missing, no parasite problems provided fleas are not brought into the house by any other means and no complaints from neighbours about the cat using their garden as a litter tray. For the particularly sensitive, with no access to the outdoors, there will be no chance of finding dead (or half dead!) prey on the carpet with an indoor cat! Many cats can become much more aggressive and less affectionate if let outdoors (our own cat Merlin is a perfect example of this).

The advantages of indoor living however must be compared to the disadvantages which include:

1. Anxiety related behavioural problems – stress of confinement in a poorly enriched environment causes behavioural problems such as urine spraying and vertical scratching. Cats in the USA have a much higher incidence of behavioural problems than cats in the UK. This could be due to the increased tendency of American cats being kept permanently indoors.

2. Indoor cats may become over-reactive to changes within their small territory (the house) and become unable to cope with new occurrences like new people, smells, objects or noises.

3. Lack of exercise can lead to obesity and boredom.

4. A solitary indoor cat will rely on its owner to provide stimulation, companionship and exercise – overdependence can then develop.

5. Chore of cleaning litter trays.

6. Scratching of walls and furniture in the house causing damage.

7. Remembering to keep doors and windows shut to prevent escape.

8. Indoor cats will explore crevices that an outdoor cat would probably not bother to investigate. Boredom and curiosity can be a dangerous combination. Washing machines, toilets, medicines, cleaners, small holes, exposed wires and wobbly shelving are all hazards for curious kittens. While outside, cats will often nibble grass or herbs. If there is no access to this they may turn to indoor plants or flowers, some of which are poisonous e.g. lilies.

9. If an indoor cat escapes he may find himself in a situation he is unable to cope with e.g. crossing a road and presence of traffic, other cats and animals in the area or areas where water is present i.e. ponds and streams.

10. Cats can become frustrated and bored leading to behavioural problems if there is insufficient stimulation in their environment.

The main problem faced by the indoor cat is lack of opportunity to display normal behavior. The cat is a natural hunter and if he cannot go out he be may be frustrated and develop behaviours which stimulate this activity so *to keep an indoor cat content you have to stimulate your cat with games and toys.* Both kittens and cats love playing fishing rod games or light spots which stimulate stalking and pouncing, they enjoy running through newspaper tents and cardboard boxes and can be encouraged to climb and explore play centres by hiding a variety of treats.

From the start, you could obtain two kittens so each can interact with each other, taking some of the burden off you! Be careful about introducing another cat into an established cat's territory however e.g. if one of a pair dies as this can create further problems. Also, be careful about introducing a new animal into the home of an indoor cat.

Regular visitors are great for indoor cats and it is important not to make life too quiet, especially when your kitten is small, because this is what he will come to see as normal and not be able to cope with change well. Because the cat's whole world may be made up of a couple of rooms in a flat which he knows inside out, be can become hypersensitive to change if not used to such occurrence.

Indoor cats, especially when young, are highly likely to cause damage in your home so remove any important items from the vicinity especially in areas prone to be used for 'mad half-hours'!

Your cat will need to act out his natural behavioural such as sharpening claws within your home –a good scratch post must be provided.

If your cat seems to be putting on weight, increase his play times, reduce his food allowance and make him work for his food by partitioning his meals and hiding them around the house and in ball feeders to make him work for his food – this will also add interest to his daily routine.

A cat that goes outdoors will nibble on grass and herbs as part of his diet. It is believed that eating vegetation helps cats to regurgitate hair balls. You can overcome the deficit by providing the cat with an indoor window box. Grass, catnip (Nepeta), thyme, sage, parsley or wheat and oats can all be sown indoors in a potting mixture. Sow seeds every couple of weeks to provide a fresh supply for your cat. Commercial kits are available.

Regularly trim your cat's claws as they will not be wearing down if he is indoors.

Some cats adapt quite readily to an indoor lifestyle. Others that have spent years outdoors are unlikely to accept confinement and will become miserable and stressed.

A purpose built outdoor enclosure could be the best of both worlds – allowing your cat access to the outside world but in a safe environment. Alternatively, if you can teach your cat to wear a harness, you can take him for walks – take care however - if the harness does not fit properly a cat can easily wriggle free.

One way to provide access to the outside world for an indoor cat is to fence your garden. Care must be taken if trees are present in the garden as cats can easily climb and leap to escape the fence. The trees themselves could be adapted by fixing horizontal plains of wire mesh below the lowest branch to prevent cats climbing up into the tree. Mesh can be placed over the whole (or small area that has been 'cat proofed') garden at fence height but may be impractical in some gardens.

A cat proof garden requires a border fence of at least 1.8m (6ft) in height. If using wood the uprights must be a minimum of 2.3m (7ft 6in) to allow enough length to fix in the ground and set in concrete for rigidity. Planning permission from the local Council may be required for fences over 2m (6ft 6in) and you should inform your neighbours of your intentions to see if anyone objects. In some areas there may be restrictions as to whether fences can be erected – check with your solicitor or consult your house deeds. Commercial solutions are available to make the whole job much easier but more expensive.

In an ideal world, cats would not wear collars. If your cat is an outdoor cat he may need a collar to allow him access to the catflap ie electronic or magnetic key. Other people prefer to use a collar as a means of identification in case their cat becomes lost or run over. Also, cats can take a heavy toll of local birds and a collar with a bell attached can give our local avian friends some much needed help. When choosing a collar if it has an elastic insert, check to see how much 'give' is present – some stretch enough to allow a leg to get stuck but not enough to release it. There should be no sharp edges, stitching should not unravel and the buckle should be firm and not sharp. Flea control can be achieved in many other ways other than using a collar i.e. spot on products such as Frontline so flea collars can be avoided if this is the only requirement for a collar. Snap open collars have a plastic buckle which snaps together to close it. If sufficient pressure is put on the collar ie if the collar catches something or the cat's leg gets caught through, it should simply snap open and release the collar and the cat.

When fitting a collar, you should only be able to get 1-2 fingers underneath (note difficulty assessing elasticated collars) – if it is too loose a cat can easily get its leg through. As kittens are great at turning themselves inside out and tend to get themselves into dangerous situations in general, it is best to get kittens used to wearing collars from around5 months but only when they can be adequately supervised.

Be careful about bells and discs hanging from collars as they can easily get stuck in openings. The use of a snap collar with such devices may minimise risk.

Most cats are highly fastidious creatures and are careful what they eat hence poisoning in cats is generally rare. Young, inquisitive cats or kittens are most at risk of eating harmful plants, particularly household ones. When a cat is confined to indoors hazardous plants should be removed from its environment as boredom has a part to play in the eating of inappropriate things. Cats given free access to the outside world tend to have other things to occupy their minds than sampling unfamiliar vegetation however due to their exposure to many gardens, they may be exposed to toxic plants.

All plants, even grass, can have an irritating effect on a cat's gastrointestinal system causing them to vomit. But, given the opportunity, cats like to nibble on grass. When not available their attention may turn to often less suitable household plants.

Chapter 17: Understanding Cat Communication

"Cats know how we feel. They don't care, but they know.."

"Dogs have owners, cats have staff.."

"You will always be lucky if you know how to make friends with strange cats.."
American proverb

Cats make a variety of sounds the purpose of which ranges from expressing contentment to terror.

MEOW – classical cat sound used to attract attention. Newborn kittens will meow with surprising volume to indicate hunger, cold or help their mother locate them. Older cats use the meow generally to attract their owner's attention to obtain food.

HISS / SPIT – angry, frightened or aggressive cats use the hiss to warn who or whatever is approaching to stop. Hissing can be accompanied by a throaty rise and fall yowl, some cats will spit and in extreme cases will scream.

CALLING / YODELING – mournful and slightly spooky especially in the middle of the night – sometimes confused as a sign of distress or pain. Female cats call when in heat to signal their readiness for a mate. One solution to stop this behavior is to have your female cat neutered by a procedure called spaying. This is done by a veterinary surgeon under a general anaesthetic and involves the removal of your cat's uterus and ovaries. Spayed cats don't have the hormonal influence on behavior so they do not call, don't come into season and can't get pregnant.

CHORTLE / CHIRRUP – indicates a happy pleased cat – often accompanied by a head rub to a familiar human companion.

CHIRP / CHATTERC strange noise often reserved for when cats see birds outside the window.

PURR – various meanings – can indicate supreme contentment or pain / distress.

KITTEN VOCALIZING If you find your new kitten starts excessively vocalizing, to the point of nearly screaming, this can be very difficult for you to know what to do. In most instances the kitten is responding to a feeling of insecurity. It can be useful to obtain 2 kittens at the same time to prevent this occurrence in the first place. The other option would be to provide a pen for your kitten, this could be in a cage or a small area of a room where he has his bed, food and litter tray and can feel safe and secure. As time progresses, his territory can be expanded.

Oriental cats tend to be highly vocal whereas breeds like the Russian Blue tend to be quieter by nature.

The ears are a good marker of how a cat is feeling. The flatter to the head a cat's ears are laid indicates defensiveness, the more upright and pricked implies curiousness.

Wide open eyes can indicate excitement and playfulness but can also indicate terror.

The position of a cat's mouth says something about his feelings. An open mouth can indicate rage (tense, lips drawn back) or play (relaxed, lips not drawn back). Spitting, hissing and showing sharp teeth indicate intense anger.

An erect tail is usually part of a friendly greeting or a "follow-me" message like a mother cat leading her kittens or your cat trying to lure you toward the food cupboard. A lashing tail shows agitation, which may mean anger, excitement, or anticipation, especially just before pouncing in play or hunting. A bristled tail indicates fear, while a relaxed, gently swishing tail suggests contentment.

Body orientation can indicate behavior. A straight-on approach is friendly, confident, or aggressive. When a cat makes himself bigger, by standing taller over another cat, climbing higher, or "puffing up" his hair, it's usually a display of dominance or aggression or an outright threat. A "Halloween cat" posture (sometimes called spidering or arching) is where the cat turns sideways, arches his back, puffs up his hair, and hisses. This posture combines defensive elements (such as turning sideways) with clear threats (such as making himself look larger). When a cat makes himself smaller, by scrunching down, rolling to his side, or leaning away, he's trying to show that he's not a threat.



Chapter 18: Butt Rubbing

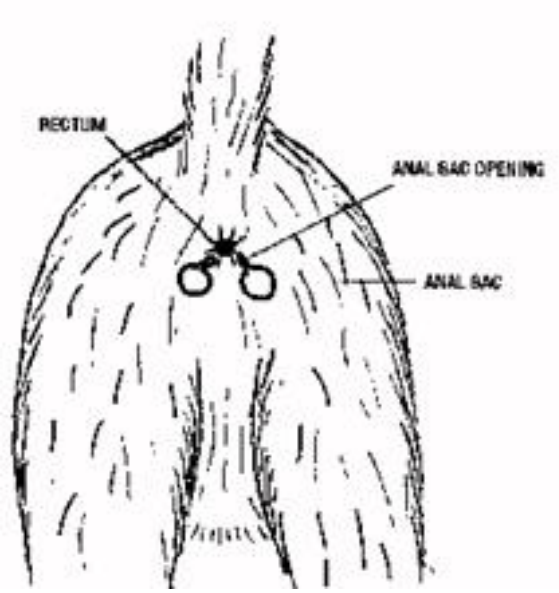
IMPACT ON OWNER – unsightly behavior often accompanied by an offensive fishy type smell.

- sometimes occurs when your cat is stressed or excited and happens regardless of whether you have wormed your cat.

CAT'S PERSPECTIVE – a sign of anal irritation that something is not right

This is a condition that most commonly occurs in dogs but occasionally in cats. Generally, the animal will sit and rub its bottom along a length of carpet (sometimes called scooting). Rarely this can be due to the presence of worms but most commonly it is to do with irritation of the anal glands either from being overfull or infected.

The anal sacs are paired organs located beneath the skin and anal sphincter muscles at about the four and eight o'clock positions surrounding the rectum.
Tiny ducts lead to the tissue just inside the rectum and the secretion that comes from these glands is an oily brown liquid with a disagreeable smell. On passing faeces, the anal sphincter squeezes the sacs against the solid faeces and empties the gland of its secretion. The secretion leaves a marking scent but has no real function.



Problems arise when the anal gland is unable to empty, generally because the faeces are not hard enough to cause the gland to expel its fluid. A build-up of fluid leads to impaction and discomfort. If the anal glands are not emptied at this stage the fluid becomes a thicker consistency (more like peanut butter!) and is even harder to empty. Infection can enter the anal gland at this stage and a painful abscess may form which can burst out of the skin around the rectum causing discomfort.

THE SOLUTION

1. If your cat starts scooting you should have his/her anal glands checked and emptied by the vet. In the early stages expression of the impacted fluid is all that is required. However, if blood or pus is present your cat is likely to need antibiotic treatment and in some cases sedation and flushing of the glands is required. If your cat is having recurrent problems, the anal glands may need surgical removal as a last resort.

2. Sometimes the presence of dried anal gland secretion and faecal material on the hair around the anus can irritate a cat. Always make sure your cat is free from matted hair around his back end, especially true for overweight and elderly cats that may have trouble cleaning this area. You may find clipping the hair around the anus beneficial but take care not to damage your cat if the matted hair is close to the skin.

3. Ensure your cat has a balanced diet and try to increase his dietary fibre if his faeces seem soft and poorly formed. Remember, if your cat suddenly develops diarrhoea and is ill you must seek veterinary attention.

4. Ensure you worm your cat regularly with a reputable product, and please ask your vet, at least the first time.

5. A cat that is frightened or suddenly stressed is likely to void his anal glands in response to this so try to minimise sudden stressors e.g. excessive restraint trying to get your cat into a basket or for claw clipping. In many cases, some degree of planning and careful strategy will allow you to accomplish these tasks with minimal stress. Use specific cat nail clippers like Simply Cats KittyNails (for sale on Amazon)



Chapter 19: The Vomiting Cat

IMPACT ON OWNER – worry that cat is ill

- finding vomit around house

CAT'S PERSPECTIVE – can be normal for cats to vomit once or twice a week

Vomiting is defined as the forceful expulsion of gastric and proximal small intestinal contents through the mouth. The worries about vomiting tend not to be related to the actual act itself (however as humans we hate the idea of vomiting!) moreover the frequency and possible causes of the vomit.

Possible causes of vomiting include:

1. Overeating
2. Change in diet – particularly to a richer more fatty food
3. Hairballs (TRICHOBEZOR)
4. Parasites like roundworm and tapeworm
5. Infection by bacteria or viruses
6. Metabolic problems – kidney disease, hyperthyroidism, liver disease
7. Inflammatory conditions – part of the eosinophillic granuloma complex or inflammatory bowel disease / conditions (IBD).
8. Poisoning
9. Tumours
10. Ingestion of foreign bodies like toys, stones, coins
11. Gastric ulcers

THE SOLUTION

YOU MUST SEEK VETERINARY ADVICE IF YOUR CAT IS VOMITING FOR MORE THAN 24HOURS OR MORE THAN ONCE A WEEK

Vomiting is usually self-limiting and in most simple cases of overeating or a change in diet can be treated at home by allowing access to fluids only and starving your cat for 24hrs then feeding small frequent amounts of a bland diet of white fish, scrambled egg or chicken for 2-3 days then a gradual reintroduction of his normal food.

Your cat should be wormed regularly with a suitable product please ask your vet, but if your cat hunts you may need to worm him monthly.

It is not always the case that a cat with a hairball will vomit hair although for those of you who have stepped on a cold wet mat of hair in the early hours of the morning you may want to disagree with this statement! Often, the hairball will be lodged at the exit to the stomach and when the stomach contracts to push food into the small intestine the food has nowhere to go but back out through the mouth. The food is generally undigested and as there is no real nausea or cramping, most cats return to their food dish and eat some more. With the normal churning of the stomach the hairball is often then dislodged from the stomach's exit or passed into the small intestine to be expelled so often a cat will vomit 1-2 times a week

but be normal for 2-3 weeks in between episodes. Hairball remedies such as Katalax and Laxapast are pertroleum jelly based products which try to stop the hair becoming entangled in the stomach and forming a dense mat. They should be used before vomiting becomes a problem as they are unlikely to penetrate an already formed hairball, at best they can just help its passage out of the stomach. Routine hairballs will not cause a cat to be ill, go off his food or lose weight so if this happening you must CONSULT A VET.

Hairballs sometimes cause a cough – presumed due to a 'tickle' caused by the hair. If the cough is increasing in frequency or duration you are advised to consult your veterinary surgeon as the cough associated with feline asthma is identical to that of hairball irritation but is more frequent. A chest xray may be needed.

Some cats have a motility disorder relating to their stomach contractions – this can cause more hairballs than usual. Your vet is likely to need to investigate this further as medication to try to help with stomach motility may be required.

If your cat doesn't want to eat, possibly passing diarrhoea and is vomiting you should consult your vet as your cat may have an infection requiring treatment.

Profuse vomiting and the vomiting of undigested food, particularly in young cats not passing much faeces or passing diarrhoea requires VETERINARY ATTENTION as your cat may have eaten something that is causing obstruction. An x-ray is generally needed and your cat may need surgery to remove the foreign body. Dangerous foreign bodies are those of linear dimensions i.e. string, wool, fishing line – they cause serious damage to the intestines and can be fatal.

Inflammatory bowel disease is a condition in which the stomach and/or intestine is chronically infiltrated by inflammatory cells. It is characterized by certain cells invading the wall of the intestine. To be called inflammatory bowel disease, the condition must be chronic, infiltrates of inflammatory cells must be present, and other causes of these infiltrates (e.g., bacterial infections, parasites) must have been excluded. Lymphocytic-plasmacytic IBD is the most common cause of IBD. The second most common form is Eosinophilic IBD and
tends to be more severe than lymphocytic-plasmacytic. Your vet will need to do tests like x-rays and stomach / intestinal biopsies to confirm this condition.

Any cat that is vomiting, losing weight and possibly drinking more than usual should be seen by a vet for blood and urine sample analysis and possible x-rays.

If you think your cat has been poisoned (vomiting, salivating, trembling, falling over, fitting) SEEK IMMEDIATE VETERINARY ATTENTION.

Chapter 20: Loss of Appetite

IMPACT ON OWNER – concern about health of cat

CAT'S PERSPECTIVE – something wrong with the food

- something wrong with the cat

Cats can be quite fussy about their food and may not readily accept any change associated with their food type, presentation or location. Sometimes cats can be quite fickle, readily eating a certain food type one day then refusing it the next. It is important to be able to distinguish between a cat that is simply being fussy and one that is anorexic due to illness.

Potential causes of loss of appetite include;

1. Change in brand of food – it may all look the same to us but some cats prefer different brands to others.

2. Change in flavour of food – some cats prefer red meat based foods to fish based and vice versa.

3. Change in food type – dried to wet and vice versa.

4. Food dish has remnants of previous meal – dried hard onto surface – affecting smell of food.

5. Change food dish – saucers and flat dishes are preferred as they do not touch a cats whiskers while he is eating unlike bowls.

6. Changing position of your cat's feeding station can cause problems if your cat doesn't feel secure in his new site. The presence of too much traffic in busy areas of the house can create insecurity. Moving the station to a work surface may cause problems for an elderly cat if he has an underlying arthritis and finds it difficult to jump up. Placing a litter tray near a food station can put a cat off eating as cats do not like to eat and eliminate in the same place.

7. The presence of new people, animals or furniture in a house can upset a cat causing him to go off his food.

8. Your cat has found an alternative food source – be it from hunting prey to visiting a neighbour's house.

The above are generally behavior related reasons for a loss of appetite and do not imply illness. However**, if your cat has a sustained loss of appetite for 24-48 hours you should consult your vet.**

The following are some examples of medical causes of loss of appetite. There will generally be other signs associated with the anorexia such as lethargy, increased thirst, weight loss. Cats, especially overweight cats, who lose weight very quickly due to anorexia or reduced appetite are in danger of developing fatty liver disease (hepatic lipidosis) where the cells of the liver are replaced by fat cells stopping the liver functioning properly. It is best to prevent this problem in the first place as a cure is rarely achieved and the outcome for survival is poor.

1. Infection causing a raised temperature (pyrexia) reduces the appetite.

2. Respiratory disease reduces the appetite, sometimes because of pyrexia but more often due to nasal congestion meaning the cat can't smell his food and be stimulated to eat it.

3. Dehydration can affect appetite.

4. Kidney failure causing uraemic compounds to accumulate in the bloodstream can make a cat feel nauseous and inappetant.

5. Pain from injuries, dental disease or digestive problems like pancreatitis, IBD, constipation can affect appetite.

…..the list goes on. Your veterinary surgeon will be able to examine your cat, take blood samples and carry out further tests to identify medical causes of anorexia and instigate treatment as soon as possible to try to prevent further problems. THE SOONER VETERINARY ADVICE IS SOUGHT, THE BETTER THE OUTCOME.

THE SOLUTION

PLEASE SEEK VETERINARY ADVICE IF YOUR CAT IS ILL OR HASN'T EATEN FOR 24-48 HOURS

1. If changing a cats' food do so gradually by mixing increasing proportions of the new food with the original food over several days.

2. Consider feeding both dry and wet food – either together or in separate food bowls.

3. Weigh your cat once a month and seek advice if his weight changes by more than 1 kg even if he seems ok in himself otherwise.

4. Ensure your cats food dishes are washes at least daily and ideally after every meal with a mild, unperfumed detergent and ensure they are thoroughly rinsed.

5. Do not use deep bowls to feed your cat from as these will touch his whiskers and stop him eating.

6. Position your cats feeding station in a quiet, accessible area away from his litter tray.

7. Ask around your neighbourhood to see if your cat visits other people who feed him – request that they stop encouraging your cat.

Some tips for trying to get a convalescing cat to eat;

1. Warm your cat's food either in the microwave (mix thoroughly and check to see its not too hot before feeding) or by adding some warm water.

2. Hand feed your cat if he is debilitated.

3. Try fresh cooked meat such as chicken or fish or meat based baby foods (without onions).

4. Try strong smelling foods such as prawns or tuna fish.

5. Surprisingly a lot of cats will eat sardines or pilchards in tomato sauce!

6. Obtain liquid food from your vet e.g. Liquivite or a high energy convalescent food such as Hills A/ D

7. Avoid force feeding as this stresses your cat and there is the danger that your cat could choke or develop aspiration pneumonia if he breathes in instead of swallowing the food. If your cat won't eat he must go back to the vet who may want to put a feeding tube into him.

8. Sometimes feeding at the same time as your other cat can help as the sense of competition can stimulate the debilitated cat to eat.

9. Try to feed small amounts frequently rather than large portions.

Chapter 21: Specific Case Studies

Selected Case Studies

In this section we summarise the main behavioural problems covered within this E-Book into a selection of case studies from real life data. This we hope will enable you to get a quick fix solution and some ideas to put into practice while you read the main guide twice ;-)

Ultimately, we want you to get inside your cats mind, not to offer a quick fix solution which will not last in the long term. All long-term solutions to harmony between cat and owner is based on an understanding of your cats thought processes!

CASE STUDY 1 – Scratching the walls

CASE STUDY 2 – Eliminating outside the box

CASE STUDY 3 – Nervous cat

CASE STUDY 4 –Cat with an intestinal obstruction

CASE STUDY 5 – Old cat

CASE STUDY 6 – How do I introduce my new cat to the rest of my animals?

CASE STUDY 7 – Aggressive cat

CASE STUDY 1 – Scratching the walls

Merlin is my cat – a black peppered domestic shorthair that was brought to the surgery as a stray when I was working in mixed practice in North Yorkshire. At the time, I was looking for a pet as living away from my partner Paul and my family I wanted someone at home to greet me when I came back from a busy day's work! Merlin was an adult cat and with various battle scars wasn't a youngster but neither was he geriatric so we guessed his age to be 6 years.

I lived in a large cottage and Merlin quickly settled in, getting used to which cupboard his food and treats lived in and finding a great resting place on the window seat where he would spend many hours sleeping and cleaning himself in the sun. I bought him a myriad of toys and a scratch post and he was brilliantly litter trained (in fact took the opportunity to use the tray and show off whenever anyone came into the house! The litter tray was subsequently moved from the kitchen to the bathroom for this reason but Merlin would happily accompany anyone who wished to use the facility….and still does!)

One day after a couple of months I came home to find deep scratches in the walls of the living room and kitchen. Why?!! I thought. Nothing had changed in the house, Merlin was still using his scratch post, no other cats had access inside and otherwise Merlin didn't appear to be acting unusually. In the days that followed the wall scratching became worse. It never happened when I was in the house but every night

when I came home more wallpaper was pulled off the walls, further scratches were apparent and there Merlin would be either greeting me for food or curled up asleep on the sofa.

I didn't know what to do except apologise profusely to the landlady (herself a cat lover and VERY sympathetic saying she had needed to redecorate the place anyway!). I was due to move to another job at this point so ignored the problem.

While waiting to move to my current house we moved temporarily into my parent's house. We initially tried to keep Merlin indoors but after a few weeks he escaped when the garage door was opened and sauntered around and about the house but always 2 whiskers away from being caught. From his history I knew Merlin had been in the outside world before and he had a microchip and collar so I wasn't too worried about him being out. However, Merlin is not a nice cat when he has access to the outside world – he fights, he wants to come indoors then as soon as he is in he wants to be back out, he seems agitated all of the time and dislikes being stroked – totally different to the cat he was in North Yorkshire.

At this point I was ready to move into my current house. I was a bit worried about how the change would affect Merlin as he would have to be a house cat again and was worried that his wall scratching would return. When we moved in I let Merlin explore the whole area. The furniture was the same as I had previously so his scent was on this and I had plugged a Feliway diffuser into the landing socket the day before Merlin arrived. I put the litter tray in the bathroom as this was where he was used to going. He used it straightaway, had a few mouthfuls of food from the kitchen then curled up in his bed next to Paul's computer! Months passed, Merlin seemed very content, he occasionally made dash for the door but otherwise was relaxed and happy.

Just before Christmas 2005 I acquired a 3-month-old rabbit that had a severely damaged ear that needed amputating. I had not planned on having a rabbit in the house because of Merlin as was worried that he would hurt and terrorise her. The rabbit has various names as Paul and I can't agree on what to call her – I call her Minstrel, Paul calls her Larry …..the day she chewed through the modem cable however she was called a few more colourful names! Needless to say, the house is now bunny proof. She is now the same size as Merlin – occasionally they play and lie next to each other and as Minstrel is confined to an area of the house, Merlin is able to get away and not have to share all of his territory.

A few months ago things took a turn for the worse – I started finding scratch marks and wallpaper pieces in all of the rooms in the house apart from the kitchen and bathroom. Merlin was at it again. This time the scratches were a lot more extensive and we would hear him scratching the walls through the night and in sight of us. I regularly trim his claws and again nothing had changed immediately preceding this behavior.

I got a refill for the Feliway diffuser as it had run out and obstructed the areas Merlin had been scratching with tin foil. The problem was if one area was obstructed he just found a new bit of wall to scratch. I considered allowing him access to outdoors but decided against this remembering how agitated he had become last time and how many fights he had gotten into.

I tried playing with him more – focusing on predatory play with fishing line games I tried rubbing his scent collected by rubbing his face with a cloth over the areas that had been scratched and tried providing him with elevated resting areas to increase his territory and security. Nothing seemed to be working. It was at this point I had a good look at Merlin's scratch post. It was the same one I'd had since I first got him 5 years ago. It was well scratched and had holes in the material causing it to sag. Watching Merlin try to use it, it seemed that he couldn't scratch it properly as he kept getting stuck. Also, the scratch post was only 40 cms high so he couldn't achieve full stretch. I went out looking for a new scratch post and came home with a great multilevel scratch station that has an excellent 80 cm sisal scratch post, 2 levels covered in a scratch inducing fabric with catnip and a fur lined sling bed. I thought – great, a fantastic feature for the living room in the space now vacant with the demise of the Christmas tree. As you can

imagine, Merlin wouldn't go anywhere near it let alone scratch it. Wallpaper continued to be ripped and new scratches were still appearing in the wall. The scratches seemed to be most intense on the landing at the top of the stairs with a view of the front door. I decided to change the position of the new scratch post to the landing in front of the most highly scratched area. I encouraged Merlin to come near by playing with his toys and offering catnip treats. I then got him to stand on a platform by further use of catnip biscuits and rubbed them on the sisal of the post. After a couple of licks of the post, Merlin made his first scratch!! I was ecstatic!! As the days progressed, Merlin started using the scratch post more and more and started sleeping on the various platforms. The best moment was seeing him at full stretch up the long post scratching away happily then curling up on the platform to watch the world go by. There have been no new scratches on the walls or wallpaper pieces to vacuum up since.

There may be other issues affecting Merlin's behavior but by not providing him with adequate resources to express his natural behavior caused frustration and stress. By scratching the walls Merlin was trying to adapt to his need to express this behavior. He had a negative experience using the old scratch post as every time he used it he got stuck. The fact that most of the scratches are concentrated in sight of the front door could mean Merlin is feeling insecure possibly from the presence of other cats outside (of which there are many) even though he can't see them. Allowing him an elevated rest area / watch post in this location can increase his security as he can keep an eye on comings and going through the front door instead of having to rely on scratch marks to indicate his presence.

CASE STUDY 2 – Eliminating outside the box

Tabitha is a 7 year old neutered female silver tabby. She has access to the outdoors but prefers to stay in and around the house. She uses a litter tray overnight but is free to go outside during the day.
Over the past 2 weeks her owner noticed wet areas around the house but in the past two days these wet areas have seemed to contain blood. Tabitha had also been going in and out of the litter tray but only passing small amounts of urine with bits of blood. Her owner was worried so brought Tabitha to the surgery for a check-up.

Tabitha's owner had tried to collect a urine sample but as Tabitha was only passing small amounts of urine this had proved impossible. Fortunately, the vet who examined Tabitha was able to express a small amount of urine from her bladder by palpating it. The urine was dipped with a Clinistix – there was an indication of blood and protein. Tabitha was given an anti-inflammatory injection and a course of antibiotic tablets and the owner told to return in 1 week, before if she was worried. The vet gave the owner some non-absorbent cat litter called Katkor and on the repeat, visit a urine sample was able to be brought as Tabitha was now passing a more normal volume of urine in the tray and her owner was able to collect a sample. On testing, the blood and protein had gone from the urine and there had been no further wet areas in the house.

This case study illustrates how a medical problem, in this instance cystitis, can cause a behavioural change. Tabitha was urinating inappropriately because she was in discomfort with the inflammation of her bladder. Once this was resolved, she returned to her normal behavior.

Jake is a 2-year-old male neutered ginger domestic shorthair. His owner got him as a kitten at 8 weeks. He was neutered at 6months.
The family have moved from a town to a more rural location. Jake initially seemed to settle in well, enjoying his new-found freedom playing outside among the leaves and climbing and jumping in the neighbouring trees.

After a few weeks, however, Jake started to spray urine in the house, particularly in the kitchen where the cat flap is located in the back door. The owner reported seeing Jake backup to the wall with his tail held high and his back-leg muscles trembling. He was also eating and playing less than he used to. Jake was taken to the vets but the vet couldn't find anything medically wrong and advised the owner to observe the timing and location of the spray marks and try to think of anything that could have changed to upset Jake.

The family were redecorating the house but Jake's litter tray, feeding station and bed had not been moved and the room that was being painted was one that Jake had shown no interest in exploring when they first moved in. Jake was using his litter tray for passing urine and faeces but everyone in the house was getting sick of the smell and the wall stains in the kitchen from his spraying.

The family generally left the house between 8 to 8.30am until 4pm when the children were home from school, the parents arriving back at 5-6pm. During the day, the house doors were locked but Jake had access in and outdoors via the cat flap. One day, the owner returned home midday to see a streak of black fly out of the cat flap. Jake was sitting in the garden under a tree but the minute he saw his owner he went into the house.

The owner rang his vet to enquire if the presence of another cat in the house could have caused Jake to start spraying. The vet said it was highly likely that this was a case of territorial spraying. The other cat entering the house would have stressed Jake out sufficiently to cause him to try to reaffirm his territory by scent marking the area the other cat had been in. He was trying to show the other cat that he lived here as well as reassuring himself of his own smell to make himself feel more secure. Jake was not a confrontational cat and did not want a fight with the bigger intruder so was getting stressed about how to get back his territory.

Jake's owner changed the cat flap to a magnetic cat flap so Jake was the only cat able to go in and out of the house. He cleaned the areas that Jake was spraying with a solution of enzymatic washing powder before rinsing and spraying with surgical spirit. He installed a feliway diffuser in the kitchen and tried to discourage the presence of the black cat by chasing it when it entered the garden and using a water sprinkler on the back lawn.

Things were going well; Jake seemed a lot happier and started eating more like he usually did. He was also more relaxed with the family and wanted to play again……however the owner then found evidence of spray stains in the room that had just been decorated! These weren't as intense as those that had been in the kitchen but the owner was worried things would escalate. Jake was prevented access to the recently decorated room for 2 weeks. During this time the owner made facial rubbings with a soft cloth from around Jake's head and mouth and rubbed these around the skirting boards and furniture in the new room. He also moved the rug that Jake liked to lie on from the sitting room to the new room to give Jake a sense of familiarity. Once the door was opened and Jake has a sniff around the new room he calmly walked out and hasn't sprayed or gone in the room since!

This case illustrates just how sensitive cats are to the presence of unfamiliar odours and how important it is to minimise this stress by increasing a cat's feeling of security.

Doris, Daisy and Pepper are 3-year-old Domestic longhair brothers and sisters living in a 3 storey townhouse with their lady owner and 2 other cats – an older male Siamese who sleeps most of the time and a 3 month old female kitten. All of the cats are neutered and all have been obtained from rescue centres over the past few years. One of the cats has started to pass faeces in the bath on the third floor. The owner is unsure who is doing this but the old Siamese rarely moves from the second-floor living area as he is arthritic and doesn't like stairs so she doesn't think it is him. Daisy prefers to be outdoors and only

comes home to be fed in the kitchen on the ground floor so again, the owner doesn't think it is her. Doris and Pepper spend varying amounts of time on all 3 floors with the kitten following them wanting to play. The owner doesn't think the kitten is big enough to jump into and out of the roll top bath to pass the faeces and the faeces itself is large but solid and normal looking. There doesn't appear to be any inappropriate urination. There is 1 litter tray on each floor of the house. The litter tray on the top floor is covered, the one on the middle floor has low sides for the Siamese (who previously started urinating inappropriately before his arthritis was diagnosed as he couldn't get into a standard high sided tray) and the tray on the ground floor is between the back door and the washing machine – this tray is rarely used. The owner had read an article about the use of nontoxic crayon shavings to distinguish which cats are passing faeces in inappropriate places. She fed ½ teaspoon full of blue shavings to Doris and green shavings to Pepper. The next time she looked in the bath there was a pile of solid faeces with flecks of green – Pepper was the culprit!

The owner then had the task of trying to figure out why Pepper had chosen to eliminate in the bath and what she could do to make the litter tray more inviting and the bath less appealing. She started by removing the lid from the covered litter tray on the 3rd floor as she had read that cats dislike confined spaces that trap the smell of faeces. She also changed the litter in this tray to a finer particulate matter that clumped (previously she had been using wood pellets). There was no change – faeces were still being passed in the bath. Pepper had never been seen to use the low sided litter tray on the second floor but had on occasion been in the tray on the ground floor. The owner moved this tray away from the washing machine incase the vibrations were upsetting the cats when they were in the tray and positioned it on the other side of the utility away from the door and possible interruptions if Daisy were to come in. She then confined Pepper to this floor of the house – he had access to the outside but rarely ventured out, preferring instead to spend his time between the kitchen lying near the Aga and the utility playing with toys. This went on for 2 weeks during which time Pepper used the litter tray dutifully.

The owner thought she had solved the problem by keeping Pepper away from the bath so gradually re introduced him to the rest of the house. Things were going well until one day there it was – faeces in the bath! At this point the owner was at her wits end so called in a behaviouralist. The behaviouralist observed each cat in turn and suggested setting up a video monitoring the bath. It transpired that Pepper and the kitten had a very close relationship – playing together, mock fighting, and chasing one another with the kitten instigating a lot of the play by basically getting on Pepper's nerves. This was fine until it became obvious that poor Pepper was unable to use the litter tray in peace. His only chance to get some alone time was to get in the bath where the kitten couldn't follow!
The owner put a baby gate on the top of the stairs to the 3rd floor and placed plastic sheeting over the bars to stop the kitten getting through. Pepper was able to jump over the gate to get out of the way and up to the litter tray on the top floor and no more faeces has been found in the bath. The problem will come when the kitten is able to jump the gate – hopefully she will be less of a shadow to Pepper by then!

This example highlights the need for a cat to feel secure and happy with the site chosen for elimination. In this case 5 cats were coping with 3 litter boxes, it was helped by the fact that the cats had access to the outside but in an ideal world there should be 6 litter boxes (1 for each cat plus 1). Litter type didn't seem to be important however mot cats prefer unscented fine texture litter. Boxes should be scooped out daily and the litter emptied and box washed once a week. Most cats prefer an uncovered box that lets odours escape and allows 360 degree view of their surroundings. It was good that litter facilities were provided on each living area especially for the elderly less mobile cat. The location of the litter box was important – no cat likes to feel insecure while toileting and the fear of an ambush lead to them finding alternative places. With more litter trays available, even if baby gate is removed, Pepper should be able to get away for long enough to be alone to eliminate in a tray somewhere in the house.

CASE STUDY 3 – Nervous cat

Boomer was brought to a rescue centre with his mother and siblings when he was approximately 8 weeks old. He had been born in a barn to a domestic mother who was well socialised with humans however there was no evidence that any of the kittens had been exposed to humans up until the time they were caught. He was chosen by his owner for his striking appearance as a silver tabby but was extremely nervous on arrival, hiding in any space he could find between furniture and even showing defensive aggression when removed from such areas.

The owner consulted the rescue centre who suggested she take another of Boomer's siblings to give him company and confidence. Now the owner had two nervous kittens hiding in small spaces!
The owner consulted a behaviouralist who suggested the cause of the problem was that they had been deprived of the opportunity in the important developmental phase between 2 and 7 weeks of age to experience the challenge of contact with different things and situations in the environment. This meant every new situation was potentially frightening and stressful as they had no previous experience to teach them the appropriate response. Although both kittens had not had contact with humans during this period they were naturally bold and sociable cats so the hope was to build their confidence by making every interaction with humans and new challenges pleasant and non threatening.

The owner obtained a large wire cage (large enough to house a Labrador so the owner was told at the pet shop). In it she put bedding for the kittens, a scratch post, a tube for the kittens to run through and chase each other, litter tray and food and water. The kittens were placed in this area whenever the owner was out of the house but allowed run of the house excluding the kitchen (as this was the area most difficult to prevent the kittens getting stuck behind appliances). An activity centre was placed in the living room in a location where the kittens could see all of the room and out into the garden. Cardboard boxes with holes in were placed around the house for the kittens to hide in if they felt vulnerable. When he kittens found a favoured hiding place, this was respected and not disturbed to ensure it was still thought of as secure.
The owner was asked to walk around normally to get the kittens used to the normal sounds and movements of adult humans as she had previously been keeping as quiet as possible. This however had created an air of tension rather than reassuring the kittens. The owner was encouraged to invite other people into the house, not to interact with the kittens initially but just to be around to get them used to people other than their owner.

The owner and friends were asked to play as often as possible with the kittens using predatory play with fishing rod type games. She was told not to make eye contact and try to get the kittens to play as close to her as possible. While the kittens were distracted, she was told to build up stroking all parts of the kitten's body for small amounts of time.

Once the stroking was well tolerated the owner could concentrate on developing the concept of restraint. This involved gentle holding pressure for seconds followed by immediate release and more stroking. The gentle holding then progressed to taking the weight of the kitten and then lifting for longer and longer periods of time. Ultimately the goal was to be able to pick either kitten up and hold against the body. If the kittens became fearful she was advised to ignore the kitten to avoid reinforcing the negative emotion.
After about 3 months of time, patience and positive experience of people and new situations, the kittens started approaching the owner regularly for attention and Boomer was even greeting new people the minute they entered the house!
This case study highlights the importance of the making of a confident cat. It involves the balance between natural personality and exposure to people and situations of everyday life in the crucial period between birth and 8 weeks of age. If cats are deprived of these experiences everything after is a scary potentially threatening situation and it will take a lot of time and effort to try to convince these cats otherwise.

CASE STUDY 4 –Cat with an intestinal obstruction

Speedo was a 1 year old seal point Siamese cat. His owner was worried about him as he hadn't eaten his food overnight (very unusual for him) and started to vomit profusely in the morning. The vomit seemed like watery froth and it happened about six times in the space of half an hour.
The vet examined Speedo but couldn't find anything abnormal however because of the presentation and profuse vomit, she decided to keep Speedo in for an xray and blood sample with a view to putting on iv fluids if the vomiting continued.

The x-ray revealed a strange shaped structure in Speedo's stomach. It looked like a metal figure of eight. An exploratory laparotomy was performed on Speedo under a general anaesthetic. The structure was removed from his stomach by gastrotomy and it turned out to be a hair bobble. Unfortunately, there had been a lot of hair attached to the bobble and for all the bobble itself had not passed out of the stomach, the long hair had, creating a linear foreign body. The intestine had tried to pass the hair through the digestive system but had only managed to achieve a bunching up of the intestine with the hair cutting into the lining of the intestine.

The vet had to perform multiple enterotomy incisions (incisions into the intestine) to remove the hair. This meant multiple wounds in the intestine with greater risk as each one had the potential to break down and leak intestinal contents into the abdomen causing a serious infection called peritonitis.
Unfortunately, in the days following the operation, Speedo developed peritonitis. He was miserable and uncomfortable despite intensive nursing. He had a further operation to try to drain and flush the infection from his abdomen but his condition continued to deteriorate and the owners decided to have him euthanased.

This case shows that despite cats being generally fastidious in their eating habits, are prone o eating items they shouldn't. This is especially true of young cats. Be really careful about not letting your cat play with stringy items like cassette tape, string, tinsel and elastic. The outcome as above can be fatal.

CASE STUDY 5 – Old cat

Purdy was an 18 year old domestic shorthair. She was brought to the surgery as she had started yowling for food even though she had just been given it. She no longer went outside, would urinate and defecate wherever she was and was crippled with arthritis. On examination, Purdy was underweight, had a high heart rate, cataracts in both eyes and pain when her back legs were touched. The owner was advised to have her euthanased but said he was not ready.

Purdy was brought back to the surgery collapsed and with breathing difficulties. Her circulation had collapsed and it was impossible to give her the overdose of anaesthetic to euthanase her into her peripheral veins. She had to be sedated and given the overdose directly into her heart.

In this case, Purdy had been left too long before she was put to sleep. The decision to end a life is never easy as the bond between cat and owner is a very special one. It is easy to become emotionally caught up in keeping a pet alive when your own common sense tells you there is no hope of it regaining its health. To help decide when it is time to let go you need to consider things from the cat's point of view.

Is your cat in incurable pain or continual discomfort which cannot be alleviated by drugs?

Is he suffering from severe injuries or illness from which he will never recover?

Does he have an age-related condition which cannot be alleviated and which now causes misery e.g. advanced senility or incontinence?

Is he suffering from a terminal illness, maybe one related to extreme old age, which has now reduced its quality of life to such a point that he is no longer happy?

The decision almost always causes much soul-searching, especially if you and your cat have been companions for several years. What matters to the cat is quality of life not length of life since a cat has no concept of future time. An illness may be treatable for a period of time, but there eventually comes a point when the cat no longer enjoys life. He may be in visible distress, withdrawn or incontinent. If you are unsure, your vet will be able to advise you, but he cannot make the decision for you.

Having seen your cat when he is happy and healthy, most owners recognise the signs given by a cat which is miserable or uncomfortable and a caring owner will realise that is their duty to prevent further suffering by offering the cat a painless release from life.

Modern drugs are extremely fast-acting and the end is very peaceful compared to the latter stages of a terminal illness or age-related illness. Your vet will administer an overdose of anaesthetic by injection and the cat will simply fall into a painless and final sleep. If, during its life, your cat has been a cherished member of your family, this is the last, and often most compassionate, duty you can perform for it.

CASE STUDY 6 – How do I introduce my new cat to the rest of my animals?

This is a question I am frequently asked. Take Mrs. Smith for instance, she has just bought a 12-week-old Maine Coon male kitten as she's always liked this breed but never had the opportunity to own one before. She already has a neutered male cat called Scampi who is 5 years old and a Springer Spaniel bitch called Polly. The new kitten is going to be called Chips.

Mrs. Smith is worried that a) Scampi will not accept the new kitten and b) Polly will chase and terrorise him.

As Chips is a kitten, he is less of a threat to Scampi. He should also be neutered at 6months old. Mrs. Smith should delay letting the cats meet face to face until Chips' scent can be spread around the house and the usual house smells spread to him. To do this, she should keep Chips in a separate room in a large cage housing his resources like food, bed, and litter tray. He can have access to the cage and the room but no further afield. Scampi is not allowed access to this room at first but can otherwise carry on with everyday life. Both cats can be stroked without washing hands in between. After 2-3 days, Chips can be removed from the room and allow Scampi to explore it. Chips in the meantime can be moved to a more communal area in the house to observe daily goings on. The cage should be positioned somewhere with a good view of the room but also provide some security – placing in a corner with a rug over the top of the cage can provide this. As Chips is now accessible, Scampi can be allowed to make introductions safely through the bars of the cage. Mrs Smith can observe initial behaviours on both Scampi and Chips' parts. After about 1 week she can try a face to face meeting without the cage. This should be done at feeding time when both cats are hungry. Suitable escape options should be available should the situation take a turn for the worse but if the meetings are structured so that neither cat feels pressurised or trapped, confrontation should not ensue.

As Polly is used to Scampi's presence it is unlikely that she will take exception to Chips. However, the meeting must be done in a controlled environment as Chips being a kitten may never have been exposed to dogs before and may run away precipitating a chase. While Chips is in the communal area in the cage, Polly can be allowed an initial meeting. She may be initially excited by the presence of a new animal so Mrs Smith must ignore this behavior and only give praise and reward when she is calm. The first meeting out of the cage should involve Polly being restrained on her lead and Chips encouraged to investigate. Polly's calm behavior is to be rewarded and Chips must be allowed to escape if he feels threatened.

CASE STUDY 7 – Aggressive cat

Hugo was a 14-week-old male Burmese cross obtained from a domestic home at 8 weeks old. There were 4 other cats in the litter. His new owners were a young couple with no other pets or children. His new home was a flat and he wasn't allowed outdoors.

For the first 10 days in his new home, Hugo was defensively aggressive and subdued. He then improved markedly becoming more confident and investigating strangers and new items with interest. This behavior however took a turn for the worse when he started pouncing at people's ankles and lashing out with his claws during play. His male owner encouraged this behavior and the play fighting became rougher and more energetic. He sustained some nasty bites and scratches when using his hands to simulate play.

Hugo's aggression started to go beyond playtimes and he started attacking anyone who entered the flat, the greatest target however being his female owner who was extremely reactive when 'attacked'.

Hugo was a bold kitten requiring stimulation and energetic play which he learned to instigate by attacking and running at humans. He was using his owners as substitute siblings for combative and predatory play. He found boisterous games very exciting but was unable to moderate his behavior as he had no siblings to regulate his behavior by either biting back or stopping play. What he was getting instead was a reaction from his owners that he found intensely exciting and further reinforced his desire to continue the behavior. He focused mostly on his female owner as her response was most reactive hence rewarding

To solve this behavior a program of non-reward is essential. Hugo needed physical and mental stimulation so new activities had to be found to accommodate this whilst ignoring inappropriate behavior. Games were played that were remote from the owner's body like fishing line games stimulating predatory play but not encouraging contact with human skin or clothes. He was encouraged to forage for food by hiding dried biscuits around the flat thus providing a challenge. Cardboard boxes, paper bags and tubes were used to construct changing disposable activity centres that could be entered or climbed. Dry loose catnip was placed in several locations inside to provide an alternative reward.

The owners were instructed to ignore aggressive biting, scratching and running at people. They were asked not to make eye contact, move or show any emotion. Hugo was only given physical contact when he was quiet and resting. Stroking was only done for a short amount of time.

Hugo's behavior continued to improve and although he was still extremely energetic he developed into an active nonviolent cat. When the owners moved, Hugo was now allowed outdoors which he thoroughly enjoyed with all the stimulus the outside world has to offer and his owners would find he would be out all day playing and occupying himself but come home at night to sit with them on the sofa.

Chapter 22: Customer Submitted Questions & Answers

Welcome to this compilation of questions and relevant replies we received through our so called “Ask Campaign” on the web site http://www.purrfectcatbehavior.com. We have organised them into Broad Categories reflecting the most popular questions and the Chapter Structure of our new E-book.

Sarah and I would like to apologise for those of you whom did not get personal answers to your questions but time constraints became very pressing and hence we decided to summarize the answers and replies of the 100 or so mails we actually managed to reply to ;-)

I hope this gives you a starting point to deal with your own cats behavior problems, and you will obviously get a much more rounded view from our E-Book which we hope to release at a very competitive price (and you all get a early bird reduction for being an early subscriber;-)) in the next few days.

If you feel that your particular individual problem is not mentioned and is not **covered in the E-book** then please drop us an E-mail at info@purrrfectcatbehavior.com and we will endeavour to answer your question as best we can. Due to time constraints, we are unable to answer any individual behavior problems unless the E-Book has been purchased and read!

At the end of the day our “Mission Statement” is….”We endeavour to provide relevant up to date trustworthy information to enhance and strengthen communication between cats and there owners. This will lead to an optimum quality of life for both.”

Please note these replies are not the original to provide anonymity for all our subscribers but reflect, in our opinion a true summary of the main cat behavior problems being addressed. These questions have had a major role in the focus and direction of the E-book.

A) Category 1: Urine Spraying and Inappropriate Urination.

B) Category 2: Aggressive Behavior in Cats

C) Category 3: Inappropriate Defecation

D) Category 4: Crepuscular (Early Morning) Activity

E) Category 5: Introducing Cats (Cat Dating)

F) Category 6: Other Problem Replies, Scratching Walls etc

Please note these questions are direct from the website, so please excuse the formatting and we often reference this book you are reading as these customers had just asked questions and had not actually obtained the book.

URINE SPRAYING AND INAPPROPRIATE URINATION REPLIES

Question Our adult female cat-spayed-has begun peeing everywhere. She is definitely “marking”-she has been observed. It is usually just a few drops or so. We have begun to let our older dog stay in the house. You can tell she doesn’t like that but she isn’t mean to the dog. She hisses only occasionally. However, I believe that is the reason for her behavior. How do we stop it?

When you say marking do you mean your cat is spraying ie backing up and shaking a few drops of urine at a vertical target or is she leaving drops of urine on the floor? If the drops of urine are found around the floor it would be worth getting a urine sample checked by your vet for the presence of infection or crystals. If she is spraying, this is a sign that she is feeling stressed and needs to make herself feel more secure. It could be that the presence of your dog and his scent are upsetting your cat making her feel the need to scent mark her territory. This boosts her confidence by replacing the scent of the dog with her own familiar odours. I am sure you are right and it is likely that your cat is just tolerating the presence of the dog (you say she occasionally hisses and I imagine she spends most of her time avoiding him). It is worth concentrating on trying to make your cat feel more secure both in the presence of the dog and with the presence of his smell.

When your dog and cat are in the same room, offer treats and stroking to your cat so she begins to associate the presence of the dog with positive experiences. Stroke both your cat and dog without washing your hands in-between to allow the exchange of each others scents. Provide raised areas with igloo type beds (or even cardboard boxes with holes cut out) in areas your dog is likely to frequent so your cat knows she has an escape route and hiding place should your dog make any sudden movements to initiate a chase. Position your cats litter tray, feeding and resting stations either in areas that the dog can’t access or in raised positions so she won’t be disturbed either by the dog or human traffic. Clean the areas she has sprayed with a product that will break down protein and fats – residual scent will make her keep going back to places to top up and replace the scent. Make rubbings with a soft cloth from around your cats face and rub these around the walls (honestly! These are facial pheromones that make your cat feel more relaxed) or consider the use of a Feliway diffuser, again to release pheromones to relax your cat. Applying coverings to the surfaces being sprayed that your cat won’t like to use like tin foil (noisy) can stop your cat spraying in a particular area but can just move the spraying to somewhere else unless the underlying insecurity problem is addressed. As a last resort you could try limiting your cat to certain areas of the house that the dog doesn’t have access to – she then only has to patrol one or two rooms and her feeling of security may increase. Good luck!

Question I have a male cat that is 4 months old, I am planning to mate him with my mom’s female when he is old enough, in the meantime I don’t want him to spray my house. I was told that he would not spray if he does not feel threatened by an intact male. I have a male but he was neutered over 4 years ago, he is outdoors mostly. My kitten is strictly indoors. Thanks for any help or advice.

Unfortunately, any cat, male or female, entire or neutered can spray. Territorial marking behavior is more common with entire male cats but any cat may feel the need to scent mark their territory usually as a means of communication to alert other cats of their presence and to boost confidence by surrounding themselves with odours that are familiar. Such behavior is usually manifest by the cat ‘backing up’ to the target and spraying or shaking a few drops of urine and revisiting the targets at regular intervals. Cats often spray around a cat flap or door to make themselves secure and to signal their presence to invading cats. Spaying indoors is often a sign that a cat is feeling stressed and insecure. However in the entire cat, the urine not only signals the cat’s presence but also its status so you may find as your cat reaches puberty at around 6 months he could start to spray even though he is a secure happy cat. He is just trying to communicate that he is an available male!

The fact that your other cat is neutered is helpful in that he will present less of a threat to your kitten. Ideally, your kitten should have an area that your other cat has no access to so he can feel secure about not having another cats smell around to contend with as his hormones develop as he reaches puberty. The fact that your other cat has access to outside is good as hopefully he will have an established territory outside and not start spraying in your house due to the presence of the kitten!

In the area that your kitten has to patrol, provide sufficient resources for food, littering, resting, hiding and playing. Provide scratch posts and keep your kitten active and interested by playing a variety of hunting based games with fishing rod type toys. You could try hiding food around the place and make your kitten find it, anything to keep him alert and occupied so he doesn't get bored. You could also consider using a Feliway diffuser which plugs into an electrical socket and releases pheromones to make your kitten feel secure and relieve frustration. Also take a soft cloth and wipe around your kittens face removing scent from the scent glands. Wipe this cloth around the walls of the rooms he is allowed in to spread his own familiar scent providing further security. Good luck and hope this is of some help.

Question How do you stop a neutered male adult from spraying?

All cats, male or female, entire or neutered can spray. Territorial marking behavior is more common with entire male cats but any cat may feel the need to scent mark their territory usually as a means of communication to alert other cats of their presence and to boost confidence by surrounding themselves with odours that are familiar. Cats often spray around a cat flap or door to make themselves feel more secure and to signal their presence to invading cats. Spraying indoors is a sign that the cat is feeling stressed and needs to make itself feel more secure. A nervous cat or one that is kept entirely indoors may be threatened by changes to his environment like redecorating, moving furniture or even new people entering the house. Smells brought in on feet may be enough to trigger a feeling of insecurity and a need to spray. Redecorating effectively removes all the cat's subtle markings which have been carefully placed by rubbing and scratching, with the strong odour of new carpets, paint or furniture.

You need to address any underlying issues of insecurity. Do any other cats have access to your house? Did the spraying start after part of the house was decorated? Have any new people or animals moved into the house?

Ensure you thoroughly clean the areas that have been sprayed using a product that will remove both fat and protein as even the slightest lingering odour will attract your cat back. Restrict access to the affected area until odours have dissipated and change the geography of the location by using pieces of furniture to block areas that have been sprayed. Use synthetic pheromones (Feliway plug in diffuser) or your cat's own facial pheromones on the area to discourage further attention. Obtain your cat's own pheromones by rubbing a soft cloth around his face.

After decorating, keep your cat out of the area until strong smells have dissipated then rub facial pheromones around the room or consider the use of a Feliway diffuser as above. A piece of furniture or material eg a throw from another room can be put in the newly decorated room again to give your cat a feeling of familiarity in the new surroundings.

Avoid unwanted intruders leaving their scent in your home by installing either a magnetic or electric cat flap so only your cat has access.

Good luck and hope this is of some help.

Question We have a male cat 2yrs old. After about 3 weeks he started to pee in areas of our home. He was fixed today and they found a problem in his urinary tract, having a high count of protein and showed an infection. Could this have caused him to pee in our home? Will this problem cease or is there something that we must do to prevent it from happening? The effective areas have been cleaned to our best and we have placed orange peals in some of the places where he has pee. He has been checked by the Vet and was given medicine. Will this continue? What to do?

A urinary tract infection can certainly cause inappropriate urination in the house. It's like us when we get cystitis – a frequent need to urinate, often passing only small amounts and a burning feeling when the urine is passed. Sometimes blood is obviously present but sometimes it will only show up with a dipstick test. Causes of urinary tract infection in cats are many and include 'idiopathic' ie the bladder becomes inflamed and the signs of cystitis are present but the cause is unknown (it is a condition known as FUS – feline urologic syndrome or FLUTD – feline lower urinary tract disease), bacterial infection, presence of crystals that irritate the bladder lining and can group together to form stones and inflammatory conditions of the bladder including tumours. In a young cat the first 3 conditions are most common. FUS usually resolves on its own or with the help of anti-inflammatory drugs, infection requires anti inflammatory and antibiotic drugs. A crystal check should be performed to identify crystals eg struvite and a special diet fed to the cat initially to remove the crystals then to stop further ones forming by altering the acidity (ph) of the bladder. Cats predisposed to crystal formation will need special diet food for the rest of their lives. The most common group of cats affected are sedentary neutered males who eat a dried food diet but any cat can be affected. Some cats have recurrent bouts of cystitis and you should seek immediate veterinary attention if your cat seems to be straining but not passing urine – a 'blocked bladder' can be potentially life threatening if not treated. If stones are present they may need surgical removal involving a general anaesthetic and opening up the bladder and flushing them out. Sometimes they can be seen on a radiograph.

It would be worth taking a further urine sample to the vet now to ensure your cat is free from infection and crystals as action should be taken medically if either are present (nb it can be quite normal for some cats to have a small number of struvite crystals present in their urine but they shouldn't be causing any inappropriate urination).

If you are happy everything is ok medically with your cat, ensure all areas that have been urinated on are thoroughly cleaned – ideally use something that will break down protein and fat as even the slightest remaining odour can cause your cat to return to the same place even if everything is ok. You may experience problems if your cat has associated the pain of cystitis with the litter tray. Ensure the tray is kept clean, is in a quiet accessible area and has a litter substrate your cat will like (fine particulate litter is best without added deodoriser)

Hope this is of some help and good luck!

Question All my cats were "foundlings"... some as early as 2 days old... had to bottle feed.. Have 2 males/5 females, all altered..range from 6 months to 7 1/2 years. All of a sudden someone is spraying.... cannot seem to "catch" them.. the odor is horrible... also feeding 5-9 strays outside, and believe my cats are also spraying badly on the porch...I am at my wits end... PLEASE help.. thank you.

So sorry to hear about your predicament. It's hard enough trying to sort out a spraying problem but even harder when you don't know who the culprit is. Are you able to separate the cats in the household to try to narrow down the offender at least into being in a certain group? Alternatively, if the spraying is aimed at one particular area, can you rig up a video camera to monitor the area for at least 24hrs to catch the cat or cats spraying without interfering with their behavior?

Cats start spraying for numerous reasons. All cats, male or female, entire or neutered can spray. Territorial marking behavior is more common with entire male cats but any cat may feel the need to scent mark their territory usually as a means of communication to alert other cats of their presence and to boost confidence by surrounding themselves with odours that are familiar. Cats often spray around a cat flap or doors to

make themselves secure and to signal their presence to invading cats. Spraying indoors is generally a sign that the cat is feeling stressed and needs to make itself feel more secure.

Some cats are unable to cope with change in the environment hence feel threatened and feel the need to spray to make themselves feel better and furnish the area with their smell. Has anything changed recently – new people, decorating, new animals? Has the feeding of the strays been a recent thing?

If the culprit is entire, consider getting them neutered – it may make a big difference but not guaranteed. Focus on making him/her more secure in the environment by ensuring all cats have access to their own feed, litter, resting and playing stations. When feeding the strays, do this away from your house and don't let your resident cats see you do this. Ensure any areas that have been sprayed are thoroughly cleaned with a substance that will break down protein and fat. The E- book is able to go into greater depth with these issues but in the meantime hope this is of some help and good luck!

Question One of the cats (rescued cat,have 3) keeps spraying and scatching the wallpaper every single panel in lounge and by front door.although there is a cat flap i have had to put a litter tray down. the other 2 cats go outside so does he sometimes? i have tried all the remedy sprays etc but he still does it. lovley cat but ruining the house. help me pleeease??! !

Both spraying and scratching in a house indicate that your cat is feeling stressed about something.

When cats feel vulnerable, they will try to rub their own scent on prominent places in a room so that they feel more secure. If the cat is trying to increase its feeling of security, many surfaces may be scratched, particularly those in strategic places such as edges of chairs and areas nearest to doorways. Secretions of watery sweat from between the cat's pads leave a scent message on top of the physical marks, reassuring your cat of his own environment. The same is true with spraying – this again reassures your cat by surrounding himself with his own familiar smell.

It might be worth getting your cat checked out by a vet to make sure there is nothing wrong with him like pain, bladder infection etc that could be making him feel insecure. Also has anything changed in the house – new people or animals, decorating or moving the furniture? Do any other cats except your other 2 have access to the house? Does the cat with the problem get on well with the other 2 cats or does he keep out of their way?

A lot of the products on the market that claim to clear cat odours don't actually work. Make sure you clean the areas that have been sprayed with a product that will remove protein and fat – the slightest residual trace of odour will make your cat return to the same place. Next you need to clean the areas that have been scratched and remove the visual signs of scratching. It might be worth just covering the areas at first with something that your cat will not want to scratch (or spray) eg tin foil or bubble wrap. Your cat is stressed by something so you need to remove this stressor or the problem will continue but in other areas of the house. Stop any stray cats coming into your home by fitting a magnetic or electric cat flap so only your cats can get in and out. Prevent conflict between your resident cats by providing separate resources for each one for eating, sleeping and toileting. Buy scratch posts (ones that your cat can scratch at full stretch), position these in the areas that have been scratched most. Consider the use of a Feliway diffuser to release pheromone to calm your cat and take facial rubbings with a soft cloth from around his face and rub these around the covered walls. It will take a long time to resolve this problem but hopefully with patience and reassurance you should be able to make your cat feel more secure and stop the behavior. Hope this is of some help, good luck!

Question One of my many cats is urinating in my STOVE! I am at my wits end. Is there an ordor, such as vinegar, that I can place in a bowl to keep them off my stove? I can not figure out which one it is as they only do it at night when I am sleeping. Thanks for any advice you can give me.

The stove is indeed an unusual choice of places to mark!

It's difficult in a multicat household to find the culprit or culprits urinating or spraying unless you actually see them do it. One way to find out who is doing what would be to confine each cat in turn in the kitchen and see who does it overnight when they're in on their own. This is however a behavior modifying technique so may alter the behavior and you might not get any further problems! The other option would be to rig up a video camera overnight focusing on the stove and see what happens.

If it is actual urination and has suddenly started it would be worth getting the cat checked out by a vet for bladder infection or crystals as this can cause inappropriate urination. If it is spraying, this is a sign that the cat is feeling stressed and needs to make himself feel more secure.

All cats, male or female, entire or neutered can spray. Territorial marking behavior is more common with entire male cats but any cat may feel the need to scent mark their territory usually as a means of communication to alert other cats of their presence and to boost confidence by surrounding themselves with odours that are familiar. Such behavior is usually manifest by the cat 'backing up' to the target and spraying or shaking a few drops of urine at said target. Typically this is 'vertical' marking (walls, table legs, televisions) and typically the targets are revisited at regular intervals. Cats often spray around a cat flap or doors to make themselves secure and to signal their presence to invading cats.

Spraying is not a habit but rather a signal that a cat is feeling insecure. Has anything changed recently in the house – new people, animals or furniture? Is the stove new? Any of these changes can be enough to stress. New furniture smells different to a cat so he feels he needs to make it smell familiar hence sprays it.

Thoroughly clean any areas that have been sprayed with a product that will break down protein and fat. Consider the use of a Feliway diffuser in the area the stove is in to release pheromone to relax your cat. Take a soft cloth and rub around your cat's face and rub the cloth over the stove. Ensure each cat in your household has their own litter tray, feeding station, resting area and scratch post. If there is conflict for resources amongst the cats this will add to general stress which the cat that is using the stove may not be able to tolerate.

Covering the stove at night with something like tin foil or bubble wrap should hopefully stop the cat using it as they don't like the texture of these materials. Unfortunately, if the underlying problem is not resolved, he may just move to some other area to mark. Good luck and hope this is of some help.

Question I have 2 male cats that spray on everything and everywhere. I have tried all suggestions and products to get the smell out. The one male cat will just look at me and spray. I have even caught him squatting to pee right in front of me. HELP!!!

You seem to be having a bad time with spraying at the moment. Are your cats young and have they been neutered? All cats, male or female, entire or neutered can spray. Territorial marking behavior is more common with entire male cats but any cat may feel the need to scent mark their territory usually as a means of communication to alert other cats of their presence and to boost confidence by surrounding themselves with odours that are familiar. If your cats are reaching puberty (6months +) it could be their hormonal drive to establish their territory is causing the spraying ie I'm male and available and this is where I live. They are probably trying to out do each other as well in the scent marking stakes – that is why they are spraying everywhere, each one trying to make his scent the more frequent and dominant. Neutering your cats would probably be the first thing to consider but may not be the total solution. You also need to remove all traces of scent from the areas that have been sprayed – the best cat odour removers are ones containing something to break down fat as well as protein. The areas that have been sprayed should be covered with something that your cats will not want to spray – tin foil works well with

most cats. The cat who will spray and urinate in front of you sounds like he is attention seeking. Does he get a reward, albeit negative when he does this? Do you react? It's going to be really difficult but you have to ignore him at these times – refrain from eye contact, don't speak just move out of the room away from him. He will initially increase his demands for attention but you must ignore this, even when it gets quite intense. Give him attention at your bequest, by all means play with him and stroke him but make sure you initiate the attention, not him. Increase the areas to play on and in around the house so your cats can use up their excess energy and consider the use of a Feliway diffuser to calm them.

Hope this is of some help and good luck!

Question: male cat neutered but sprays around condo. Considering using Feliway but not sure it will help.

As you've found out, any cat, male or female, entire or neutered can spray. Spraying indoors is generally a sign that your cat is feeling stressed and needs to make himself feel more secure. Territorial marking behavior is more common with entire male cats but any cat may feel the need to scent mark their territory usually as a means of communication to alert other cats of their presence and to boost confidence by surrounding themselves with odours that are familiar. Cats often spray around a cat flap or doors to make themselves secure and to signal their presence to invading cats – could a strange cat be entering your house ? Has anything changed in your house like new furniture, people or animals that could have triggered off your cat's behavior by causing him fear or anxiety? Its great that you're considering the use of Feliway – you can use the plug in diffuser to release pheromone to make your cat feel more secure and use the spray on the areas your cat has marked to prevent further spraying. It would be best to clean the area that has been sprayed with a product that will remove protein and fat. You could also try feeding your cat in areas he has sprayed (which have been thoroughly cleaned) as cats hate to eat and eliminate waste in the same area.

We hope this will help and suspect you will get lots more information from our E-book ;-). We also hope to start a consultation service in the near future on a 1 to 1 basis for owners with problem cats. However we have not organised a pricing structure yet. But we know from past experience that many owners need guidance over a number of months regarding there specific situation to actually make a difference. We really hope this helps and keep us informed how you are doing and please let us know if you are still having problems after trying the above advice and reading our E-book and we will think of putting you on our Private Cat Behavior Consultation Program at a discount as you are an early adopter ;-)

AGGRESSION REPLIES

Question: I have had cat A, age 6, for almost 2 years. She is front paw declawed, neutered, very sweet but shy with strangers. For the past six months or so, she has been more comfortable with visitors, venturing out after they have been around for a while. Then she is willing to be petted and will play. She is not a lap cat, except with me. She is a calico, neutered, in good health, adopted from a shelter. In December I adopted cat B, age 14, because I thought it would be good for cat A to have a companion to play with. I was advised to get a male also front paw declawed, preferably younger than cat A but not a kitten. It was difficult to find a declawed male—I went to quite a few shelters. cat B fit the bill so I went to see him. He is neutered, declawed, a senior. He had been left at the shelter with a companion female who was quickly adopted. As a result of these stresses and the stress of the shelter, he was very unhappy, was losing weight and had to be given fluid by IV. When I saw him he was lying on a desk, with several dogs, and was lethargic until he saw me. He stood up, lifted a paw and when I extended my hand, he lit up. He came to me immediately and found a perch on my chest. His paws held on to my shoulders for dear life. He captured my heart in a second. I was assured his basic health was sound and was shown medical records to document the treatment he had received at the shelter. I decided I wanted him: the shelter gave him to me on a two-week foster arrangement: after that if all went well, the adoption would be made final. He came home with me and, I was delighted to see immediate improvement. He ate, drank water, slept and within a day had become energetic and active. I kept him separate from cat A but of course she knew he was there in his room. I set up a separate station for his food and water and gave him a litterbox in his room. I followed a gradual introduction: first letting them see each other through a crack in the door, and a few minutes at a time together only after 10 days. Then I put cat A in a bedroom and let cat B check out the apartment on his own.

It was almost a full two weeks before I allowed them to be together freely during the day. I did not leave them during these times. They seemed to be ok, sniffing each other, nose to nose. Finally I let them be together at night. cat B immediately began sleeping with me, curled under my arm. He continues to do that. Cat A occasionally sleeps on the bed, at my feet. Otherwise, she sleeps nearby. Both greet me in the morning. They share litterboxes and cat A likes to eat cat B' food. They do not fight over food, water or litterboxes. They are both clean and do not defecate or urinate outside their boxes. Sometimes they seem affectionate toward each other. They will come together, nose to nose, but then it seems cat A gets too close and cat B bats at her. This escalates with some growling and hissing and then they get more excited and bare their teeth. I have not seen them bite one another but my presence seems to keep them from doing that. If they are getting too agitated, I separate them. Sometimes, it seems that cat A is defending her territory and cat B runs away. Sometimes cat B jumps on the furniture and stared cat A down and she runs away. She seems to rule the floor but cat B rules the tops of things, including my bed.I have been trying to do more interactive play with them at their most active times—first thing in the morning and later in the evening. They sleep a lot during the day—usually at opposite ends of the couch (atop the cushions). Currently cat B is being given medication for an intestinal parasite he picked up at the shelter, but his behavior does not seem to be affected. The only apparent effect of the parasite is slight anaemia which the vet says will probably improve after he has received the full course of medication (in four days).I would appreciate any tips you have to give. Altering my behavior included. I have a few of those fishing pole toys and cat A seems to like them (I use them to distract her as well as to play with). cat B is less interested in toys although he sometimes plays with them by himself but not as much as cat A.Thanks again for the response. I look forward to your suggestions.

Sorry for the delay in response, it's been hectic at work this week as we have a lot of staff off sick!
The way you acquired cat B was heart-warming. The problem with your problem is unfortunately you've done everything right! You selected cat B correctly – a neutered male. You performed a textbook introduction between your cats, not rushing it and allowing them to accommodate to each other's presence (the evidence for this success is illustrated by the fact that you have no problems with inappropriate urination, wall scratching etc) so well done!
It is possible that the problem between your cats is due to misinterpreted signals when they do come together to play or even greet. It is possible that cat B is responding to a perceived threat when cat A approaches – either the way she is moving, looking at him or even if she slightly puffs up her coat not meaning to be threatening. He counters this by a defensive action ie the batting. Poor cat A who at this point didn't think she was being threatening thinks cat B is going to attack her and counter defends and hence the aggressive behavior escalates. Although no biting has occurred yet, it could be the next step. You do well to separate cat B and cat A but one possible consideration would be to intervene earlier. It will require an intense period of monitoring on your part but in the initial period, every time cat B and cat A come together even for a brief moment, you should step in and intervene ie at the most calm moment in time. Make the intervention a reward that both cats receive either as a food treat or an interactive game – the fishing rod toy is ideal. Build up the time, even if it is by 10 seconds after each few days that pass without conflict. If conflict occurs, return to the shortest time period and continue building up again. It's going to take a very long time with this method but the reward should be greater than keeping your cats

separated in the house, leading their own lives without each others company (an unfortunate reality if we let this behavior escalate).
For all your cats are happy to share litter boxes and food it might be worth giving each cat a station again for litter, food, scratch post, sleeping and hiding to try to prevent any other issues getting in the way. A Feliway diffuser plugged into the wall socket would also be of benefit to release pheromone to calm both of your cats.
Best of luck and hope this is of some help, let me know how you get on.

Question: Hello I recently adopted a 10month old stray cat. I am a college student so she is at home alone most of the day but, when I get home and play with her she plays really aggressive. She plays with my hands and bits into them really hard and digs her claws into them. So what is something I can do to ease her aggresion?

It is great that you decided to provide a stray with a home. It sounds as though your cat gets so excited with being interacted with by you that she forgets herself and attacks you. If kittens are encouraged to do this when they are small they will continue doing it when they get bigger with stronger, bigger more painful teeth. As we don't know anything about your cat's history with her being a stray, this could be the case or she may have been orphaned at an early age and not learned the limits of an appropriate response to play.

I suggest that when your cat starts acting aggressively you get up and walk away, don't make eye contact or speak to her, simply ignore her so you are not rewarding the behavior. Return to her after about 5 minutes, continue playing but repeat your actions of ignoring her if she becomes aggressive. Avoid games that involve your hands, feet or clothing. Fishing rod type toys allow you to keep your hands and feet a safe distance from sharp teeth and claws and teach your cat that human limbs are not to be associated with biting. The E-book should be able to go into more depth about this subject but in the meantime hope this helps and good luck!

Question: ! have a male 2 year old siamese cat that has been declawed. He was bottle fed because his mother had mastitis and was unable to breast feed him. He has always been aggressive and had a biting problem (even before the declawing, so I don't think it's related to that). He also chews things and tears newpapers and magazines. On the flip side, he can be very affectionate and sweet. He is home alone in our apartment most of the day. He seems to be very needy with regard to getting attention and just loves to play. I think he is a bit high strung and his mood can change without any warning. Lately, his biting has become a bigger issue. I had a visitor recently for a week and he bit her arm, breaking the skin, when she reached down to pick up one of his toys. He also recently bit my chin as I was carrying him into the living room from the hallway. It was suggested to me to punish him by holding him by the scruff of his neck, saying "no" and putting him in the bathroom for a "time out" for 5-10 minutes. At this point, I am starting not to trust him and my boyfriend is thinking about getting rid of him (which I don't want to do). Do you have any suggestions?? Thanks.

You certainly seem to be having a bad time with your cat and the biting problem is a major issue. I think your cat's problems have a lot to do with the fact he was hand reared. Was the mother still allowed access to her kittens despite the mastitis, did she interact with them and were there many kittens in the litter?

Hand rearing can cause behavioural problems in most animals, not just cats. Although humans can provide nutritional support and nutritional weaning, behavioural support and behavioural weaning is sadly lacking. Queens teach their kittens how to cope when they are not able to get what they want, we are lacking in our ability to do this to anything other than out own offspring. Much learning is to do with coping with forced change. As a queen's milk dries up and the kittens demand more, she diverts them onto prey. A successful switch is accomplished and the kittens learn to be adaptable and deal with frustration. Most hand reared kittens do not learn this lesson early in life and react aggressively to frustration.

Although the biting was going on before the declawing, it could be that the declawing has contributed to the increased intensity of your cat's behavior. Cats are equipped with claws and teeth for defence. The process of declawing takes away part of your cat's defences and makes him feel insecure and unable to perform the normal natural behavior of scratching. He then seeks alternate behavior to relieve his frustration and your cat seems to be using his biting more (other cats will start spraying or defecating in the house).

Combined with his innate sensitivity and a predisposition to be sociable as a Siamese I think your cat is stressed and unable to find an outlet for his frustration other than by biting people.

When he bites you or your guests I imagine he gets a reaction – not only does the act of biting relieve his frustration but also he gets attention albeit in a negative way yet he sees this as a positive reward. It's going to take a very long time to solve your cat's problem and it may be that you can't. Some possible ways forward would be

1. Focus on making your cat more secure in his environment with the use of a Feliway diffuser to release pheromone to calm him, facial rubbings using a soft cloth and rubbed around the walls, plenty of accessible areas for resting, hiding, feeding and toileting.

2. DON'T REACT when your cat bites you – this is going to be the hardest part and you may need to invest in some thicker clothes and protective gloves to prevent injury to yourself. If he bites you, ignore the behavior and the cat. Evert eye contact, don't speak and move away from the cat. Be prepared for the behavior to escalate initially as inevitably your cat will become more frustrated as he's not getting the desired response. DO however praise and reward your cat when he is being quiet or playing with you at your instigation – a fishing rod toy is ideal as your cat can expend a lot of energy and target his aggression towards whatever is at the end of the string rather than human limbs.

3. As your cat is home alone all day, provide him with a lot of activity to occupy himself during this time. Cardboard boxes with holes cut in or fabric tubes for him to run through and hide are ideal. A water fountain can provide good entertainment while you're not home as can hiding treats, food and catnip toys around the house so he can find them.

The focus will be to reward the behavior that you want and ignore the behavior you don't want in addition to providing a secure enriched environment for your cat to relieve his frustration. Hope this is of some help and let me know how you get on.

Question: My cat is so vicious I can't even stroke her at the minute? My boyfriend and I are out all day Mon-Fri at work but we leave the cat flap open for her. Do you think that she gets lonely and that we should get another cat for companionship? She is nearly 2 years old.

If this is a sudden change in your cat's behavior it would be worth getting her checked out by a vet. Cats that are in pain will strike out aggressively even at people they know. If she does go out and about it could be possible that she's been bitten by another cat and may have an abscess brewing – this is painful until the abscess bursts (you might find some pus or blood either on your cat or round the house), other painful problems could be an infected or pulled claw, ear infection or if she is lame, pain from her limbs or spine.

If she has always had a tendency toward aggression it would be worth noting when this occurs. If your cat initially lets you stroke her then suddenly turns around and bites you or attacks your hand it could be a problem called "petting biting syndrome". Some cats will only do this if they are on their backs when you are stroking their tummies; others do it when you are simply stroking them on the head. This is generally due to conflicting feelings of security and fear – the cat relaxes when being stroked but by doing so feels vulnerable so reacts with defensive aggression and grabs the hand which is stroking them.

As stroking is a learned response rather than a natural behavior, some cats may be more reactive than others. Some cats get better as they get older but others that have missed out on human attention at a vital time in their development may never accept physical attention.

They key to successful stroking is to make your cat feel as secure and calm as possible and stop before she starts to react. Twitching, ears back, sudden tensing and dilated pupils are signs that your cat is feeing defensive so stroking should be stopped. Reward your cat with treats and praise for remaining relaxed and never punish a cat for defensiveness as this will only reinforce negative behavior and confirm to your cat that you are a threat.

Sometimes aggression can be out of overexcitement or excess energy. The fact that your cat has access to the outside world should mean she doesn't get bored but it could also mean she is constantly on edge if she doesn't feel safe with this access either because she can't cope with change in the environment or she is being bullied by other cats outside.

A radical suggestion would be to confine your cat in the house and enrich her environment inside by providing areas she can hide at different levels (cats love perches to watch what is going on below), boxes with holes cut in and fabric tubes for her to run through, scratch posts, easily accessible litter facilities, possibly a water fountain and hiding her food and treats around the house so she has to find them. This would give her a lot to do during the day but reduce the size of her territory to a more manageable area to make her feel secure that she can patrol and look after it. The use of a Feliway diffuser can help by releasing pheromone to keep her calm. If she is a calmer cat she is more likely to tolerate stroking. Play games with her involving fishing rod toys so she can use up energy but not associate human hands as being a threat.

Some indoor cats thrive with the increased security, if she improves you can gradually build up to letting her back out, maybe just when you are home eg at weekends. Some cats will not tolerate indoor life however and other behaviours like wall scratching and spraying can occur but provided she has enough resources to display her natural behavior and feels secure in herself this should be unlikely.

I would avoid getting an additional cat at present – it could just further upset your cat

and make her feel insecure. Cats are not socially orientated and do not need a pack to function happily. Some cats will live with another cat easily whereas others will barely tolerate a companion. Possibly in the future if done carefully an additional cat could be a bonus but it's not guaranteed. Good luck and hope this helps!

Question:My cat is a black female cat and is 8 months old. We've had her since she was 6 weeks old and over the last few months, she will go into attack mode and grab your hand with claws and bites down hard at the same time. Her ears are pointed backward when she does this. She use to do this a little bit when she was a kitten but it didn't hurt like it does now. Sometimes you can reach down to pet her and then she will attack for no reason. I don't think she knows how much it hurts, if it's a game or if she has a split personality. How do you stop this kind of behavior?

Does she have access to outdoors? The reason I ask is that from what you describe, the behavior she is showing is attributable to normal predatory type play, however she seems to be lacking the ability to moderate this behavior. Normally cats learn from their littermates as kittens just how far they can go with predatory play behavior before it goes beyond a game and a litter mate will bite back or choose to ignore them. If you've had her since 6 weeks its possible she has missed out on this life lesson and now is using you for interaction and hunting skills. Most kittens grow out of this behavior towards humans and focus on prey outside however indoor cats tend to continue as an outlet for expressing their natural hunting behavior.

Its going to take a bit of time and patience (as well as some protective gloves for your hands!) but every time she attacks your hand you must not react, not move until she lets go, don't make a noise, avoid eye contact with her and leave the room. Praise her and offer treats when she is being quiet and not attacking but don't over fuss her. Concentrate on playing predatory based games – fishing rod toys, dangling toys and rolling balls are excellent as these allow her to use her hunting instinct, use up a lot of energy and are remote from human limbs. The key is to reward the behavior you do want, ignore the negative behavior but provide an outlet for this behavior in the form of play.

The other part of the problem is her dislike of stroking. Some cats will never accept stroking – it is a learned

response rather than an innate one. Some cats will enjoy human contact to a point then as they relax, internal conflict arises and they feel vulnerable so attack. This is especially true when stroking a cat on its stomach. The key is to stop stroking just before your cat becomes defensive – watch for very subtle changes like ears flattening or pupils dilating as this normally happens before an attack. In some cats however the period in which you can stroke before this occurs is very small. Hopefully in time with a gradual build up of confidence the cat will come to accept contact.

Question:I do not know how to train my two year old burmese cat, she is very playful and needy and wants a lot of attention. She is aggressive with me, pounces/hurts me when she is bored and wants to play, meows constantly, and I am unsure how to regulate her eating times (she eates whenever and all the time). I have brought numerous toys for her but do not always have heaps of time to play with her. I lock her in the room when she is aggressive with me, to teach her better behavior, but she keeps repeating it. Please help! I need to learn how to train her and deal with her problems, I am desperate!

Unfortunately, I don't think you'll ever be able to 'train' your Burmese. Unlike dogs, cats don't work on the principal of reward for action be it with food or attention. As the saying goes – a dog will respond to a request, a cat will get back to you at a point he feels is convenient. Hopefully though, we will be able to alter her behavior so she is less aggressive and needy. I suspect your cat is a highly social but manipulative cat and her behavior suggests she is attention seeking. This behavior is neither good for her as it leads to frustration nor good for you as you feel she is more of a chore than a pet.

When she bites, you I imagine she gets a reaction – not only does the act of biting relieve her frustration but also she gets attention albeit in a negative way yet she sees this as a positive reward. It's going to take a very long time to solve your cat's problem. Some possible ways forward would be

1. Focus on making your cat more secure in her environment with the use of a Feliway diffuser to release pheromone to calm her, facial rubbings using a soft cloth and rubbed around the walls, plenty of accessible areas for resting, hiding, feeding and toileting.

2. DON'T REACT when your cat bites you – this is going to be the hardest part and you may need to invest in some thicker clothes and protective gloves to prevent injury to yourself. If she bites you, ignore the behavior and the cat. Evert eye contact, don't speak and move away from the cat. Don't move her, move yourself. Be prepared for the behavior to escalate initially as inevitably your cat will become more frustrated as she's not getting the desired response. DO however praise and reward your cat when she is being quiet or playing with you at your instigation – a fishing rod toy is ideal as your cat can expend a lot of energy and target her aggression towards whatever is at the end of the string rather than human limbs as her pouncing is a natural behavior she would use when hunting – she just needs an alternative outlet for this rather than you.

3. As your cat is home alone all day, provide her with a lot of activity to occupy herself during this time. Cardboard boxes with holes cut in or fabric tubes for her to run through and hide are ideal. A water fountain can provide good entertainment while you're not home.

4. Stop feeding your cat on demand. A possible feeding regime would be a small amount of wet food in the morning, some ad lib biscuits (ideally hidden round the house with or without some catnip to find so she has to work for her food) and some more wet food in the evening. If the wet food is not eaten within 1-2 hours remove it.

The focus will be to reward the behavior that you want and ignore the behavior you don't want in addition to providing a secure enriched environment for your cat to relieve her frustration. Unfortunately I think this problem is going to take a long time to resolve but provided you stick to clear boundaries you should make some progress. I hope the E-book will give more insight into this problem. Hope this is of some help and let me know how you get on.

INAPPROPRIATE DEFECATION REPLIES

Question: George, our 10 year old cat, has been dropping messes in the house for the last 4 months. I have put him in the bathroom where his litter box is mornings and this was successful until today when he waited until mid-morning to leave his unwanted gift. What can we do???

Had anything in the house changed 4 months ago just before George started this behavior? Had he had a bout of diarrhoea or constipation when it started? Are his faeces normal consistencies and colour now? Does he use the litter tray appropriately for passing urine? Does he tend to pass faeces in the same area each time?
We need to start by ruling out any medical problem with George. If he is passing normal solid faeces and is eating, drinking and behaving normally otherwise it is unlikely he has a medical problem. If he is passing soft or watery faeces, off his food a bit, losing weight or drinking more than usual it would be worth taking him to the vet to get checked over.
Assuming George has a behavioural problem we need to work out whether something has upset George in the house or if there is something about the litter tray that is causing a problem.
We need to focus on making the litter tray more appealing to use and other areas not so appealing. Cats don't associate the passage of faeces in inappropriate areas to be offensive to us so he is not doing it to upset you!
First consider the location of the litter box and place it in a quiet accessible area. If George is a house cat and spends most of his time on one floor of the house he should have his litter tray located on that floor. If you have other cats you should provide the same number of litter trays per cat plus one located in different areas.
Consider the litter tray itself – is it high sided? If it is, consider getting a low sided tray, at 10 years old George could be developing arthritic changes so climbing into a high sided tray could cause him some discomfort. If George had either constipation or diarrhoea just before the problem started, it could be that he is associating the litter tray with pain and discomfort – changing the actual tray, location and litter type may help break this association.
Have you changed the litter substrate? Most cats prefer fine grain litter with the consistency of sand with no scented deodoriser. Ensure litter trays are cleaned regularly with a mild detergent and remove waste at least once a day. Avoid disinfectants that turn cloudy in water as these usually contain phenols which are toxic to cats.
Ensure you thoroughly clean the area that has been inappropriately defecated on. Even the slightest residual odour can make George keep returning to that place. Use a cleaning product that will break down fat as well as protein and for a short period consider putting something down in the area that George won't want to pass faeces on eg tin foil or bubble wrap.
Consider the use of a Feliway diffuser to plug into the wall and release pheromone to help George feel relaxed and secure.
Hope this is of some help and good luck!

Question: I have a 7 month old tom cat who has been under treatment at the vet for a viral infection. He is normally a well behaved cat who will use his tray.The vet prescribed a course of interferon - 5 injections.since the injections he has started not using his litter tray properly- will wee in it but not poo become very clingy very vocal restless during the night - takes ages to settle down
the illness he did have was tested for cat aids and hiv but came back negative- as he was abandoned and i took him in at about 2-3 month we think he was weaned off his mother too early and as a result displayed a weak immune system - hence the interferon the vet thinks the behavior is due to the shock of having to be left is there anything i can do to sort out his behavior

Hi you sound as if you're having a bad time of things at the moment with your cat. Interferon is only a relatively new medication used in the veterinary field, it would be very unusual for it to cause behavioural problems but it might be worth discussing this further with your vet.

It sounds as though your cat is quite stressed at the moment and the inappropriate elimination, restlessness and wanting attention are all signs that your cat is finding things difficult to cope with. It certainly could be due to his start in life.

Queens teach their kittens how to cope when they are not able to get what they want, we are lacking in our ability to do this to anything other than out own offspring. Much learning is to do with coping with forced change. As a queen's milk dries up and the kittens demand more, she diverts them onto prey. A successful switch is accomplished and the kittens learn to be adaptable and deal with frustration. It is possible your cat does not have the coping mechanisms to deal with stress and change in his environment. I suspect with his illness he has back and forth to the vets, not felt very well, had to be transported, restrained, possibly had to wait in waiting rooms with dogs? All of this is a lot to cope with in a normal cat, never mind one who has problems with coping mechanisms.

Did the viral infection cause diarrhoea in your cat? If so he could be associating the pain of passing faeces with the litter tray. We need to focus on making him feel more secure 1. with his environment and 2. with his litter facilities.

Consider the use of a Feliway diffuser to release pheromone to make your cat feel calmer. Make sure he has easily available resources like food, water, toys and scratch posts. Consider an extra litter tray and start by positioning this in the area he has chosen to defecate in (after a thorough cleaning of the area with a product that will remove protein and fat). Ensure the litter tray has a large surface area and low sides for easy access. Consider using a different litter substrate to the one in which he urinates in – preferable a fine particulate matter without deodoriser.

Hope this is of some help and good luck!

Question: **15yr old cat PJ been pooing and peeing in house for a few years but also uses litter tray.**

> Hi that's a great achievement getting PJ to 15 years old! Have you had PJ checked out with your vet for general health purposes, he may need a blood sample to check out his body functions if he is also drinking more than he used to. Its good that PJ does use the litter tray – possibly providing a litter tray with lower sides could encourage him to use it more often as with his age he may have arthritic changes going on which causes him discomfort getting into and out of the tray so at times he can't be bothered and eliminates where he is. You could try putting a litter tray on each floor of your house that PJ has access to, again, minimising any discomfort he has for example getting downstairs to a litter tray in the basement when he is on the first floor. One unfortunate problem associated with old age could be that PJ is developing senility so either doesn't know he's weeing and pooing in the wrong place or just can't remember what the right place is from time to time. It may be worth taking him to the vets for a quick check over if you have not already done so.

We hope this will help and suspect you will get lots more information from our E-book ;-). We also hope to start a consultation service in the near future on a 1 to 1 basis for owners with problem cats. However we have not organised a pricing structure yet. But we know from past experience that many owners need guidance over a number of months regarding there specific situation to actually make a difference. We really hope this helps and keep us informed how you are doing and please let us know if you are still having problems after trying the above advice and reading our E-book and we wish you loads of luck with your aged but wonderful cat ;-)

Question: Why would my cat be leaving "droppings" in the house. I had to scold him for swatting at my face and 30 minutes later I found droppings on the floor. Is it because I scolded him for swatting at me?

You don't say if these dropping were a one off incident or if he has done it in the past. Cats don't associate inappropriate pooing with being offensive so I don't think your cat leaving droppings in the house is a dirty protest to you scolding him. However, if your cat gets stressed or if a situation is unfamiliar to him he may feel insecure and start defecating inappropriately. It could be that if the scolding was an unusual

event from a person who has not shown him negative behavior before (ie you) it could have triggered him to pass droppings. Another thing to note would be the fact that your cat swatted at your face – if this is unusual behavior for him it could be a sign of pent up frustration. It would be worth looking into your cats immediate environment if his behavior has suddenly changed – does he have access to outside? can he see other cats through the window? has anything changed in the environment to make him feel insecure – new people, decorating, new animals? Make sure your cat has adequate toilet facilities with the litter tray cleaned at least daily and sufficient areas around your home to eat, rest and sleep. You could consider the use of Feliway diffuser to release pheromone to make him feel more secure.

Question: Why would they poop and urinate on the floor?

Inappropriate urination can consist of urine pooling in areas other than the litter tray or urine spraying onto vertical surfaces, people and possessions. To urinate the cat squats and deposits a volume of urine on a horizontal surface. To spray urine the cat stands up, usually making a treading motion with its back feet, quivers its tail and a small amount of urine is sprayed backwards onto a vertical surface such as a wall, leaving an obvious scent mark. Inappropriate defecation is the soiling of areas outside the litter box.

The main reasons cats eliminate waste inappropriately are

1. Medical reason such as cystitis or diarrhoea. If a cat suddenly starts urinating inappropriately he should be taken to the vet and a urine sample checked for the presence of infection or crystals. A cat passing abnormal faeces eg watery or with blood present should also be checked by a vet and is likely to need treatment.

2. Old age – getting caught short, increased thirst leading to increased urination in conditions like diabetes and kidney failure.

3. Territorial – generally related to spraying, mostly done by entire male cats but can be done by any cat. Signals that a cat is present in an area.

4. Aversion to the litter tray – not clean enough, too high sided for an old cat, not enough litter substrate, inappropriate litter substrate, not positioned in an easily accessible or appropriate place.

5. Fear / Anxiety – changes to a cat's immediate environment can make them feel insecure eg new people, furniture or animals. They can then start to mark to make themselves feel more secure.

Further details can be found in the E-book including ways to overcome these problems but hope this is of some use in the meantime.

CREPUSCULAR (Early Morning) ACTIVITY

Question: Our Cat wakes up between 2am and 4am every morning to eat. We have tried feeding her at night but she continues to wake us up. She is 15 years old.

It is great that you have a 15 year old cat but not good to have your sleep pattern so disrupted. Cats are naturally 'crepuscular hunters' ie most active when their prey would be most active and when their eyesight would be superior over the small mammals they are trying to catch. This usually coincides with dusk or sunrise. Cats often try to wake you up in the early hours by feet pouncing or yowling! If your cat has been waking you for some time it is unfortunately quite a natural behavior that has been reinforced by the positive action of getting something to eat. If this has been a sudden change however in a cat of 15 years old it would be worth getting her checked out medically. Certain changes can occur in old age from hyperthyroidism to senility which can cause this problem – your vet should be able to advise you of further tests that can be done to rule these things in or out. If everything is ok medically it might be worth considering restricting access to your bedroom at night. As long as your cat has access to a litter tray,

Question: HOW CAN YOU GET A CAT TO STOP SLEEPING SO MUCH IN THE DAYTIME SO HEOR SHE WILL NOT KEPT YOU UP ALL NIGHT AND GETTING INTO THINKS

Unfortunately cats are what is termed ‘Crepuscular Hunters’ - most active when their prey would be most active and when their eyesight would be superior over the small mammals they are trying to catch. This usually coincides with dusk or sunrise. Cats often try to wake you up in the early hours by feet pouncing or yowling! Often they will spend all day sleeping and be active at night when you want to sleep which sounds as though you’ve already encountered this!. One way would be to allow your cat out during the day so he/she is active exploring the outside world, feed him/her when they come in after dusk in the hope they will settle contented until the morning. Alternatively, let your cat out at night – some cats however like to return home in the early hours of the morning and wake you up trying to get in.Other options would be actively playing games with your cat at dusk (fishing rod type games to mimic the act of stalking and catching prey) in the hope again they will settle down when they’re tired. Good luck!

Question: My Egyptian Mau wakes me up every morning anywhere between 1 and 5 am insisting that I feed him. He leaves painful scratches on my face and won’t stop until I get out of bed to cater to his needs. If I kick him out of the room, he’ll claw at the door which I can’t tolerate because I’m renting and don’t want to have to replace it when I move out. I’ve tried feeding him more, and late in the evening around 9 or 10 hoping it will curb his appetite until I’m ready to get up at 6, but he still persists. My other cat, his brother, is a sweetheart and will stay in bed all day and never ask for food until I’m ready to get up. HELP!

You seem to be having a bad time at the moment, not to mention the disruption to your sleep pattern. Cats are naturally ‘crepuscular hunters’ ie most active when their prey would be most active and when their eyesight would be superior over the small mammals they are trying to catch. This usually coincides with dusk or sunrise. Cats often try to wake you up in the early hours by feet pouncing or yowling! If your cat has been waking you for some time it is unfortunately quite a natural behavior that has been reinforced by the positive action of getting something to eat. If this has been a sudden change however, especially if you have an older cat it would be worth getting him checked out medically. Certain changes can occur in old age from hyperthyroidism to senility which can cause this problem – your vet should be able to advise you of further tests that can be done to rule these things in or out. We also have chapter in our E-book on this topic.

If everything is ok medically it might be worth considering restricting access to your bedroom at night. As long as your cat has access to a litter tray, food, water and a resting area you can confine him to a smaller area in the house at night. As you say you are in rented accommodation it would be worth purchasing a large dog cage as this will provide enough room but your cat will not be able to destroy anything. Make it as cosy and inviting as possible – its not meant to be a punishment. The addition of a forage toy may be beneficial so your cat can roll it about releasing food if he gets hungry or wants to play. Be prepared for yowling and frustration initially as he may not tolerate the change well. You may need to plug in a Feliway diffuser which will release a pheromone to help calm him. It will require a lot of time and patience but hopefully you will achieve a good nights sleep, good luck!

INTRODUCING CATS: “CAT DATING”

Question: I just brought home a female cat and I have a male cat which is around 4 year’s old she’s 1year and a half.... I’m so afraid they will fight!! the both have claw’s so it could be ugly I hope I did not make a mistake but I feel he needed the company...

You have done the right thing getting a companion for your male cat of the opposite sex and younger. Problems however can still arise but lets see if we can try to avoid them.

It is up to the nature of the individual cats involved as to whether they will like each other but careful introductions make the difference between success and failure. If either cat feels threatened, excessive reactions can occur and conflict may take a long time to resolve, if at all.

1. Delay letting your cats meet face to face until the scent of the new cat can be spread around the home and the scent of home spread to the new cat.

2. Keep cats in separate rooms and stroke each cat without washing your hands. Rub a soft cloth over the new cat's head to collect facial pheromones then wipe it around the home and furniture to get the resident cat used to the fact another cat is around.

3. Allow each cat to investigate the other cat's room without meeting.

4. Initial introductions should be done through a cage to allow the cats to see each other, sniff, hiss and yowl but prevent fighting and chasing. A kittening pen is ideal for this.

The key to successful introductions is that everything is done slowly so both cats feel relaxed and unthreatened. You could consider the use of a Feliway diffuser for the first weeks of your cats being around each other as this will release pheromone to make them feel secure. The E-book has a section on introducing your cat to other cats and animals which you may find useful. Hope this helps, good luck!

Question: I have two cats that I rescued over 10 years ago. They are housecats now, and not used to having other animals around. I have a stray kitten who has adopted me and I have been feeding her. I would like to give her a home, but my cats can hardly stand to see her through the door! What is the best way to ease your cats into a new family member?

It is great that you want to give this stray kitten a home. Cats are not pack animals however so generally see any other cat that come into their territory as a potential threat and source of competition.

It is up to the nature of the individual cats involved as to whether they will like each other but careful introductions make the difference between success and failure. If either cat feels threatened, excessive reactions can occur and conflict may take a long time to resolve, if at all.

I would start by getting the stray checked over by a vet – get her wormed and vaccinated. The vet may suggest blood sampling for Feline leukaemia virus to minimise risk of bringing in a potential problem to your other cats.

Put the kitten in a large cage in a quiet room. Make sure the cage is large enough to accommodate her bedding, litter tray, sleeping area (that should ideally be off the ground on a perch) and scratch post. You can allow her access out of the cage and in the room and play with her to get her used to you and being indoors. You may want to plug in a Feliway diffuser to release pheromone to help keep her calm. If she will not settle indoors, you may have to resign yourself to her being an outdoor cat that you feed rather than try to make her into a house cat.

Delay letting the cats meet face to face until the scent of the new cat can be spread around the home and the scent of home spread to the new cat ie about 2 weeks. Rub a soft cloth over the new cat's head to collect facial pheromones then wipe it around the home and furniture to get the resident cats used to the fact another cat is around. Don't wash your hands between stroking the kitten and your resident cats, again to spread the scent of the other. Allow each cat to investigate the other cat's room without meeting. Initial introductions should be done through the cage to allow the cats to see each other, sniff, hiss and yowl but prevent fighting and chasing. If this is tolerated, you can then try face to face introductions after a few days. Do this at a quiet, calm time when all of the cats are hungry. Put the food in separate areas in

the same room, preferably a room with places the cats can hide or escape to if things go wrong. The E-book is able to go into more depth with introducing cats to cats but in the meantime, good luck!

Question: How can I speed up the process of getting my adult cat to accept a new 8-month old cat?

Cats are not socially orientated and do not need a pack to function happily. Some cats will live with another cat easily whereas others will barely tolerate a companion. It is up to the nature of the individual cats involved as to whether they will like each other but careful introductions make the difference between success and failure. If either cat feels threatened, excessive reactions can occur and conflict may take a long time to resolve, if at all. Some tips for introducing your new cat to your resident cat include;

1. Ideally the cats should be opposite sex and preferably neutered to avoid unwanted complications!
2. Delay letting the cats meet face to face until the scent of the new cat can be spread around the home and the scent of home spread to the new cat.
3. Keep the cats in separate rooms and stroke each cat without washing your hands.
4. Rub a soft cloth over the new cat's head to collect facial pheromones then wipe it around the home and furniture to get the resident cat used to the fact another cat is around.
5. Allow each cat to investigate the other cat's room without meeting.
6. Initial introductions should be done through a cage to allow the cats to see each other, sniff, hiss and yowl but prevent fighting and chasing.
7. When this is tolerated (may take a few attempts over days or weeks) you can let the cats meet face to face. This is best done when the house is calm and quiet and both cats are hungry so you can feed them separately but in the same room.
8. Provide an escape route and areas for each cat to hide should things take a turn for the worse.

Done patiently and carefully their should be no reason why your cats shouldn't cope with living together, they may never be best of friends but will at least tolerate each other. Hope this is of some help and good luck!

Question: We've just recently (as of 3 hrs. ago) gotten a siamese/angora mix kitten-about 4 or 5 mo. old. We currently have a Russian Blue that is about 2 yrs. old. The Russian Blue is fine with the young one, but the young one is very growly and wants to claw and run. How do we introduce these to and make it as less stressful as possible for the little one?

Hi and congratulations on your new arrival. Unfortunately, cats are not socially orientated and do not need a pack to function happily. Some cats will live with another cat easily whereas others will barely tolerate a companion. It is up to the nature of the individual cats involved as to whether they will like each other but careful introductions make the difference between success and failure. If either cat feels threatened, excessive reactions can occur and conflict may take a long time to resolve, if at all.

Your kitten is probably feeling stressed with the change to a new environment and he may be scared of your cat if he has not been socialised early enough in his life so does the only thing he can do and becomes defensive.

Question: Owner with the 2 cats scratching the walls and costing her a fortune.

Hi Sorry you're having such an unfortunate time with your cats. You don't mention how long your cats have been doing this for or if they concentrate on a particular area but I'll try to give you some tips and advice. Are your cats confined indoors? Normally they would display the natural act of scratching on trees and fence posts but if they are confined indoors they will use an alternative like a

scratch post or multilevel play centre (or as you've come to find out, a wall or piece of furniture!). Do any other cats have access to your home? When cats feel vulnerable, they will try to rub their own scent on prominent places in a room so that they feel more secure Secretions of watery sweat from between the cat's pads leave a scent message on top of the physical marks, reassuring your cat of his own environment. Your cats could be feeling threatened even by the sight of another cat through a window. Some possible solutions include

1. Claw trimming and maintenance.
2. Providing a scratch post or multilevel activity centre and position it in front of the area they are scratching most.
3. Consider allowing your cats' access to the outdoors or an enclosed outdoor area to increase energy expenditure and minimise destructive boredom.
4. Increase the amount of time you spend playing and interacting with your cats, especially with toys and games promoting hunting aptitude eg fishing rod games.
5. Try not to give your cats any attention – neither positive nor negative when they are scratching in areas where you don't want them to.
6. Improve security to your home to prevent intrusion by strange cats eg fit a magnetic or electric catflap.
7. Look at how well your two cats get on with one another – provide separate resource areas for each cat for eating, sleeping, toileting and resting.
8. Try restricting your cats' access within the house and concentrate on making them feel secure in one or two rooms, possibly by providing hiding places and raised perches.
9. Try using a Feliway diffuser which releases pheromones to make your cats feel more secure.
10. Thoroughly clean the area that has been scratched to remove traces of the scent and try to minimise further damage by placing something your cats won't want to scratch on the area like tin foil, bubble wrap or double sided sticky paper.
11. Thin sheets of Perspex can be fitted over the damaged area of wallpaper making the surface unattractive to scratch since it is smooth and it is also easily cleaned to remove any scent deposits. A useful site for this is www.purrfectpaw.com
12. As a last resort you could consider using "Soft Paws" but only if your cats are indoor only.

Question: have a 2 year old male cat. He likes to paw at the doors inside our house and make them rattle. This drives us crazy. We have tried spraying him with water, but this doesn't work because he takes a shower every morning. We have tried everything we can think of. Please help with any new ideas you may have.

Hi your cat sounds like a real character, especially the fact that he likes the shower! Is he an indoor only cat? It could be that he is displaying attention seeking behavior – he knows he gets a response if he rattles the door so gets positive feedback from this as well as the actual enjoyment of rattling the door. I think you need to make the door as unattractive as possible by either using door stops to stop it rattling or fix something like bubble wrap along and under the *door end so it doesn't have the same sensation/noise that he is associating with attention. Next, when he is par*taking in this unwanted activity ignore him – I know it's hard and he may get frustrated that the response he wants from you is not forthcoming and try even harder to get your attention. Reward him when he leaves the door either with treats or toys/games – a fishing rod toy is ideal. You don't want to encourage over attachment however as this can lead to further behavioural problems like urine spraying and wall scratching – see the E-book for ways to avoid this. Consider allowing your cat access to the outdoors so he can use up a lot of energy exploring the outside world. Good luck!

Question: I have 2 cats both male. one is a 6 year old blue persian the other a two year old moggy. They are both house cats in that they dont want to go outside. However the two year old craves attention all the time by being naughty and will only respond to my mum although me and my sister hand reared him. Also he chews plastic. It could be anything from bags,washing baskets and wires, he never swallows just shreds it. I have been studying animal welfare and behavior for two years and cant work it out. can you help

I suspect a lot of the problems you area experiencing are due to the fact that the 2 year old was hand reared. Hand rearing can cause behavioural problems in most animals, not just cats. Although humans can provide nutritional support and nutritional weaning, behavioural support and weaning is sadly lacking. Queens teach their kittens how to cope when they are not able to get what they want, we are lacking in our ability to do this to anything other than out own offspring. Much learning is to do with coping with forced change. As a queen's milk dries up and the kittens demand more, she diverts them onto prey. A successful switch is accomplished and the kittens learn to be adaptable and deal with frustration. Most hand reared kittens do not learn this lesson early in life and react in different ways to frustration – over attachment, attention seeking and other problems can ensue.

Eating strange items can also be a sign that your cat is trying to perform his natural hunting instinct of tearing and chewing things up and although he doesn't want to go outside to find prey to do this with he will need some form of stimulation inside. This could include playing more and more predatory games with him – rolling balls or fishing rod type toys are ideal where he can pounce and chase. Experts suggest supplying something for cats to tear and shred like they would in their natural environment. One solution is to feed dead whole turkey chicks, day old chicks or dead whole rats sold frozen by pet shops for reptiles. (NB day old chicks carry salmonella in their intestines the risk of feeding them is probably no more than the risk that your cat might pick up a salmonella bug from hunting mice or birds, but you should wash your hands after handling them and not allow your cat to lick you). Some people cannot cope with the thought of having such things in the house so the use of a foraging toy (so your cat has to work for his food by pushing and rolling the toy around), combined with predatory play could be tried first.

Hope this is of some help, I don't think it's a problem that is going to be easily resolved.

Disclaimer: If your cat is sick or you are at all unsure if any of the behavioral problems you are seeing may have a medical component please take your cat to the vet.



An information product for Cat Owners seeking an understanding of and solutions to problem behaviors such as inappropriate urination/ defaecation, marking (spraying), litter box, and feline aggression problems.

Copyright © 2007 to 2020 Sarah Middleton & Paul Proctor
MRCV's Fencehouses
Tyne and Wear,
DH4 6LP, UK

http://www.purrfectcatbehavior.com

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The End