

## Problem Solving for You and Your Cat

# Aggression Towards People



If you are bitten or badly scratched by a cat/kitten always seek medical care immediately as these injuries can cause severe infection and illness in people.

Aggression towards people may range from mild to severe.

### Aggression may occur:

- When being patted.
- During play.
- During general handling.
- When being groomed or claws trimmed.
- When being medicated.

### Or due to:

- Feeling vulnerable and trapped.
- Redirected aggression.
- Pain or illness.
- Wanting to establish social dominance.

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### What can you do?

- Sudden onset of aggression should be discussed with a vet to rule out any pain or illness.
- Ensure all household members learn to read signals cats use to communicate. See below for Cat Body Language poster.
- Ensure children are gentle when interacting and allow cats time to rest.
- Young children should not be unsupervised with any cat or kitten.
- Provide high vertical safe spaces so cats can retreat from children when required.
- Do not use hands or feet to play rough with cats.
- Redirect play aggression by using kicker toys or small prey size soft toys. This allows cats to express their normal hunt/catch/kill behaviour.
- Train cats to accept handling for grooming, nail trims, medication, etc. Visit: [tenlives.com.au/factsheets/problem-solving](https://tenlives.com.au/factsheets/problem-solving) for information on Training Cats.
- Learn how to manage redirected aggression and to prevent or reduce inter-cat aggression. Visit: [tenlives.com.au/factsheets/problem-solving](https://tenlives.com.au/factsheets/problem-solving) for information on Multi-cat Households.
- Provide cats with plenty of exercise, play time, and things to do in their environment.
- Do not punish or hurt cats, it is likely to make them more aggressive or develop additional behavioural problems such as toilets issues.

*If the cat's aggressive behaviour persists, and vets have ruled out any health-related illnesses causing the aggression, seek the assistance of a qualified animal behaviourist.*

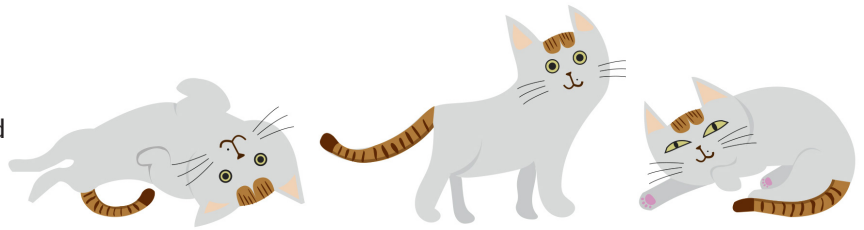
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# Cat Body Language

## A happy cat

To tell if your cat is relaxed and happy to be in your company, look for the following indicators:

- Relaxed body posture
- Ears in natural position
- Mouth closed
- Eyes and pupils are normal shape
- Tail upright with small curve, or relaxed
- Lying down with belly exposed
- Slow blinks



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## A worried cat

To tell if your cat is stressed and doesn't want you near them, look for the following indicators:

- Crouched position
- Muscles tense and body held tightly, faster breathing
- Tail tucked tightly into body
- Ears swivelled sideways
- Pupils are dilated
- Tension shown in face, with slightly lowered head
- Hiding

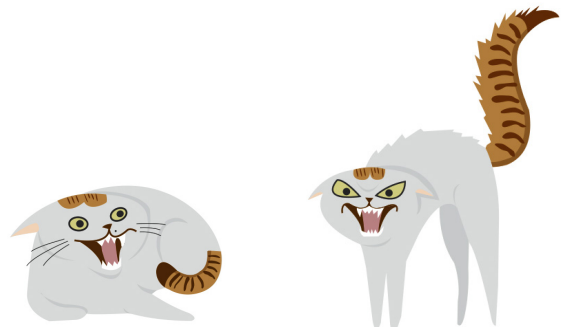


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## An angry or very unhappy cat

To tell if your cat is not at all happy and wants you to stay away, look for the following indicators:

- Cat is lying down tightly or standing with arched back
- Body flattened if lying down or held sideways if standing
- Hair is raised/bristled
- Tail tucked tightly into body or tense and swishing
- Ears flattened to the head
- Pupils are dilated
- Mouth is open and tense with teeth showing
- Change in tone of meow - clearly trying to warn you away



Mr Binks Cat Language Artwork: Fu-Chu Chiang