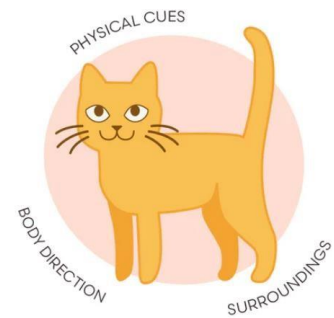




## Managing Cat Behaviour

### Understanding Behaviour and Body language

Understanding what cats are communicating through their body language is crucial for cat parents because it enables them to more accurately “read” their cats and understand their feelings and motivations for doing what they do. Key body language features are identified through eyes, ears, body and tail.



Cats which are nervous, aggressive or act in ways we consider inappropriate (such as spraying indoors) are behaving that way for a reason. These behaviours are usually a sign that something is wrong.

### Body shape and posture



When a cat appears aggressive or defensive, it will try to make itself look bigger and more intimidating. Postures may include a stiff, straight-legged upright stance, direct stare, upright ears. May be growling or howling with hackles up (fur upright).

If your cat develops ongoing aggression with no known cause, seek advice from your vet.

A defensive, fearful cat may adopt a self-protective posture and try to make itself smaller. Defensive postures include crouching, head tucked in, eyes wide open, ears flattened sideways or backward on the head.



## **Signs of Pain**

Cats are very subtle when it comes to showing pain and they often do their best to hide it. If you notice any signs of pain such as a change in their behaviour, make an appointment for a health check.

Signs of pain include:

- Becoming more withdrawn or hiding more than usual.
- Sleeping more than usual or reduced interaction with owner.
- Reduced appetite
- Hesitating or becoming more reluctant to jump up or down from furniture or being stiff after resting.
- Over grooming or a scruffy/matted coat.

## **Signs of Stress**

There are many reasons why a cat can become stressed including a change of routine, moving home or even the introduction of a new pet or even a new human! It can also occur if the litter tray and food bowls are in unsuitable locations.

Signs to look out for include:

- House soiling
- Over-grooming
- Becoming more withdrawn or sleeping more
- Changes in eating

Always see your vet if you notice any changes in your cats behaviour.