

CAT CONDUCT

Cats are mysterious creatures—affectionate one moment, aloof the next. Pam Johnson-Bennett, author of Think Like a Cat (Penguin), says studying feline body language can help you understand your pet better and develop a deeper connection.



Affectionate

Your cat's being loving when she rubs her head against you. "Cats have scent glands in their forehead," Johnson-Bennett says. "By head butting, they're depositing that scent onto you, making you part of their family." Offer her your lap.

Angry

Pinned-back ears or a lashing tail often signal that your feline is agitated, as do hissing, spitting and growling. Unless he's in danger, let him calm down.

Content

You may notice your pet kneading her front paws—sometimes on a soft blanket. An adult cat may also knead her paws on the

carpet, a sweater or your leg when she's pleased. This behavior harks back to when she was nursing as a newborn, so it's the ultimate sign of security and satisfaction.

Happy

An upright tail is a call for attention and shows your kitty is in a good mood. "When he wants to be acknowledged, he'll raise it to indicate his presence," says Johnson-Bennett. Rub his head or play with him.

Nervous

If she's apprehensive—say, at the vet's—your cat will tuck her limbs under her body, in the meatloaf position. "She's appearing as small as possible and protecting her stomach, the

most vulnerable body part," says Johnson-Bennett. She may also simply want to be left alone—so act like she's not even there.

Still have questions?

For more information on training, feeding and caring for your pets, visit familycircle.com/pets.

Cat Fight

25%

of cat owners admit that aggression is a frequent problem with their pet's behavior, according to a study from the University of Pennsylvania. A thumping tail, dilated pupils and pulled-back ears are common signs that a feline is irritated. If your cat constantly acts out, it could be because she's injured or sick, and you should take her to the vet.

- >> Catster.com Get the inside scoop on your kitty's behavior, chat with other feline fans and watch videos from the resident "Cat Lady."
- >> Icatcare.org International Cat Care is a charity devoted to keeping your pet—as well as cats across the globe—healthy and happy.
- >> Catsparella.com Everything you do—and don't—need to know about your frisky friend. We're talking kitty fashion, celebrity feline crafts and the latest news.