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Understanding Cat Body Language



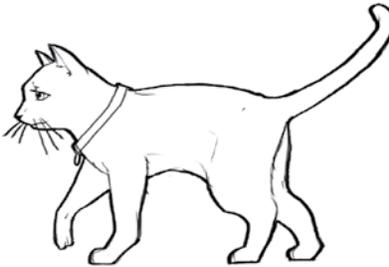
Cats primarily communicate how they are feeling through their body language. The way a cat holds its eyes, ears, body and tail can tell humans a lot about what the cat may be thinking. While interpretation of cat behavior can be difficult and can vary among individual cats and situations, the following information should help you better understand your cat.

Neutral



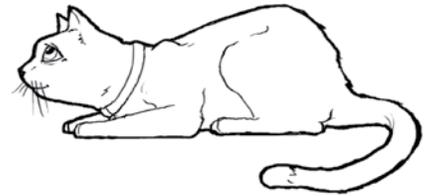
Eyes are soft and blinking. Pupils are small. Ears are up and relaxed. Head is up and body is relaxed. Tail is relaxed and may be swaying gently.

Alert or Curious



Eyes are staring forward. Ears are facing forward and alert. Head is up. Body is somewhat tense. Tail is up and tense. The cat is evaluating the situation.

Frisky or Playful



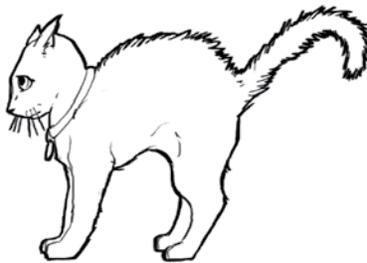
Eyes are hard and staring at what the cat is interested in. The pupils are wide open. Ears are forward and alert. Head is low and neck is tense. Body is tense. Tail is loose and may be twitching.

Annoyance



Eyes are hard and staring. Ears are turned out to the sides. Head is up and neck is tense. Body is tense and paws may be tense. Tail is tense and flicking and flopping.

Fear



Eyes are hard and pupils are very wide. Ears are plastered back. Head is up and pulled back. May be growling or hissing. Body is tense, back is arched and body fur is bristled. Tail is tense, curved and bristled. May be backing away in "fight or flight" response.

Aggression



Eyes are hard and pupils are wide. Ears are flat back against the head. Head is low and teeth are displayed. May be hissing or growling. Body is tense and turned to side. Back is arched and body fur is bristled. Tail is tense, curved and bristled. Claws are exposed and ready to swat.

For more information on pet behavior issues,
visit <http://www.americanhumane.org/behavior>