Stressed Cat: Anxious Cat Symptoms



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Even cute, adorable kittens can occasionally get stressed. If you notice any signs of stress or unusual behaviour in your kitten, speak to your vet - they'll give you good advice, and if necessary may refer your pet to an animal behaviourist for treatment.

However, it's worth remembering that certain behaviours - like scratching and scent-marking - might be perfectly normal from your kitten's point of view but not so acceptable from yours!

Cat Stress Symptoms

Anxious Behaviour

If your kitten crouches low to the ground, with a tense body and dilated pupils, she may be feeling anxious. If so, she may also pant, and lick herself more than usual.

Aggressive and Destructive Behaviour

If your usually placid and affectionate kitten starts to bite and scratch, she may be bored. Remember, she's a hunter at heart and if her natural instincts aren't given enough stimulation she'll look for it in places she shouldn't. She might also behave like this if she thinks her territory's being threatened.

Indoor Territory Marking

If there's been a change to your kitten’s normal routine, or if there’s a new cat in the home, you might find she starts spraying. Use a dilute disinfectant to remove the odour, and place a food bowl near where she’s sprayed. Above all, give your kitten lots of love and reassurance.

Indoor Soiling

If your kitten is otherwise healthy, indoor soiling could be a sign of stress. Cover the spot with tin foil or plastic to deter her, provide her with a clean litter tray and make sure she gets plenty of love and reassurance.

Nervous Grooming

If your kitten is feeling stressed, she might over-groom herself by continually licking and chewing one particular area of her coat. If she keeps doing this, it might lead to an uncomfortable skin condition, so it’s a good idea to speak to your vet for advice.

Chewing Wool

Yes, it’s true! Certain breeds of oriental cat - especially Siamese and Burmese - may obsessively chew wool. We don't understand exactly why they do this - they may be reverting to infant behaviour, or may even be a result of stress. If possible, try to discourage your kitten from doing this.

Causes of Stress in Cat

Just like humans, you little furry baby can become stressed too. And this stress usually manifests as behavioural changes such as litterbox avoidance or aggression. So, what causes stress in furry munchkins? Let’s find out!

1. **Moving house:**

   One of the biggest causes of stress in cats is moving residences. Unfamiliar and new place can make your little furry friend anxious. Be very judicious when moving homes to keep your fur kiddo stress free.

2. **Loud noises:**

   Most animals, including cats are scared of loud noises such as fire crackers and get really stressed.

3. **Vet visits:**

   Nobody likes to get pricked and probed, including your cat. Which is why vet visits can lead to a very anxious cat.

4. **New family member:**

   Felines are cautious animals and they don’t trust easily. Hence suddenly introducing a new member can be stressful for your fur baby. Take it slow and give them time to get

used to this new addition.

5. **A change in routine:**

   Are you starting a new job that would require you to stay away for long hours? Start acclimatising your fur baby slowly by leaving her alone for some time and increasing the duration gradually. Otherwise, your little munchkin will have a tough time adjusting.

6. **Being bullied:**

   Indeed, you precious furry can be stressed out if she is being bullied or picked on by another pet at your home or outside. Do watch out for such triggers and remove them to keep your cat happy and healthy.

Cat Stress Treatment

To alleviate stress in your furry love, you need to find the trigger first. The best treatment would be to solve the trigger like it is mentioned above in case your cat is being picked on by another pet. However, in some cases, such as when loud noises cause the stress, you can’t remove the trigger. What you can do instead is try the following tips:

1. **Use calming products:**

   There are certain products, namely calming collars, thundershirts, and pheromone diffusers, that can help soothe your anxious cat. Calming collars and diffusers both works much the same way. They give off pheromones that mimic the ones mother cats use to calm kittens. Hence your fur kiddo will hopefully calm down too. Thundershirts, on the other hand, are vests for felines that utilises gentle pressure to comfort furries. It is much like swaddling a human baby in blankets.

2. **Offer calming treats and food:**

   There are certain cat food and treats available that contain anti-stress ingredients including tryptophan and alpha-casozepine. The former induces sleepiness while the latter calms the nerves of an anxious cat.

3. **Playtime -**

   Playtime - There are nothing a little tender loving care and playtime wouldn’t cure. If all else fails, play with your furry munchkin to distract her. If they want to curl up near you, by all means, go ahead and cuddle with her to show her she is safe and protected. But don’t try to bring her out of her safe hiding place forcefully as that will only aggravate the anxiety levels in an already stressed cat.

When to see a veterinarian?

If you notice sudden changes in behaviour of your precious fur baby such as aggression in a normally friendly cat, overly clingy and not wanting to leave your side, litterbox avoidance, change in appetite or sleep patterns, and so on, which continues for long, it is time you see

a vet.

Furries will experience short-term stress like when there are thunder and lightening or when a stranger comes visiting. But they usually bounce back when the trigger is not there anymore. If you see your fur kid not recovering and continuing to show cat stress symptoms, do not wait any longer since just like physical ailments, your cat needs treatment for anxiety and stress too.

FAQ for Cat Stress

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1. **Why does my cat knead blankets?**

   Wondering why do cats knead blankets? They knead blanket as a habit from their kittenhood when they kneaded their mother's belly while nursing. It is a sign of contentment and relaxation. They also do it for nesting, i.e., preparing a place to sleep in just like humans fluff up their pillows.

2. **What is Cat making biscuits?**

   Cat making biscuits is when cats 'knead' on soft objects like a blanket or on their human's lap to show contentment, love and affection. They push one paw after another rhythmically, which resembles kneading dough and hence the behaviour is known as cat making biscuits.

3. **Is cat kneading a sign of affection?**

   While it might not be the most comfortable way for you but your cat is showing you love and affection by kneading on you. Also known as cat making biscuits since they way it resembles kneading dough, cats knead only when they are content and relaxed.

4. **What do cat tail flicks mean?**

   To know the language of the cat from the tail, observe the frequency of the flick or the cat tail positions. A rigid back and forth means the cat is focusing on something, most likely on prey. Flicking and thumping the tail indicates a high level of stress and agitation. An upright tail means your fur baby is asking for some love.

5. **Why does my cat hit me with her tail?**

   Sometimes it is difficult to know the language of the tailed cat. It can be a gesture of fondness, or excitement. It can also mean slight frustration. But mostly it is a positive sign.

6. **Why does my cat's tail move when I pet her?**

   If you are petting your cat, and in return, they move their tail slightly, it means they are feeling secure. Your cat feels safe in your presence, and if you wish, you may continue with your petting. In this way, you will know the cat language through the tail.

7. **Do cats wag their tails like dogs when they are happy?**

   Dogs generally wag their tails when they are happy, satisfied, or excited. However, for cats, the same does not apply. The trick to knowing is a thorough observation of its movement. The cat can thump its tail, swish it, etc., and each has a different message.

8. **What stresses out a cat?**

   Some of the most common causes of stress in cats are:
   Change in routines
   Home relocation
   New member in the family
   Loud noises
   Vet visits
   Getting bullied by other animals

9. **Do cats purr when they are stressed?**

   Indeed, they do, since purring is not just a way of communicating contentment, affection, and happiness, but it is also a self-soothing technique. So yes, a stressed kitten might also purr.

10. **Does petting a cat relieve stress?**

    While petting a cat will relieve your stress, the same cannot be said for your furry baby. Of course, if your fur kid wants to curl up to you when stressed, give her all the cuddles, but usually, a stressed cat would like to be left alone and hide in a safe place when stressed.

11. **What can I give my cat to reduce stress?**

    You can use stress relief products such as calming collars, pheromone diffusers, and thundershirts to calm your fur baby. Or you can also offer calming cat food and treats and use play as a distraction. If nothing works and the signs of stress in cats continues for long, take your furry to see a vet.

12. **Why does my cat rub against my legs when I walk?**

    If you are wondering why do cats rub against your legs, this article aims at explaining this behaviour. It is common for cats to rub against the legs of loved ones. Though it mostly signifies love and affection, it is a complex social interaction for cats. By

rubbing against the legs of their favourite humans, cats leave scent signals to claim possession and belongingness, as well as for greetings and identification. Therefore, the next time you wonder why the cat rubbing head on me, remember to shower it with all the love and affection.

13. **Can cats be trained not to scratch furniture?**

Cat clawing is one of the natural urges in cats, which not just helps in marking territory or sharpening claws, but for relieves stress and feeling good. If trained from a young age, cats can get accustomed to not scratching furniture.

14. **Why is my cat scratching the furniture?**

One of the primary reasons behind a cat scratching the furniture is to maintain and sharpen their claws. However, in addition, cats scratch furniture to condition paw muscles, relieve stress, stretch, as well as to mark territories and leave scent signals. Scent signals, combined with claw husks and scratches are strong visual cues for other cats.

15. **How can I get my cat to stop scratching the couch?**

If you want to avoid your cat clawing the couch, you can purchase a scratching post for them to use instead. Using a citrus spray is also effective as a cat repellent to keep them off furniture. In addition, you can also trim their claws to make sure they stop scratching couches. However, if your cat ventures outdoors, it is better to use homemade cat repellent sprays than to have them declawed.

16. **Why is my kitten meowing at night?**

Most cats are nocturnal in nature, meaning they are more active at night. Though most domestic cats grow acquainted with the timing followed by their owners, some cats show natural tendencies of being more active during the night. Kitten meowing is a common practice for cats of all ages. However, if your kitten meowing is particularly at night, it might mean your little furball is feeling bored, and wants to go out. Similarly, if your kitten keeps meowing at night, it might be distressed for some reason.

17. **Why do kittens chirrup?**

Chirrups, or chirping sounds are commonly made by cats and kittens alike. Mother cats often use chirping sounds or trills to gesture their kittens to follow her. By imitating the chirping kitten sound, your kitten might want you to accompany or follow it.

18. **Why is my kitten making weird noises?**

If your kitten keeps meowing or making weird kitten sounds like yowls for longer periods of time, it is usually indicative that your kitten is upset with something, or is experiencing distress and anxiety. You can help your kitten to calm down by gently holding it, stroking its head and under the chin, as well as by providing it with its favourite treats and toys.

19. **What do different kitten noises mean?**

    Kittens are social creatures which often use kitten sounds to interact with other cats, as well as their owners. Depending on the type of sound produced, its vocalization and tone, kittens can mean several things. Paying close attention to these noises can help you understand your kitten better and interpret what it is trying to communicate.

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