

How to Pat a Cat: What your cat would like you to know!

To a lot of cats we humans can be a pushy over bearing bunch.
Cats have 3 times more touch receptors in their skin than we do.
Cat body language can be very subtle so you have to observe carefully for small adjustments in whiskers, ears and tail, for them to be able to tell you they have had enough.

When cats touch each other, there are a series of polite social behaviours that occur before and during each touch.

If you take it for granted that your cat wants to be stroked all over all the time you may find yourself at the pointy end of a discussion very quickly!



So what should you do?

- Teach the cat that being touched is a good thing (hands are for helping). Use lots of yummy treats.
- Creating positive associations:
 - Smell - let the cat smell you! Use lavender!
 - If you make eye contact blink and look away (its polite)
 - Observe any changes of behaviour every second!
 - Touch from a distance ie use a soft paint brush, feathers
 - Use the back of your hand or soft cloth before attempting to pat with your palm
 - One, two strokes...re-assess! Give breaks

Also know:

- The amount of socialisation a kitten has with people between two and seven weeks will determine how well he will interact with people later in life
- Good experiences early in life are more likely to produce a friendly outgoing cat
- The amount of socialisation with other animals as a kitten will also influence how likely they are to accept other animals throughout their lives
- A happy cat will knead and then purr when being stroked by a human.
- Cats purr continuously as they inhale and exhale
- Purring usually shows contentment but can also indicate pain!
- Cats may reflexively open and close their claws when being stroked, use a cushion or a blanket to introduce a safety barrier if this occurs
- The more relaxed you are, the more the cat will relax - remember to breathe.

