

How to Interact with Cats Purroperly

The Alaska Humane Society
Adopt-a-Cat Shelter Guide



How to Understand Cat Body Language



Signs a Cat Shows Prior to Biting/Scratching and Purroactive Steps to Purrevent

Cats give plenty of warning signs before biting/scratching. The notion that the bite came out of nowhere is very rare. When interacting with shelter cats, the first important fact to remember is that this is not your purrsonal pet and there are signs to watch for to keep the cat and people safe.

Being purroactive is the best method to reduce bites or scratches:

1. Incorporating enrichment into a daily schedule will help keep their minds happy and healthy ([Enrichment Brochure](#))
2. Providing plenty of space so the cat doesn't feel threatened (this can be challenging in a kennel as some are kennel defensive, which is why we are implementing this training).
3. Spay/Neuter helps to reduce aggression in most cats as well.
4. Utilize [Feli-way](#) for stress reduction
5. Provide calming music such as the research-based program [I Calm Pet](#).

Warning Signs:

1. If the cat's body starts to tense and his/her tail begins to twitch or thump, you want to stop petting right away. This is being purroactive and can purrevent any scratching or biting, along with you building trust with him/her.
2. Ears back
3. Growling and hissing
4. Big eyes-dilated
5. Head-turning very quickly towards your hand/object
6. Do not under any circumstances pet a cat's belly in the shelter setting.



How Cats Use Their Ears to Communicate

Breezy and PURRleased



PURRceptive and vigilant



Agitated and Nervous



Frightened



Angry (In Attack Mode)



Content



The Cat Tell Tail Chart

Friendly



Unsure



Dismissive



**Friendly,
but unsure**



**Amicable, not
fearful or aggressive**



Defensive



Angry!



**Potentially
aggressive**



Scared



**Very happy
to see you!**



**Excited, angry,
or irritable**



Interested



Big No-No's

Those bellies looks meowty tempting,

BUT

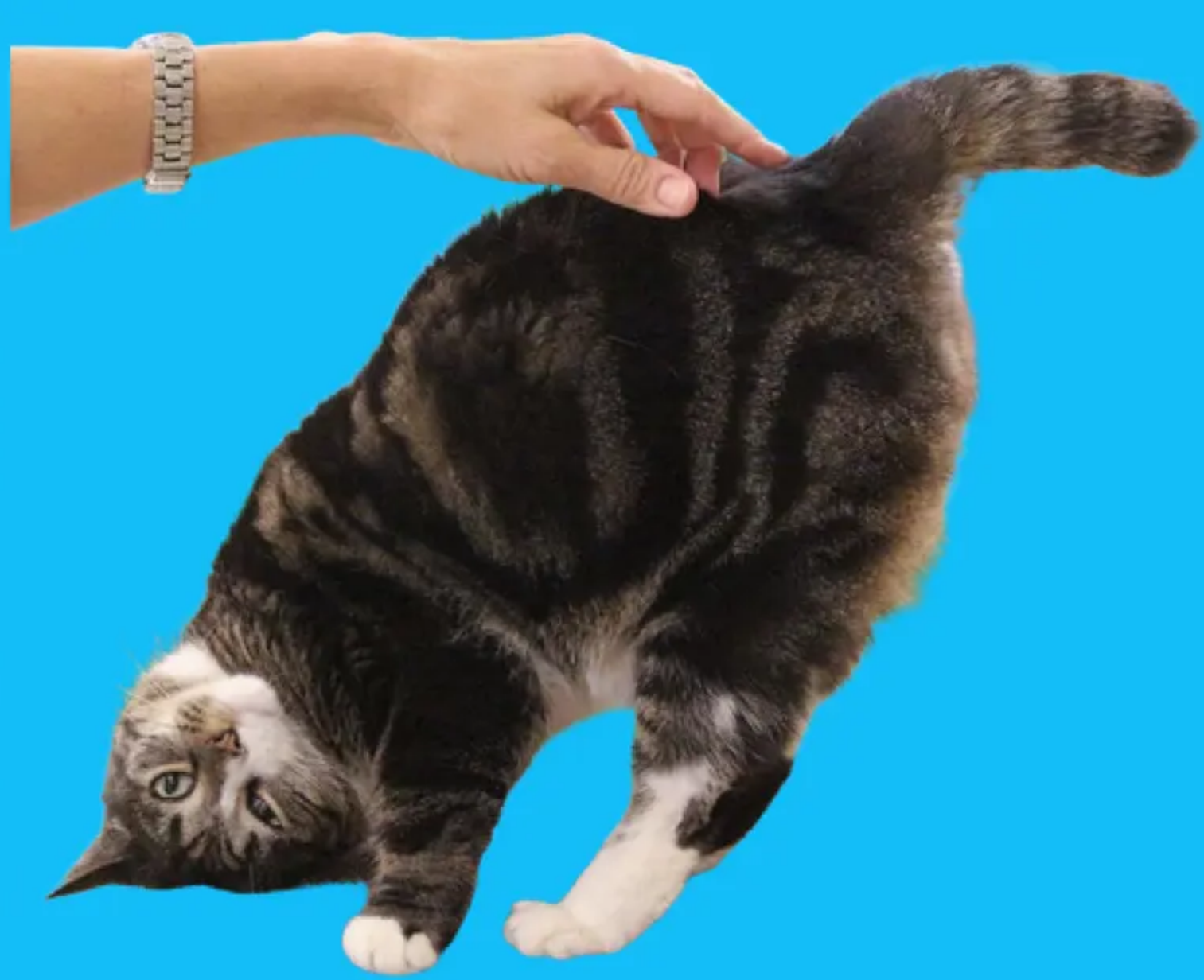
Never pet a shelter cat's belly!



No Belly Peps

PAW-
POWLS
PERR





Here are a few
examples
of
Pawsitive
Interactions



From the PURRerspective of our Alaska Humane Society Cats

You are entering the home of our cats, and they humbly request that you follow their house rules in order for everyone to have an enjoyable visit.

🐱 Some of us are shy or scared - please do not chase us or try to interact if we move away from you.

🐱 Not all of us like to be picked up, if we stiffen or try to get away - let us go.

🐱 Some of us have arthritis and we can get grouchy if you inadvertently hurt us.

🐱 Sometimes we get overstimulated, and if you don't give us time to calm ourselves we might lash out - please watch and respect our body language (and when a volunteer tells you to be cautious with us - please respect that).

🐱 If we are sleeping, please don't wake us up - nobody appreciates having their nap cut short.

🐱 Please don't disturb us if we are eating.

🐱 Most of us don't like our belly rubbed - be cautious and be prepared for us to say "No!" - even if we did lay on our backs.

🐱 No screaming, running or climbing on our furniture. Please use indoor voices and soft feet.

🐱 Parents, please watch your children and make sure they follow the rules as well.

🐱 We all have our moods - sometimes we just want to watch or we just want to be alone - please don't push us.

🐱 If there is a fight, DO NOT attempt to break it up, we will not understand and you could get hurt!

Thank you for respecting our needs!

🐱 We hope you enjoy your visit with us! 🐱



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