

## **Why does my cat...?**



### **Purring**

A purring cat is not necessarily a happy cat.

A cat in great pain, distress or even a female giving birth will purr. A little known fact is that friendly cats that are in pain will purr when approached by people; this suggests that cats purr to show that they are friendly and approachable, ready to be stroked or helped

### **Greeting**

Cats normally greet each other by rubbing faces.

When a cat greets you by standing on its hind legs, it is simply trying to reach your face. If you were to lower yourself so your face is within reach, your cat will rub their face with yours. This is only done to humans that the cat trusts.

### **Kneading**

Kneading is when a cat extends and retracts its claws, usually when it is resting on its owner's lap. This behaviour comes from kitten hood, kittens knead their mother while suckling to make the milk flow more freely.

Adult cats will do this when they feel safe and contented. They see their owners as surrogate mothers and, as pampered pets, will retain some kitten characteristics through their adult life.

If the cat dribbles or sucking of the owners clothes happens whilst kneading, the cat in question will probably have been taken from its mother too early and never had a chance to grow out of the behaviour naturally.

These behaviours are usually for life.

## **Eating Grass**

Eating grass often occurs when the cat needs to clean out its stomach by vomiting (maybe to get rid of fur balls!).

If your cat does not have access to grass, house plants or anything similar will be used by your cat.

Vomiting will occur soon after the cat has eaten grass. It has been said that cats eat grass to obtain "Colic Acid", something that cats need in minute quantities for its well-being. "Colic Acid" cannot be obtained from meat.

## **Scratching Furniture**

A cat needs to sharpen its claws by stripping off the old shell to reveal a new one.

Scratching at furniture is one way a cat will renew its claws. All indoor cats will do this if they have not been trained on how to use a scratching post from an early age. It is also a way for the cat to exercise its claws and paws, and for scent-marking (there are scent glands under its front paws).

Show your cat how to use a scratching post, start training as soon as possible, so they will be less likely to damage a piece of your furniture.

The secret is to show the cat what to do. Hold them near the post and scratch their claws on the surface. Putting Catnip in and around the scratching post will also help to encourage your cat to use it.

If you have more than one cat then you may find that the dominant cat will not use the scratching post and may need discouraging by using a spray bottle filled with water (use fresh water only). This has the advantage of keeping the owner remote from the cat and the scene of the crime.

## **Wagging Tail**

A wagging tail could mean the cat is angry or can mean that the cat is feeling indecisive – it wants to do two things at once and cannot make up its mind which action to take.

**Please remember that in Malta, as in many countries, there is no legal requirement to have undergone any training before you can call yourself an animal trainer or behaviourist. Ensure that before you accept and follow any advice from veterinary clinic staff, trainers and rescue charities, you check their experience and credentials. The M\$PCA has UK qualified behavioural and Registered Veterinary Nursing personnel on staff and the information in this document has been collated from other qualified professionals as well.**

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