

## SIGNS AND SIGNALS YOUR CAT IS IN PAIN

Cats often disguise when they are in pain and will put forth a valiant effort to appear well. Why do they do this? Simply because they don't want to appear sick, injured or vulnerable to potential predators. You are in the best position to identify the signs and signals that your cat is in pain or distress. The sooner their pain is diagnosed and treated, the sooner they can go on to enjoy their happy, comfortable life.

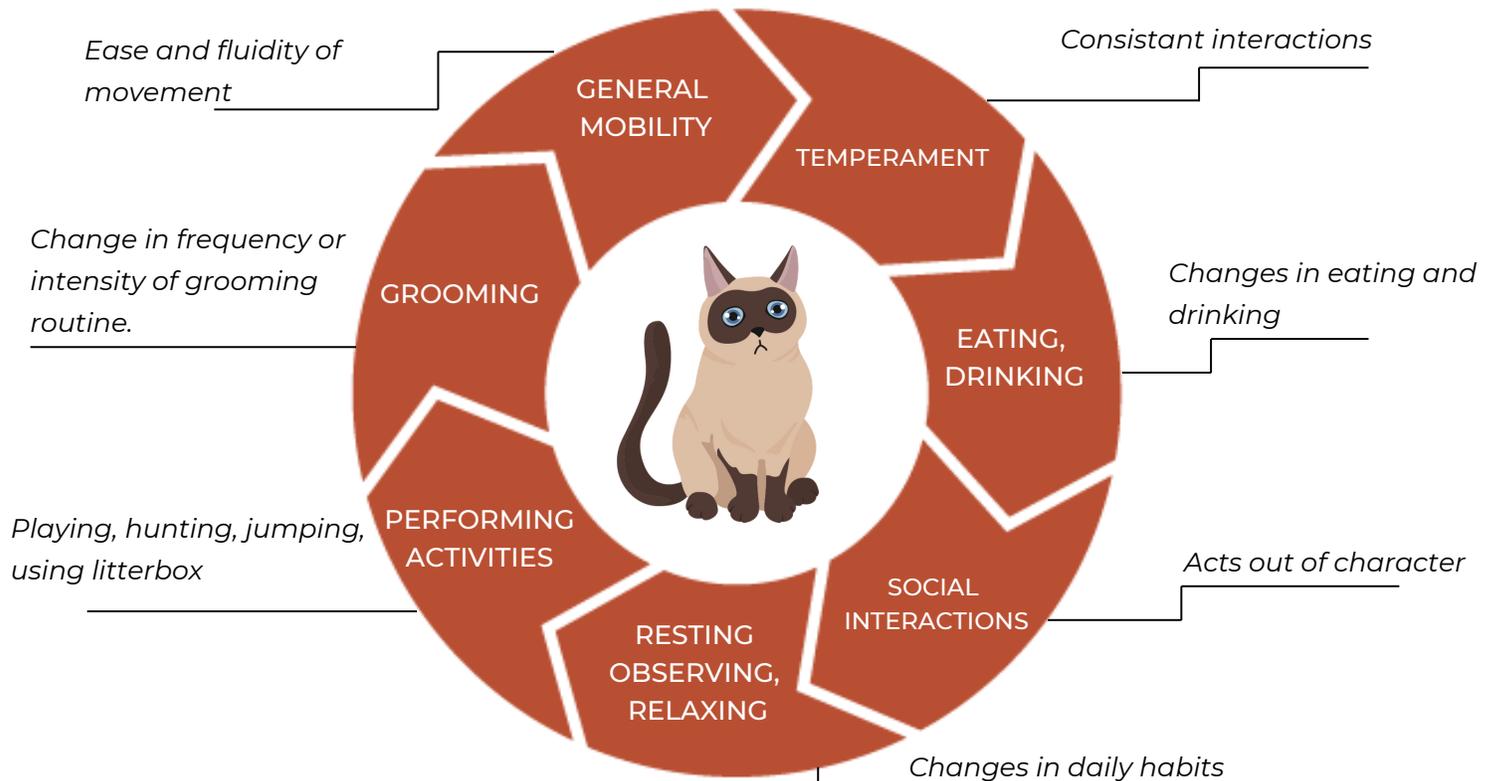
### BE A CATVOCATE!

Your cat is communicating with you all of the time. They use their body to show you when they're feeling comfortable and when they're feeling sore or unwell. This handout will teach you how to read the signs and signals that your cat is in pain and how to evaluate your cat's body language.

- Learn your cat's "normal" and pay attention to any changes. It can be helpful to keep a diary to track appetite, vomiting, bowl movements, etc.
- Know the signs and signals of pain.
- Advocate for your cat.
- Changes in your cats' daily habits should not always be attributed to aging. Age is not a disease, but as your cat ages they are more likely to be suffering from pain.

EVERY VET EXAM SHOULD INCLUDE 2-3 SHORT VIDEOS OF YOUR CAT ACTING "NORMAL"

WHEN EVALUATING WHETHER YOUR CAT IS IN PAIN, IT'S IMPORTANT TO ASSESS ALL BEHAVIORS



# SIGNS AND SIGNALS OF PAIN

## GENERAL MOBILITY

*Ease and fluidity of movement.*



**SELF PROTECTION:** Protects a part of their body or hesitant to put weight on a limb.

**POSTURE:** May try to curl up into a ball or sit hunched in a crouched position, with back curved higher than normal, head lowered, and front paws often folded underneath it. Legs often tucked underneath instead of stretching out on their side.

## TEMPERAMENT

*Consistent interactions*



**ACTION AND INTERACTION:** Any change in their daily activity should be discussed with your vet.

Consider, frequency and intensity of play, as well as any changes to how they greet and / or interact with you.

## EATING, DRINKING

*Changes in eating and drinking*



**APPETITE:** Decreased, picky or absent. Change in dietary preference. Change in rate of eating (slower, quicker). Decreased water intake.

**Body Language:** Paws at mouth, lip smacking, excessive swallowing, drooling, vocalizing while eating, yawning.

## GROOMING

*Change in frequency or intensity of grooming routine.*



**SELF TRAUMA:** Licking, biting or scratching at a specific spot.

**APPEARANCE:** Stops grooming and appears unkempt.

**OVER-GROOMING:** Frequent, intense grooming to a particular part of their body.

## RESTING, OBSERVING, RELAXING

*Changes in daily habits*



**REST BEHAVIOR:** Restless, difficulty getting up, sleeps more, hides and/or panting while resting

**FACIAL EXPRESSION:** Grimaces, furrowed brow, vacant stare, glazed, wide-eyed, enlarged pupils and/or flattened ears.

## PERFORMING ACTIVITIES

*Playing, hunting, jumping, using litterbox*



**LITTERBOX HABITS:** Urinates or defecates outside the litterbox; has difficulty getting in or out of the litterbox, unable to squat.

**AVOIDANCE:** Avoids jumping, or have difficulty jumping as high as they were previously able. Difficulty getting in and out of the litter box or positioning to urinate and defecate.

## SOCIAL INTERACTIONS

*Acts out of character*

**AGGRESSIVE:** Vocalizations like growling, hissing, biting, or pins ears back.

**INCREASED IRRITABILITY:** May begin to growl or hiss when other people or pets approach, uncomfortable being held, may resent being brushed or combed. They may bite or scratch when a person touches or moves the painful area, or even in anticipation of being touched.



**SIGNS AND SIGNALS OF PAIN IN CATS ARE NOT SUBTLE, WE JUST NEED TO LEARN HOW TO RECOGNIZE THEM**

