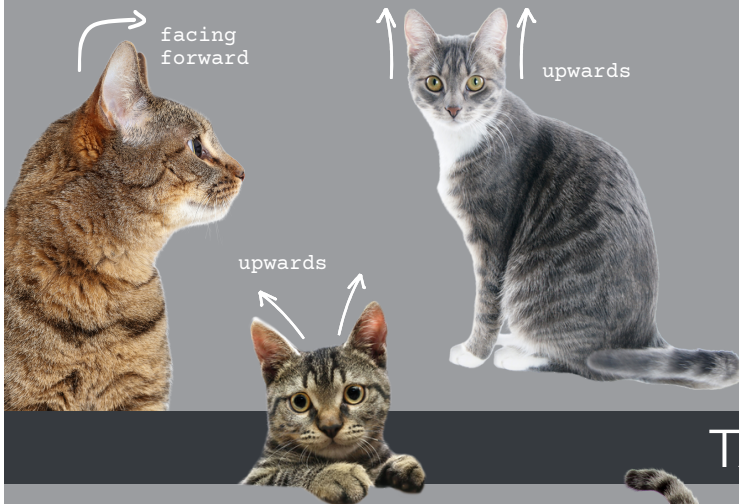


HAPPY

Upright and facing forward



EARS

Close to their head. One or both pointing and facing outwards, towards the side of their head, or facing back ("airplane ears")



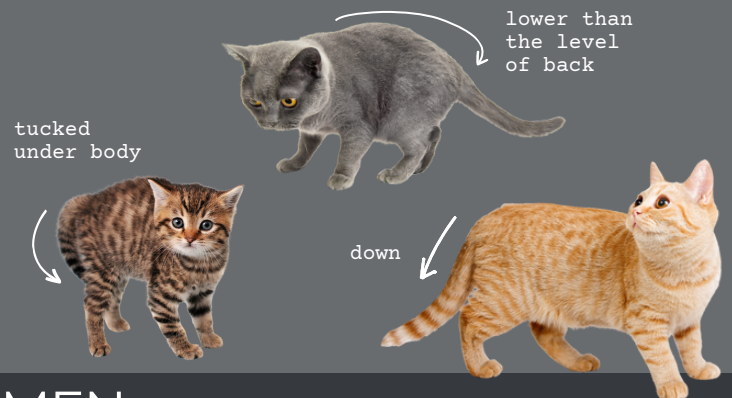
FEARFUL

Upwards, with the base higher than the level of their back or tail straight out behind them, in line with level of their back



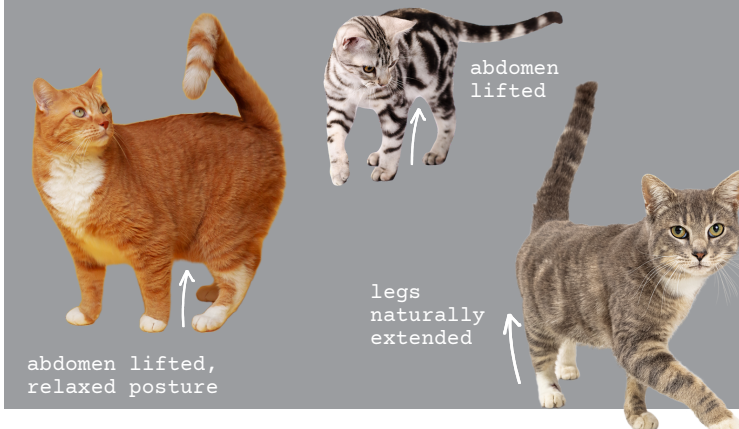
TAIL

Tail positioned down, lower than the level of their back, or tail tucked under their body or wrapped it around their hind legs

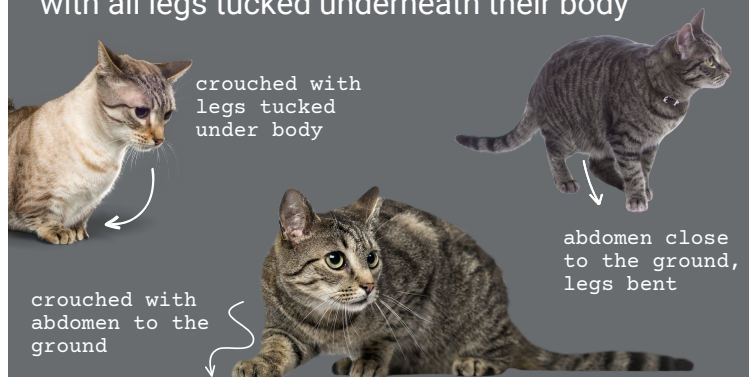


ABDOMEN

Hold their abdomen lifted from ground with their legs naturally extended with a relaxed posture

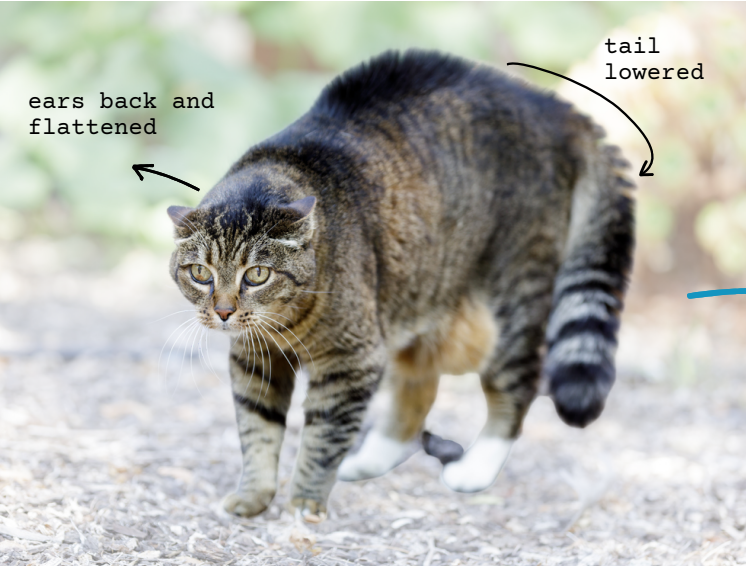


Abdomen close to the ground with all legs bent or crouched with abdomen directly to the ground, with all legs tucked underneath their body



DEFENSIVE AND AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOURS

- Hold a crouched and lowered body position
- Tuck their legs under their body
- Hold their tail lowered or tucked around their back end or hind legs, or swishes their tail rapidly
- Hold their ears back and flattened against their head (“airplane ears”)
- Dilate their pupils
- Suddenly start grooming themselves, lasting only a few seconds
- Arch their back and/or puff up their fur (piloerection; often seen just prior to overt aggression, like swatting)
- Bare their teeth
- Hiss, spit, and/or growl
- Swat their paw with or without claws drawn
- Lunge to bite



RESPONSE TO PETTING

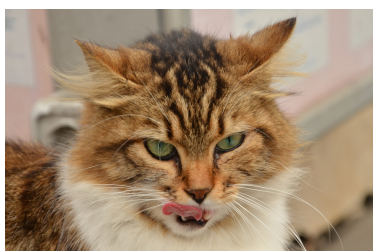
Positive	Mild negative	Moderate negative	Severe negative
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pushing their bodyweight into the hand stroking it• Slow, rhythmic purring• Gently closed eyes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Panting• Pacing• Whining, and growling without escalation to aggression• the cat will still take food	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cowering• Trembling• Salivation• Freezing• Snarling• Air snapping (biting without making contact)• Struggling during restraint	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Intense struggling during restraint• Attempts to escape• Urination• Defecation• Yowling or yelping,• Escalating aggression• Anal sac expression

UNDERSTANDING CAT BODY LANGUAGE AND BEHAVIOUR

STRESS IN CATS

PHYSIOLOGICAL SIGNS OF STRESS

- Panting
- Salivation
- Dilated pupils
- Sweaty paws
- Loss of bladder control
- Diarrhea
- Constipation
- Loss of appetite



BEHAVIOURAL SIGNS OF STRESS

- Increased vigilance
- Appearing tense, only able to relax for short periods
- Lowered head and body posture. The head may be positioned lower than the body
- Ears flattened sideways or backwards
- Tail held closely to the body
- Poor appetite or loss of interest in food/treats
- Withdrawing; not wanting to interact or play
- Continually or frequently attempting to hide or escape
- Indoor urine marking (spraying)



AnimalKind
BCSPCA Accredited