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Facts about cats

Sarah Lee - 2026-07-17 - [Comments \(0\)](#) - [Cats](#)

- A [house cat's genome](#) is [95.6 percent tiger](#), and they share many behaviors with their jungle ancestors, says [Layla Morgan Wilde](#), a cat behavior expert and the founder of Cat Wisdom 101. These behaviors include scent marking by scratching, prey play, prey stalking, pouncing, chinning, and urine marking.
- Cats are believed to be the only mammals who [don't taste sweetness](#).
- [Cats are nearsighted](#), but their peripheral vision and night vision are much better than that of humans.
- Cats are supposed to have 18 toes (five toes on each front paw; four toes on each back paw).
- [Cats can jump](#) up to six times their length.
- Cats' claws all curve downward, which means that [they can't climb down trees head-first](#). Instead, they have to back down the trunk.
- [Cats' collarbones](#) don't connect to their other bones, as these bones are buried in their shoulder muscles.
- Cats have 230 [bones](#), while humans only have 206.
- Cats have an [extra organ](#) that allows them to taste scents on the air, which is why your cat stares at you with her mouth open from time to time.
- Cats have [whiskers](#) on the backs of their front legs, as well.
- Cats have nearly twice the amount of [neurons in their cerebral cortex](#) as dogs.
- Cats have the [largest eyes relative to their head size](#) of any mammal.
- Cats make very little noise when they [walk around](#). The thick, soft pads on their paws allow them to sneak up on their prey — or you!
- [Cats' rough tongues](#) can lick a bone clean of any shred of meat.
- Cats use their [long tails to balance themselves](#) when they're jumping or walking along narrow ledges.
- Cats use their whiskers to ["feel" the world around them](#) in an effort to determine which small spaces they can fit into. A cat's whiskers are generally about the same width as its body. (This is why you should never, EVER cut their whiskers.)
- [Cats walk like camels and giraffes](#): They move both of their right feet first, then move both of their left feet. No other animals walk this way.

- [Male cats are more likely to be left-pawed](#), while female cats are more likely to be right-pawed.
- Though cats can notice the fast movements of their prey, it often seems to them that [slow-moving objects are actually stagnant](#).
- Some [cats are ambidextrous](#), but 40 percent are either left- or right-pawed.
- Some [cats can swim](#).
- There are cats who have more than 18 toes. These extra-digit felines are referred to as being "[polydactyl](#)."



Facts About Cat Health & Wellness

- A cat's average lifespan increased by a year over the span of time between 2002 and 2012, according to a study by [Banfield Pet Hospital](#).
- According to [The Huffington Post](#), cats typically sleep for 12 to 16 hours a day.
- Cats are [crepuscular](#), which means that they're most active at dawn and dusk.
- Cats are fastidious creatures about their "bathroom." If you have more than one cat, you should have [one litter box for each](#).
- Cats can spend up to a [third of their waking hours](#) grooming.
- Cats live longer when they [stay indoors](#).
- Cats' [purring may be a self-soothing behavior](#), since they make this noise when they're ill or distressed, as well as when they're happy.
- Cats will [refuse an unpalatable food](#) to the point of starvation.
- Despite popular belief, many cats are actually [lactose intolerant](#).
- Female cats have the ability to get pregnant when they are only [4 months old](#)!
- [Grapes and raisins](#), as well as [onions, garlic, and chives](#), are all extremely harmful foods for cats. Grapes and raisins can cause kidney failure — although the reasoning behind that isn't clear. Meanwhile, onions, garlic, and chives wreak havoc on your cat's gastrointestinal system and can cause anemia.

- If you [keep your cat active during the day](#), he will sleep better at night. If you're not free-feeding your cat, you can also help her get a good night's sleep by providing her with a [substantial evening meal](#).
- It's believed that [catnip produces an effect](#) similar to LSD or marijuana in cats. The effects of nepetalactone — the chemical in catnip that can makes cats crazy — [wears off within 15 minutes](#), and won't surface again for a few hours, even if your cat remains in sniffing distance.
- Kittens can be [spayed or neutered](#) when they are only eight weeks old. If possible, these procedures should be performed in the first 5 months of your cat's life.
- Male cats who have been fixed [need fewer calories](#) to maintain their weight.
- Spaying and neutering can extend a cat's life. The [Banfield Pet Hospital study](#) found that neutered males live an average of 62 percent longer than unneutered cats and spayed females live an average of 39 percent longer than unsplayed cats.
- Your cat's [grooming process](#) stimulates blood flow to his skin, regulates his body temperature and helps him relax.

Facts About Cat Communication Cues

- A [cat with a question-mark-shaped tail](#) is asking, "Want to play?"
- According to Wilde, a slow blink is a "kitty kiss." This movement shows contentment and trust.
- Cats have a [unique "vocabulary"](#) with their owner — each cat has a different set of vocalizations, purrs and behaviors.
- Cats have up to [100 different vocalizations](#) — dogs only have 10.
- [Cats find it threatening](#) when you make direct eye contact with them.
- [Cats mark you as their territory](#)
when they rub their faces and bodies against you, as they have scent glands in those areas.
- Cats may [yawn as a way to end a confrontation](#) with another animal. Think of it as their "talk to the hand" gesture.
- Hissing is defensive, not aggressive, says Wilde. "It's an expression of fear, stress or discomfort of a threatened cat communicating 'stay away,'" she says.
- If cats are fighting, the cat that's hissing is the more vulnerable one, says Wilde.
- If your cat approaches you with a straight, almost [vibrating tail](#), this means that she is extremely happy to see you.
- [Kneading](#) — which some people refer to as "making biscuits" — is a sign of contentment and happiness. Cats knead their mothers when they are nursing to stimulate the let-down of milk.
- Meowing is a behavior that cats developed [exclusively to communicate with people](#).
- When a cat flops over and exposes his belly, it's not always an invitation for a belly rub. A cat does this when he's relaxed and showing trust.

- When [cats hit you with retracted claws](#), they're playing, not attacking.
- When dogs wag their tails, they may be expressing happiness. But this isn't the case for cats! When your cat [wags her tail](#), it's her way of warning you that you are getting on her last nerve.
- When your [cat sticks his butt in your face](#), he is doing so as a gesture of friendship.
- Whiskers are also [good indicators of a cat's mood](#). When a cat is scared, he put his whiskers back. But when a cat is in hunting mode, he puts his whiskers forward.
- Your [cat drapes its tail](#) over another cat, your dog, or you as a symbol of friendship.

Facts About Quirky Cat Behaviors — And Why They Happen

- Cats are very [fussy about their water bowls](#); some prefer to ignore their bowls entirely in favor of drinking from the sink faucet.
- Cats groom other cats — and sometimes people — in a ritual called [alogrooming](#).
- Cats like to sleep on things that smell like their owners, such as their [pillows and dirty laundry](#) (ick!).
- Cats love to sleep in [laundry baskets](#), too, because they're basically hiding places with peep holes.
- Cats often [attack your ankles](#) when they're bored.
- Certain cats go crazy for foods you wouldn't expect, like [olives](#), potato chips, and the hops in beer.
- For some reason, cats really dislike [citrus scents](#).
- If you can't find your cat, you should [look in a box or a bag](#), as these are some of their favorite hiding spots!
- Male cats who try to get to a female in heat can show [very bizarre behavior](#) — for example, some have been known to slide down chimneys!
- Many cats like to lick their owner's [freshly washed hair](#).
- Some [cats love the smell of chlorine](#).
- Thieving behavior is not uncommon among cats. They will often grab objects like stuffed animals, feather dusters, and other things that [remind them of prey](#).