

**Why do cats wag their tails:  
Understanding cat tail language and  
other behaviours**

**Have you ever wondered what your cat's really thinking or what it means when your cat wags their tail?**

Learning to read the body language of a cat is a great way to understand your feline friend's feelings and improve your relationship with them!

## What is my cat “saying” with their tail?

- 🐾 Straight up tail - friendly and confident, happy to see you!
- 🐾 Question mark tail - a vertical tail with a softly curled tip shows the cat is happy and wanting to interact.
- 🐾 Tail tucked away down low - feeling unsure or unsafe, something is upsetting this cat.
- 🐾 Puffed up tail - like a fluffy pipe cleaner, this shows a startled or frightened cat.
- 🐾 Swishing tail from side to side - if rapidly flicking this can show frustration or excitement, if slowly swishing can be a sign of focus on something they are focused on, and maybe want to pounce on.

## Why is my cat making that noise?

- 🐾 Meow - often heard as a greeting on your return home, a request (e.g., for food or attention) or if incessant could mean they aren't well or are telling you they are frustrated or upset.
- 🐾 Purr - generally the sound of a happy, relaxed cat but can also be heard in cats trying to self-soothe if they are unwell or after a stressful event.
- 🐾 Hiss - keep away!
- 🐾 Growl - another warning to keep away!
- 🐾 Yowl - can be heard in cats that are very distressed or in pain, during cat fights, or when calling (if a female cat is in season or 'on heat')

## What else is my cat trying to tell me?

- 🐾 Kneading with front paws - this shows an affectionate and relaxed cat as they 'make biscuits' by a dough kneading type action on your lap or other soft surface.
- 🐾 Rolling over - this shows a cat trusts you as they expose their vulnerable belly toward you as a social greeting, but beware as it's not an invitation to pat them and many cats don't like tummy rubs.
- 🐾 Rubbing against you - this is a cat's way of marking you with their scent and showing that they like you.
- 🐾 Zoomies - cats may rapidly rush around the house after a period of rest or boredom, also commonly seen after a cat has successfully used the litter tray!
- 🐾 Ears pricked forwards shows interest, ears pinned back can indicate fear.

If you have any concerns about your cat's health or behaviour, seek advice from your vet.

And to ensure your pet can receive the care they need in case of accidental illness and injury, consider contacting [RSPCA Pet Insurance](#) for a free quote.

**RSPCA**   
Pet Insurance