

WHY DOES MY CAT SLEEP ON ME? AND IS THIS A GOOD SIGN?



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Cats are creatures of habit, but some of these habits are a little peculiar - especially when it comes to sleep. Although you may have purchased an adorable bed for your cat, they may still choose strange locations to sleep. And their favourite location is probably you.

If you're wondering why your cat sleeps on you, rest assured this is a good sign. Once your cat has bonded with you, they will want to sleep on your bed, next to you, or even pressed up against you. Cats may even sleep on your chest, your lap, or the best yet, on top of your head. In this article, we help cat owners understand their feline friend's sleeping behaviours, and the various reasons why cats sleep on us.

Understanding cats sleeping behaviour

While humans need a chunk of deep sleep to re-energise, cats have several restorative naps a day - infamously known as catnaps. During these naps, cats are still in a light sleep, even if they appear to be in a deep slumber. This is because cats are natural hunters, and when they sleep in the wild, it's important for them to still be aware of their surroundings in case a prey or predator shows up.

Your cat's sense of hearing and smell are heightened, so they are always on high alert and ready to attack or defend themselves at a moment's notice, if necessary. Therefore, it's important to make sure your cat is not disturbed whilst sleeping, which can usually be achieved by cats sleeping in your bed, or any place off the ground, to avoid children or other pets.

Some cats even adjust their sleep schedule to maximise the time they spend with their owners. In this case, cats will sleep when their owner is at work during the day, and then be ready to play when they're home.

Cats replenish their energy with cat naps throughout the day, so they can spend their nights hunting.

[Kittens need more sleep](#) than adult cats because they are growing and therefore their bodies require more rest. Kittens are also a lot more playful, so they will need more sleep to keep their energy levels up.

Reasons why your cat sleeps on you

If you have experience as a cat owner, you'll notice your cat has some strange sleeping habits. Often, [cats will knead](#) an area, whether it's your lap or a blanket, before settling down for a nap, as a soothing way to make themselves comfortable.

But you may be wondering why your cat sleeps on you, or more specifically on your chest, lap or even on top of your head. There are various reasons why your cat has chosen you as their ideal sleep location, rather than their fancy cat bed, and we look at these below.

Your cat has bonded with you

You'll know first-hand as a cat owner that cats aren't the stand-offish pets that they have been stereotyped to be. Cats are extremely affectionate once they have bonded with you, and [love cuddling](#). By sleeping pressed up against you, your cat is telling you they want to stay near you. This behaviour is similar to that of kittens, who often use each other as a pillow - known as pillowing. Your cat may even jump into your lap for a snooze, knowing it's the perfect position for you to pet them, which is another way for you both to bond.

Your cat feels safe

Like any person, you are more vulnerable and exposed when sleeping. By sleeping in bed with you, your cat is letting you know they feel safe with you. They are able to let their guard down and rest more peacefully, knowing you are there as their protection. Kittens always sleep near their cat mother, and in the wild cats will seek the safest place to rest between their hunting endeavours. At home, you are their safe space.

Cats like to feel warm

Cats are always curling up to sleep in the warmest spot they can find - whether they're sleeping in bed, in a sunny spot, on the windowsill, or near a radiator. Although it may feel strange, your cat may sleep on your head for this very same reason. Your head releases heat throughout the night, and is more stationary than other parts of your body as we toss and turn whilst we sleep. Your cat may even find comfort in the smell of your hair. By sleeping on your head, your cat also knows they can easily (and perhaps, annoyingly) tap your face to wake you up if they want food or attention.

Cats are territorial

Although we call ourselves cat owners, really our cats own us. Cats are very territorial creatures, and have scent glands which release pheromones to mark their scent. If your cat is sleeping on you, besides feeling safe and warm, they are also marking their scent on you. This is the same reason why your cat may press up against you, rubbing their body on yours. They are claiming their owners as part of their territory.

Cats are social sleepers

As mentioned, cats are social sleepers and enjoy sleeping next to their cat mother or siblings by pillowing. When this is not an option, your cat may sleep on you. If your cat is sleeping on your chest, they likely enjoy the rhythmic sound of your heart beating, as well as your breathing. Hearing these sounds will make your cat feel safe, and may remind them of their time in a litter.

Cats' hormones affect their sleeping

Although it may not be as much as dogs, a study conducted by Paul Zak (reported by [The Telegraph\(open in new tab\)](#) shows that a cat's oxytocin levels increased as much as 12% after playing with their owners. It's safe to assume that cat's oxytocin levels are higher when bonding with their pet parent, and what better way for them to bond than to sleep on you?

What about if your cat is sleeping near you or next to you?

Some cats may not sleep directly on you, but may sleep next to you or sleep on your bed. This does not mean your cat likes you less! If you're a restless sleeper and move around a lot in your sleep, your cat may not want to be disturbed. Your cat sleeping next to you indicates they still want to stay close to you, but may want a safe zone in order to not be hit by flailing arms or legs.

What are the advantages of cats sleeping on you

Your cat will feel warm, safe and loved when sleeping on you, next to you or on your bed. If you're away from home during the day, your cat sleeping on you is a great way for you both to bond and spend that extra time together. Petting and sleeping with your cat is also a way for you to destress from your day, as it releases oxytocin in humans too.

Why does my cat sleep on me FAQs

Do cats sleep on their favourite person?

If your cat sleeps on you, it's likely you're their favourite person - and usually because you care for them the most too. Your cat is showing love and gratitude by sleeping on your bed, and it's also their way of telling you they feel safe and comfortable in your company.

Why do cats like to sleep on their owner's head?

Some cats like to sleep on their owner's head because our heads release heat throughout the night, which keeps your cat cosy and warm. Your head is also more stationary than other parts of your body when you sleep, making it the ideal sleep location.

Why does my cat sleep on me and purr?

Your cat is sleeping on you and purring because they feel content in your company. Once cats have bonded with their owners, they will want to maximise time together and stay

close even when they sleep as it makes them feel safe and comfortable.

Cats are extremely affectionate pets (when they want to be) and cat owners will know this truth. If your cat is sleeping on you or near you, it's likely you are the person who looks after their daily needs, and by staying close cats are showing their love and gratitude. Cats are also trusting you to keep them safe, as they are most vulnerable whilst asleep. Sleeping together is a bonding experience, and there are many other great ways to [bond with your cat](#) and strengthen your relationship.

FAQs

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1. **Where do cats sleep?**

Cats feel safe at great vantage points within their home, which is why you may notice your cat climbing as high as they can to rest or sleep. It's helpful to place blankets or cat beds on secure shelving and windowsills for your cat to be more comfortable. Cats also adore sleeping in cave-like places, such as boxes or under blankets.

2. **When do cats sleep?**

On average, cats sleep 15 hours a day. This can range between 12-18 hours in a 24-hour period, and for kittens it can be as much as 18-20 hours a day. Cats are crepuscular animals, which means they are usually active between dusk and dawn due to their hunting behaviours. Cats mostly sleep during the day, although they can enjoy a nap at any time.

3. **Why do cats sleep so much?**

Cats sleep so much because sleep is restorative for them, and allows their body to repair and regulate. Although cats have been domesticated, they still have innate hunting behaviours which is why they will have short bursts of energy, followed by long periods of rest.

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