PERFECT FIT

Cats Cuddling: A Guide to Understanding your Cat’s Affections
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Cats Cuddling: A Guide to Understanding your Cat’s Affections

The warmth, the rhythmic purring: there’s something incredibly soothing about cuddling with a cat. For many cat owners and lovers, these close-contact moments are some of the most rewarding, comforting, and enjoyable parts of pet companionship. Research shows that cat cuddles are also associated with a number of proven health benefits, from reducing stress and lowering blood pressure to improving overall heart health. And it’s not just us humans who benefit from these snuggles. Cats also get a sense of security and reassurance through affectionate interactions with their human, strengthening the bond between pet and owner. Some breeds, like Ragdolls, Maine Coons, and Devon Rexes, are naturally more affectionate, but every cat has its own way of showing love, whether that’s curling up on your lap, asking for a gentle head scratch, or simply lounging nearby.

Cat cuddles: Understanding your cat's needs and limitations

Cats have different ways of showing people when they want a cuddle. Look out for signs

such as purring, kneading, soft head-butting, slow blinking, and rubbing against you. When you see any of these behaviours, respond by gently petting them or letting them settle beside you. Creating a warm, calm, and stress-free environment can also make them more receptive to affection. Understanding and respecting your cat's preferences is key to building trust and nurturing a deeper connection. Let them control the interaction, rather than forcing cuddles upon them. Like humans and all animals, cats need space too. They'll give signs when they feel uncomfortable, so keep an eye out for tail flicking, flattened ears, tense body language, or obvious attempts to move away.

Do cats like cuddles? The signs and signals

Some cats genuinely love cuddles, affection, and fuss, and you might never see any signs to suggest otherwise. If your cat approaches you while purring or slow-blinking, this points towards them being open to being petted. Particularly if their body language is relaxed, with an upright tail. But not all cats are like this. Others are more independent and perhaps show less signs of wanting to snuggle up. There are so many different reasons for this, including breed, age, and personality type. Ragdolls and Devon Rexes tend to be more affectionate, while some cats prefer to show love from a distance, if at all. To encourage cuddling in a less affectionate cat, start by respecting their space and letting them come to you. As time goes on, you might find that a bit of patience goes a long way, with positive reinforcement helping to build a bond with cats that aren't natural cuddlers.

Why some cats avoid cuddles

Do cats like cuddles? Sometimes, they don't. There can be a few reasons for this, including:

- Negative associations. Cats can link being cuddled with bad experiences such as vet or groomer visits.
- Past abuse. If a cat has been abused, they may likely never become comfortable with cuddling.
- Lack of early socialisation. If they haven't been socialised well as a kitten, they might see being cuddled as a threat.
- Preferences. Sometimes a cat prefers one person over another, it's nothing personal.

If this happens, give the cat space and let them come to you, never force the issue, make them feel comfortable, and hopefully you can enjoy cat cuddles in the future.

What are the most cuddly cat breeds?

If cat cuddling is at the top of your pet wishlist, you'll want to know which breed to go for. Cats that are naturally more affectionate than others tend to seek out human contact, love some lap time, and crave social interaction. Here are a few of the most cuddly cat breeds for you to consider:

Ragdoll

- Their temperament is gentle, docile, and affectionate.
- Known for their floppy nature, Ragdolls go limp in your arms when held. They love

being carried and will happily follow you around from room to room.
- They’re generally a good choice for families, first-time cat owners, and anyone who wants a laid-back furry friend.

Maine Coon

- By nature, Maine Coon’s are friendly, intelligent, and affectionate without being overly demanding.
- Even though they’re a large breed, they love to sit on their owner’s laps and snuggle up.
- If you want a highly social pet who naturally wants to give and receive affection, a Maine Coon could be the perfect match.

Burmese

- Burmese cats are generally outgoing, and have playful and affectionate characters.
- They are very loyal and seek out attention, whether that’s being held and curling up next to their owners for some strokes.
- Owners who want an interactive, loving cat won’t be disappointed with a Burmese.

Devon Rex

- Although a little mischievous, Devon Rex are playful and affectionate in nature.
- Devon Rexes have gorgeous short and wavy coats, making cuddles extra soft and snuggly. They’re very dog-like, often actively seeking out cuddles and contact from their humans.
- You’ll love this breed if you’re happy with an energetic cat that needs regular playtime and cuddles.

Siamese

- Siamese cats are quite vocal, social, and loving towards and around humans.
- This breed forms strong attachments to their owners and enjoys physical affection.
- These cats are a match made in heaven for people who want a talkative, affectionate, and people-oriented pet.

British Short Hair

- British short hair cats are gentle, intelligent, and easygoing. They generally dislike being carried.
- They have a short, thick and plush coat which is often a charcoal colour with blue undertones.
- They are well-suited to people who are busty and don’t enjoy cuddling frequently. This is because British short hair cats are very independent.

Cuddling a cat: Techniques for a happy cuddle cat

Whatever the setting or situation, cuddling a cat should always be an enjoyable experience for both you and your pet. It’s always best practice to let your cat initiate any potential contact, while you keep an eye (or ear) out for signs like purring and nuzzling. If they start to climb into your space or onto your lap, then that's a great sign that they’re open to receiving some affection. If it gets to the point where you’re able to hold them, make sure you’re supporting their body correctly, keeping your movements slow and steady. Try giving a few gentle strokes on the head, under the chin, and along the back. Got a cat that

doesn’t want to cuddle as often as you’d like them to? Begin with some very short, positive interactions as you offer them their favourite treats with some gentle strokes, or a warm blanket to relax on. Never force cuddles onto your cat, as it can make them very stressed, and then they’ll be even less likely to want them in the future.

Cats cuddling: The benefits of cuddle time

Studies show that cuddling a cat has genuine psychological and physical benefits for pets and their owners. It can help release oxytocin (also known as the love hormone), which promotes relaxation and trust for the cat. For humans, time spent cuddling a cat has been linked to lower blood pressure, reduced anxiety, and a decrease in loneliness. Regularly interacting with your pets can increase levels of serotonin and dopamine, helping to improve well-being. The sound of a cat’s purr has even been found to have a therapeutic effect on humans.

The ultimate guide to cat cuddles

Cats cuddling up to their human plays a crucial role in supporting your cat’s well-being. Affectionate interactions can help reduce stress and build trust between you and your beloved pet. Got a shy cat? Try following the below steps to encourage some closer contact:

Let your cat take the lead

If you want to get cats cuddling you, you need to let them take the lead. Ensuring that you have consent to cuddle a cat is key, if you hold out your hand, and they lean in then you can get cuddling. No response? Try again later. Maintaining consistency and routine is another key to getting cat cuddles. Cats feel safe when you’re consistent with their feeding times and play times. Being gentle is another factor of respecting a cat's boundaries. You could initiate a game by gently rolling a ping pong ball towards them and always remember that, unlike some dogs, cats don’t like rough play.

Use treats and positive reinforcement

Even the most affectionate cat will likely seem aloof when they first meet you. This is a perfect opportunity to use treats and positive reinforcement to help them become comfortable around you. It’s all about helping them to associate you with good things, for example if you want a cat to touch your hand, you can start out by rewarding them with treats, simply when they come over to investigate you, rewarding them next time they come a little closer, and keep progressing from there until you’re cuddling on a regular basis.

Learn your cat’s petting preferences

We know that cats like cuddles, but it’s even better to figure out *how* cats like cuddles. You can recognise by observing their body language clues whilst you’re stroking or cuddling them, such as:

- Slow blinking, which is an important sign of trust

- Arching their back into your hand
- Purring, this is a sign of a very content cat
- ‘Kneading’, this is when they push their paws into a soft surface as if they were kneading dough
- Head butting your hand, face, or body
- Placing a paw on your face, head or body

Create a cosy, calm environment

Have a look at the areas in your house that a cat enjoys spending time in, and try to replicate that across the rest of your house if possible. You’re more likely to cuddle a cat if they feel comfortable in their environment. Some easy things you could do are:

- Make areas warmer, because cats love warmer temperatures.
- Give it something to do, a climbing perch in one of your rooms for example is a good starting point.
- Keep the noise consistent, it doesn’t have to resemble a library, but try to avoid making things super loud or random loud noises.

Is it good to cuddle with your cat?

Yes, it’s good to cuddle with your cat, but only if they are enjoying it. Cuddling encourages the release of feel-good chemicals, like serotonin and oxytocin, so you’re likely to feel more relaxed, less stressed, and closer to your pet. If your cat resists being touched, picked up, or cuddled, chances are you’ll know about it. Their tail will begin to flick sharply, their ears will go flat, and they’re likely to start squirming, hissing, making a deep grumbling / growling type sound, or even scratching. Avoid damaging their trust, but gently and slowly introducing affectionate interactions. There are also many other ways to bond with your furry companion, like playing with toys or grooming them.

Patrick the cuddle cat: A story from the Perfect Fit Team

Patrick has always been a very affectionate cat - from the day we brought him home as a kitten, he always enjoyed our company and lots of fuss. This hasn’t changed in adulthood and we still have lots of cuddle time with him, whether it be first thing in the morning (usually when I’m trying to get out of the door for work) or in the evening when we’re winding down. Patrick has always been a cat who kneads - he pads something soft intently whilst purring loudly. This behaviour is always the first thing he does before he settles down for a cuddle. It always seems to have been triggered by a soft, textured material - whether it is his favourite blanket (we have lots of these all over the house) or one of my big fluffy scarves, he seems to revel in kneading it whilst holding it in his mouth. This behaviour is associated with feelings of being content and is reminiscent of times as a kitten spent with the nursing mother. This is normal to carry on into adulthood and is an adorable way that Patrick shows his affection.

Once Patrick has finished his kneading session (this usually only lasts a couple of minutes),

he'll settle down on my lap for a nap. Patrick is an independent cat, however when we're home, he spends a lot of his time with us - often sleeping on my lap or next to me on the sofa. Even when I'm cooking, he'll nap next to me on the sofa in the kitchen. Being a Bengal mix, Patrick has a lot of energy to burn and spends the time he isn't sleeping being very active. If he is in his 'playtime' mode, he is very unlikely to want to cuddle or show us any affection - no matter how hard we try! If he gets picked up for a cuddle, he'll promptly meow to tell you to put him down, as he just wants to play. He is very strong-willed, so if he really doesn't want a cuddle, he's definitely not afraid to tell you!

If on the off chance you pick him up, and he is feeling affectionate, he might let you put him on his back and maybe even stroke his belly!

These behaviours are great to see in Patrick, and we feel we are always developing our common communication methods with him. He communicates to us how happy and content he is through a combination of body language and vocalisations which show he trusts us and wants affection.

Cats cuddling - FAQs

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1. **Do cats love you if they cuddle?**

   It depends a lot on the individual cat. Some cat breeds prefer to cuddle more than others, such as Maine Coons. But, similar to how people show affection in different ways, cats do too. Just because they're less physically affectionate doesn't mean that they don't love you. They might bring you 'gifts' such as dead animals, purr when you're around and sleep near you.

2. **Are cuddly cats rare?**

   No, cuddly cats are not rare at all. However, the degree of 'cuddliness' can vary depending on a range of factors, including:

   - The cat's individual personality
   - The breed
   - Their previous life experience
   - Their home environment
   - Your emotional state when attempting to cuddle a cat

3. **Is it normal for cats to cuddle together?**

   Yes, it's normal for cats that are bonded or related to cuddle together for:

   - Warmth, as it helps them conserve energy,
   - Bonding with other cats, particularly family members

- Comfort, as it helps them feel secure in stressful situations

Seeing cats cuddling is always a good thing, so if you notice it, you’re likely doing a good job as a pet owner. However, not all cats are bonded companions and despite living in the same household, some unrelated cats may never cuddle up and this is also normal.

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