PERFECT FIT

DO CATS GET COLD?



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Cats are known and loved for their distinctive fur coats, which come in a multitude of unique textures, colours, and lengths. They are also famous for finding the warmest, cosiest place to snuggle up in! Despite most cats being well-covered, heat-seeking animals, do cats get cold like us during the winter months?

When do cats start to feel the cold? In colder climates or during wintertime, 7°C and below is deemed cold weather for cats. This depends on their breed, age, health and unique coat type. Certain breeds are much more adaptable to colder climates, for example, the mythical-looking Norwegian forest cat can tolerate colder temperatures due to their thick double coats which can even repel water.

It is also important to note that age is a key factor in determining how cold cats feel. Generally, kittens and senior cats are more susceptible to colder weather. As a guide for kittens and senior cats, we advise that they may start feeling the chill at 10°C, so make sure you take note of that and keep them warmer in the autumn and winter, colder months.

Keeping cats warm

Do cats get cold inside? Cats are attuned to the needs of their body and will seek warmth when they are cold. Most cat owners will have noticed their pet's heat-seeking tendencies, and will always find the sunny spot! Sometimes they seek out our heat in bed or they want to sit on our laptops and gadgets. A heat source is a heat source and despite their coats, they will almost always prioritise warmth, even when they're inside. Therefore it is important to ensure warm, safe and dry spaces are always available for your cat, away from loud noises or busy parts of your home.

Here are our top tips for keeping your cat cosy during those winter months when the

temperatures start to plummet.

1. Warm blanket: always provide a clean, warm blanket for your pets during the colder months.
2. A bed with some kind of cushioning or insulation: soft hooded cat beds, fur-lined beds, cardboard boxes, warm blankets and nooks around your house are key.
3. Allowing them to cuddle with you/sit on your lap: once the nights start to draw in you might notice your cat wants to cuddle with you even more often, so you can keep each other warm.
4. Playing with your cat to keep them active: keeping your pet active is another great way to help them retain heat.
5. Keeping them dry if they have been outside: some cats have thick coats that can repel water but generally, they don't enjoy getting soaked in the rain. Make sure to keep them inside during a storm and dry them off if they return home drenched.
6. Heated bed: this can be self-warming, or a radiator bed, although pet owners must ensure these are pet-rated and are checked regularly to ensure no exposed elements are present that may risk burns.
7. Nutrition: ensure your cat is eating well and getting all the nutrients they need through a complete and balanced food, tailored to their specific life stage and lifestyle.

Keeping outdoor cats warm

Do outdoor cats get cold? Some cats prefer the outdoors, but we advise that you aim to keep them indoors if the temperature drops below 0°C. We know this sometimes isn't possible, so here are some extra tips to stop cats from feeling the cold. For some older cats or kittens, you may have to be more selective about when or how often to let them outside to prevent them from getting cold.

1. Make sure they have free access to come back indoors whenever they need to.
2. Ensure they have fresh water indoors as cold weather can dehydrate them.
3. Ensure frozen bodies of water are covered and products like antifreeze are not within reach as these pose risks to cats.
4. Make sure you dry them off thoroughly with a towel if they have gotten wet outside.
5. If you have a cat flap, ensure that it is open with no obstructions during the day and closed at night. Remember: whenever a cat doesn't have access to the outdoors, a litter tray must be available.

Signs that your cat is cold

Cats are independent creatures and can generally warm themselves up as long as they are fit and healthy. Here are some physical and behavioural signs which let you know your cat feels cold.

1. Sleeping on direct heat sources: have you ever noticed your cat sleeping on a specific area of your floor or trying to sleep on your laptop? That's because your cat feels cold.
2. Curling into a ball: cats will often curl up into a ball to keep warm on colder days.
3. More cuddly than usual: cats will be more keen to cuddle when they feel cold.
4. Shivering: cats also shiver when they're cold. This may be a sign of more severe cold and should be monitored closely although it is more common in kittens.
5. Stiffness: older cats may experience stiffness in arthritic joints on cold days.

6. Hiding under blankets or tight spaces: cats also hide away in cosy spots to warm up.
7. Check their ears, paws and tail for uncharacteristic signs of cold, too.

If your cat is regularly cold it can cause problems with their health. Fur, in general, can be deceptive and it's important to check for weight loss in winter months as cats may need more food to keep them warm. Weight loss in cats could be a sign they're suffering from the cold, as they need more calories to fuel their body to maintain body temperature.

Being cold to the touch, weakness, dead skin, discolouration, pain when touching the skin and cold noses and paws could be signs of hypothermia and a vet should be consulted immediately.

Do cats shiver when they are cold

Yes, cats shiver when they are cold, however, there can be other causes including fear, pain, illness, shock, toxicity or poison, so it is important to identify the correct root cause. Prolonged shivering or shaking could also be a sign of hypothermia - if the behaviour continues it is always advisable to consult a vet.

If the symptoms are not serious but you notice a pattern of reactions to the cold that seem out of character try to encourage your cat to play indoors more or take them to your vet for a checkup.

Conclusion: Do cats feel the cold?

So, do cats feel the cold like we do? In many ways, yes! We have clothes and cats have their warm furry coats but once the temperature dips below 10°C - 7°C we all start to feel it more intensely. How intensely depends on their breed, health, age and unique coat type. Certain breeds are much more adaptable to colder climates, such as the Norwegian forest cat and the Maine Coon. Cats are intuitive creatures and can generally warm themselves up well but it's always a good idea to provide some warm areas inside and outside the home to keep them extra comfortable as preparation for winter is key. You should also be vigilant of signs of hypothermia during the winter months especially when the temperature drops below 0°C.

FAQs

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1. **Should I worry about my cat getting cold?**

   In most cases your cat will be just fine in the cold, however, it is always good to be educated about how colder weather affects cats and be wary of your cat's risk factors, such as their coat length, health or age. Certain breeds with extra lustrous coats cope better in colder temperatures, especially long-haired breeds. Senior cats and kittens need more help regulating a good body temperature in the winter.

2. **Do Cats get cold easily inside?**

   Cats get cold indoors during the winter months, even when they're curled up sleeping, so it is important to keep this in mind and provide some cosy areas inside your home for them to warm up in. Different breeds react differently, usually depending on their coat length. Unsurprisingly, longhaired breeds like the Norwegian forest cat are much better at withstanding the cold than short-haired breeds such as the sphinx.

3. **How do I know if my cat is too cold?**

   There are physical and behavioural signs which let you know your cat feels cold. Including: sleeping on direct heat sources, curling into a ball, being more cuddly than usual and hiding under blankets. Cats also shiver when they’re cold and may also become stiff. Remember to check their ears, paws and tail too.

   7°C is when most cats will start feeling cold, depending on breed and age, make sure to check the temperature indoors and always look for other behavioural changes to see if they are doing anything unusual during the colder months.

4. **Should I keep my cat warm if they have a cold?**

   Do cats get cold when they are sick? You should always aim to keep your cat warm during the winter, especially if they have a cold. Make sure to keep an eye on their symptoms in case they worsen, annual vaccinations can lower your pet’s chances of catching the flu. Looking for more advice about how to determine when your cat has an illness and how to care for them? Check out our health blog which details everything you need to know about the health and happiness of your cat for more expert advice!

5. **Do cats feel cold at night?**

   Yes, despite their lovely furry coats, cats get cold during the night, and just like us, their body temperature can naturally drop when they relax and sleep. 7°C is when most cats will start feeling cold, depending on breed and age. Make sure to check the temperature indoors and outdoors. Try to keep your pet indoors if temperatures drop suddenly and make sure they can get back indoors easily if they venture outside. Add some warm blankets and duvets inside for your pet to enjoy during the colder nights.

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