

MEOW – MIX (IT UP)

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FELINE BODY LANGUAGE

- **Body Language cues**

- **Eyes**
 - Alert
 - Not dilated
- **Ears**
 - Forward
 - Up
- **Tail**
 - Unknown
- **Mouth**
 - Closed
- **Body**
 - Soft/Relaxed
 - Facing us
 - Lying down



FELINE BODY LANGUAGE

- Relaxed or curious body language:
 - Cat returns your blink
 - Whiskers forward
 - Both ears up & forward
 - Smelling
 - Tucks front paws under body
 - Lying down or sitting in a relaxed posture
 - Grooming
 - Purring
 - Kneading
 - Soliciting attention
 - Rubbing head against hand or object
 - Rubbing against the cage

FELINE BODY LANGUAGE

■ Undecided or nervous body language:

- One ear up and one back
- Licking lips
- Ears up with stiff body
- Hissing
- Looking away
- Lying firmly against the back of the cage

■ Scared or fearful body language:

- Wide-eyed stare
- Ears down
- Whiskers back
- Hissing
- Growling
- Biting
- Holding a front paw up
- Standing with weight on one front paw
- Striking
- Lying down with head low, head and body stiff

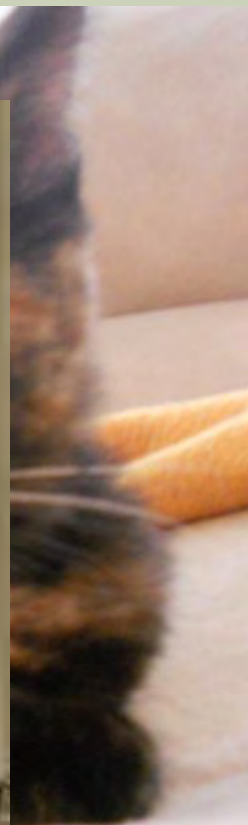
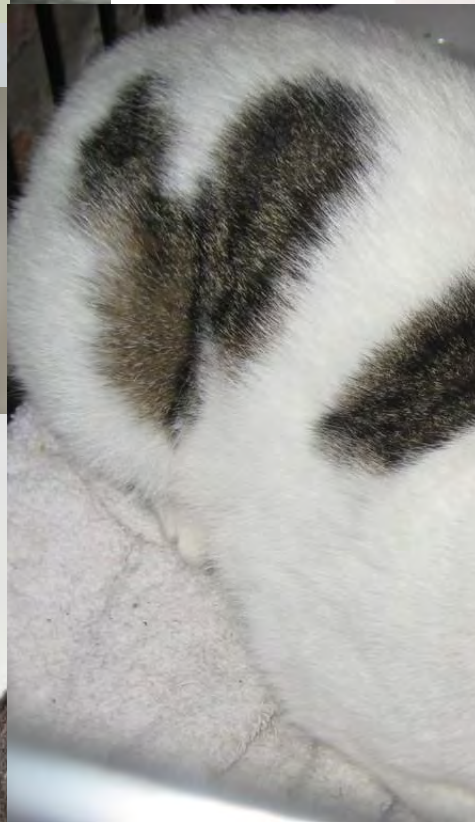
OVERSTIMULATION/PLAY AGGRESSION



OVERSTIMULATION/PLAY AGGRESSION

- Use toys (feather toys, string, etc.) NOT hands to play. Encourage adopters to do the same, an overstimulated kitten is cute but an overstimulated adult cat is DANGEROUS.
- Once a cat reaches a state of being overstimulated, the best thing you can do for it is to leave it alone, COMPLETELY. Cats do not 'reset' quickly, and this behavior is highly likely to escalate if interaction continues. Bites and painful scratches are common when a cat is overstimulated, do whatever you can to avoid this.
- Less is more!
- If a cat seems sensitive to touch in a particular area, do your best to avoid touching that area, make notes for volunteers that come after you.

GO OR NO GO?



INTRODUCING YOURSELF TO THE CAT

- Talk to the cat in a soothing voice while you are working with him.
- Use the cat's name often and let him know what you are going to do.
- Reassure the cat that it's going to be OK.
- When you open the kennel door, sit or stand in front of it, let the cat get comfortable with your presence.
- Put your hand in the kennel slowly, allow the cat to smell your hand before picking him up, or petting him.
- Don't stare at the cat, cats consider direct eye contact threatening.

- When in doubt, DON'T do it.

QUESTIONS?

Resources:

Staff, Me

www.sfspca.org

www.messybeast.com

www.littlebigcat.com