

## Reading Cat Body Language

Learn to read body language is important so that you know the emotional state of the cat you are handling.

Cats are a predatory/prey species and as such have a heightened flight-or-fight response. This means that if they cannot get away from the scary thing, they will do what they need to do to get the scary thing to get away from them. This fight response leads to aggressive behavior.

### Body Language

#### Ears:

Flattened back = fear

Rotated side-ways = angry

#### Whiskers:

Pointed forward and fanned out = alert

Flattened against face = fear

#### Eyes:

Dilated pupils = fear

Constricted pupils = anger

#### Tail:

High flagged tail = friendly greeting Between legs = fear

Puffed out = fear or anger

End twitching = interest

Tail swishing = irritated

Violently swishing = anger

#### Vocalizations

Meow - request - directed to humans

Purr - content, anxious, or sick

Chattering - predatory arousal

Growl, hiss, spit - annoyed, frightened, angry

Howl, yowl - females in heat, males fighting, distress