

Cat Body Language Decoder

Your cat is talking all day — mostly with tail, ears, and eyes. Here is the translation, in plain English.

Read the whole cat, not one body part — signals change meaning with context. When signals conflict, trust the tense ones.

You see this	It usually means	What to do
Tail straight up, slight curve at tip	"I'm happy and I like you."	Say hello, offer a hand to sniff, then pet if they lean in.
Slow blink	Trust and calm — the famous "cat kiss."	Slow-blink back. It genuinely lowers the tension.
Belly on display	Relaxed and trusting — NOT an open invitation to rub the belly.	Admire from a distance; try a cheek or chin scratch instead.
Ears flattened ("airplane ears")	Irritated, scared, or overstimulated.	Stop what you are doing. Give space and an exit route.
Tail lashing side to side	Arousal is building — play is turning into too much.	Pause petting. Redirect to a wand toy.
Puffed-up tail, arched back	Frightened and trying to look big.	Do not reach in. Let them leave and settle on their own.
Dilated (huge) pupils	Excited play mode — or fear/pain in a quiet setting.	In play: toss a toy. At rest: check context, consider a vet call.
Kneading ("making biscuits")	Contentment, a kitten comfort behavior kept for life.	Enjoy it — a blanket saves your lap from happy claws.
Chattering at birds through the window	Frustrated hunting excitement.	Normal! Follow with a play session to "finish the hunt."
Hiding suddenly, eating less	The quiet alarm bell — cats hide pain and illness.	If it lasts over 24 hours, book the vet. Do not wait it out.
Rubbing cheeks on you/furniture	Marking you as safe, familiar "family" territory.	Take it as the compliment it is.

You see this	It usually means	What to do
The 3 a.m. zoomies	Stored-up energy with nowhere to go.	10 minutes of play + a small meal before YOUR bedtime fixes most cases.

Three golden rules

- ✓ **Petting consent test:** pet 2–3 strokes, then stop and wait. A cat that wants more leans in or nudges you; one that is done simply... does nothing.
- ✓ **Never punish a fear signal.** Hissing, hiding and swatting are information, not attitude. Punishing them only adds fear.
- ✓ **Changes matter most.** A new hiding spot, new vocalizing, new litter-box habits — sudden change is the signal, whatever the body part.