Disclaimer

• Employed by International Cat Care
• Employed by the University of Liverpool as a post-doc researcher at the Feline Healthy Ageing Clinic, post funded by Royal Canin
• Also received financial remuneration and gifts for providing educational material, speaking at conferences, and consultancy work
Outline

• What is cat friendly?
  • An introduction to Cat Friendly Principles

• Understanding a cats needs, the cat centric approach
  • Feline emotions

• What is a cat friendly interaction?

• Tips and Tricks for interactions

Source: Simonscat.com
2022 AAFP/ISFM Cat Friendly Veterinary Interaction Guidelines
Approach and Handling Techniques

Practical relevance: The ‘2022 AAFP/ISFM Cat Friendly Veterinary Interaction Guidelines: Approach and Handling Techniques’ (hereafter the ‘Cat Friendly Veterinary Interaction Guidelines’) support veterinary professionals with feline interactions and handling to reduce the impact of fear and other protective (negative) emotions, in so doing enhancing feline welfare and In implementing these Guidelines, team satisfaction and cat caregiver confidence in the veterinary team will increase as the result of efficient examinations, better experience, more reliable diagnostic testing and improved feline wellbeing. Veterinary professionals will learn the importance of understanding and appropriately responding to the current emotional state of the cat and tailoring each visit to the individual.
Cat Friendly Principles

Keep cats well
Give equal consideration to the cat’s physical health and mental wellbeing

Be solution driven for cats
Find evidence-based, pragmatic and sustainable solutions for cats

Collaborate for cats
Work together, locally, internationally and with people from different backgrounds, always supporting and valuing each other

Respect cats
Respect the diversity of the species and understand the individual cat

Do cats no harm
Ensure cats are never worse off as a result of people or their activities

Communicate for cats
Communicate considerately and share knowledge generously for the sake of cats

Evolve for cats
Be innovative, remain curious and keep learning for cats
The importance of being cat friendly

"I PROMISE AND SOLEMNLY DECLARE that I will pursue the work of my profession with integrity and accept my responsibilities to the public, my clients, the profession and the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons, and that, ABOVE ALL, my constant endeavour will be to ensure the health and welfare of animals committed to my care."

RCVS Oath

Keep cats well
Give equal consideration to the cat's physical health and mental wellbeing
Evolving for cats

Evolve for cats
Be innovative, remain curious and keep learning for cats
Cat Friendly Principles

- **Keep cats well**: Give equal consideration to the cat's physical health and mental wellbeing.
- **Be solution driven for cats**: Find evidence-based, pragmatic and sustainable solutions for cats.
- **Collaborate for cats**: Work together, locally, internationally and with people from different backgrounds, always supporting and valuing each other.

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**Communicate for cats**: Communicate considerately and share knowledge generously for the sake of cats.

**Evolve for cats**: Be innovative, remain curious and keep learning for cats.
ISFM’S CAT FRIENDLY PRINCIPLES FOR VETERINARY PROFESSIONALS

Claire Bessant, Nathalie Dowgray, Sarah LH Ellis, Samantha Taylor, Sarah Collins, Linda Ryan and Vicky Halls

This article introduces the Cat Friendly Principles of the International Society of Feline Medicine (ISFM) and its parent charity International Cat Care (iCatCare). The principles are contextualised for veterinary professionals, and are a consensus of evidence-based expert opinion.

INTRODUCTION

As the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic spread, the development and mass production of a vaccine has been an essential requirement to control the spread and impact of the flu viruses and educate against the scruffing of cats and opposing declawing.
How to put cat friendly into action?

• Optimize your environment based on understanding of cats needs

• Adapt how you interact and care for cats based on an understanding of cats needs
Understanding a cat's needs

The cat centric approach
Understand the species

• Species specific behavioural biology
  • Socially diverse as a species but fixed as individuals
  • Solitary for survival
  • Obligate carnivore
  • Territorial and ranging
  • Highly sensorial with specialism in chemical communication
  • Cognitive and emotionally complex
Socially diverse as a species but fixed as individuals

- **Feral Cat**: Adapted to free-roaming in uninhabited areas.
- **Street Cat**: Adapted to free-roaming in inhabited areas.
- **Inbetweener Cat**: Not adapted to free-roaming or life in domestic home.
- **Pet Cat**: Adapted to life in domestic home.

Lives with people

Avoids people
The feline sociability spectrum

Pet cat response to physical contact

- Protective behaviours
- Tolerate
- Need
- Avoid
- Enjoy

Need to avoid contact -> Need for contact
Feline emotions
Credit: Dr Sarah Heath

Valence

Repulsion

Fear

Avoidance

Inhibition

Appeasement

Joy

Care

Lust

Fear

Inhibition

Avoidance

Repulsion

Eating treats, relaxed body posture, sleeping, purring, approaching people

Arousal
Keep cats well
Give equal consideration to the cat's physical health and mental wellbeing

Stressor Stacking

Kept Indoors
Food Withheld
Picked Up
Placed in Carrier
Transport
Waiting Room
Examination

international cat care
isfm
What is a cat friendly interaction in a veterinary context?

A Cat Friendly interaction is an interaction between a person and a cat that respects the cat as an individual while still achieving the required outcome.
Tips and tricks for interacting with cats
Preparation

• History
  • Previous owner
  • Previous veterinary visits
  • What worked, what didn’t?

• Health
• Head

• Where did the cat come from? What previous experiences have they had, what are their genetics...

Don’t use language like ‘aggressive’, ‘fractious’, ‘naughty’ or ‘spicy’ these do not help colleagues with understanding the cat’s emotional state and behavioral responses to the emotional state. Try to record what the most likely emotional state was that lead to that behavioural response.
Visual assessment

• Always work in a room where the cat is safe to freely roam
• Allow the cat to come out on their own accord
• Give them time to explore and acclimatise
• Observe movement and body language
• Try to allow the cat to achieve their behavioral response
  • Hiding
  • Jumping down off table
  • Talk softly
  • Move slowly and deliberately
  • Encourage the caregiver to do the same

Credit: FHAC
1st interaction

- Come to the same level as the cat
- Avoid leaning over and cornering
- Don’t make eye contact
  - Slow blink if do
- Move slowly and deliberately
- Extend a soft hand
Where to touch?

How to interact with your cat – the Battersea way:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UwqG2wLb0KQ
1st interaction – won’t leave carrier?

- Passively offer treats
- Remove top ½ of carrier can cover with towel/blanket
- Scope out of top if required
- Gently slide out of side opening on bedding
Additional tips if lifting

• Four to the floor
• Use caregiver where possible
• Use base of carrier where possible
• Use large towels/blankets to scope and mimic sense of contact with ground
• If leaving the room always place in carrier
Examination

Credit: FHAC
Towel wrapping and holds

- Hands free
- Minimal restraint

- Loose towel
- Tighter towel

- Towel wrap
- ‘Purrito’
Controversy

• Scruffing
• Clips that mimic scruffing
• Full body restraint
• Cat Bags
• Gauntlets / thick gloves
• Muzzles / air muzzles
• Elizabethan collars
• Anesthetic induction boxes
• Pillowcases
• Mesh cat ‘nabbers’ / cat tongs
• Rabies poles

Physical interactions and routine use
Protective cats

Don’t be afraid to use anxiolytics

Gabapentin 100mg-200mg per cat or 20mg/kg
Trazadone 50-100mg per cat or 10mg/kg

Must still have a cat friendly environment and use cat friendly interactions

50% reduction in CKD cats
**Sedation?**

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**Algorithm 2**

**Interactions to support protective cats in the veterinary practice**

- **Cat has previously behaved PROTECTIVELY**
  - Review patient record to minimize or eliminate triggers and promote positive interactions
  - Record in patient record information on behavior and responses to handling
  - Consider if procedure can be postponed
  - Procedure can't be postponed
  - Attempt brief physical examination (e.g., examine in base of carrier with towel over)
  - Plan sedation via IM injection
  - Give IM sedation
  - Consider agents to minimize volume
  - Consider reversible agents to speed recovery
  - Inject while cat remains in carrier base, with assistant covering with a towel
  - Leave in quiet environment (with monitoring)
  - Provide oxygen
  - Place IV catheter

- **Cat behaving PROTECTIVELY in the practice**
  - Discharge as soon as safe to do so
  - Avoid hospitalization, if possible
  - If hospitalized, consider ongoing anxiolytics (e.g., gabapentin)*
  - Provide caregiver with discharge information and discuss future management pre-visit

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A cat friendly environment is also needed to support protective cats in the practice

- *Use 50% of the lower dose of gabapentin in cats with reduced renal function
- †All cats should be closely monitored during recovery from sedation or anesthesia
- IM = intramuscular; IV = intravenous; GA = general anesthesia

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2022 AAFP/ISFM Cat Friendly Veterinary interaction Guidelines, Rodan et al. JFMS
Consider becoming a Cat Friendly Clinic

For further information visit

www.catfriendlyclinic.org
Between a Urolith and a Hard Place: Acute upper urinary tract disease and beyond...

DUBLIN
29 June – 2 July 2023

Find out more and register at icatcare.org/congress-2023-dublin #ISFMRocksDublin
Thank you