

Happy, healthy cats

Whether your cat has arthritis or not, here are some things you can do to make his/her old age more comfortable:

- **Play and maintain activity.** Gentle games with your cat can help keep him/her alert and active. Create places where your cat can easily climb and hide, such as cardboard boxes with a hole for a cat sized 'door'. Attract your cat inside with deep comfy bedding and some dry food
- **Make access to food and water easy.** Make sure your cat doesn't have to jump or stretch too much to eat or drink. Put it in a place where your cat feels 'safe' and not near the cat flap or litter tray
- **Relocate the litter tray.** Make sure the litter tray is in a place where your cat feels 'safe' - not in a busy corridor or near the cat flap. Litter trays with smaller sides can be more comfortable for cats with stiff joints
- **Control weight.** Being overweight can put extra strain on your cat's joints so keep him/her at a healthy size. If your cat is overweight ask your vet or vet nurse for advice on a suitable diet
- **Consider joint supplements.** If your cat does have arthritis then your vet may suggest joint supplements. This nutritional support can help maintain healthy joints and tendons
- **Help your cat to groom.** Gentle grooming can help maintain your cat's interest in life, but painful areas are best avoided

If you suspect your cat is in pain, speak to your vet or vet nurse about how they can help.



Pain free cats - what a relief!

The good news is that there is a treatment available which is licensed for long term use in cats with arthritis. This can help manage the pain and inflammation associated with arthritis, allowing your cat to make the most out of life. Remember:

- It is always important to follow your vet's advice on the use of medicines
- They will need to see your cat at regular intervals to check that the medicine is still suitable and working for your cat
- Speak to your vet for more information

The Spot the Signs website is a dedicated resource to help owners spot the signs of cat pain. It includes everything from expert advice and case studies to interactive competitions and exclusive Jess the Cat content.

Visit www.spotcatpain.co.uk.



Join us on Facebook to show your support
facebook.com/spotcatpain

¹The American Association of Feline Practitioners and the Cornell Feline Health Center, Cornell University, College of Veterinary Medicine, Ithaca, New York.

²Elizabeth Hardie, DVM, Ph.D., Dipl. ACVS, at North Carolina State University, conducted a study in 2002 of 100 cats age 12 and older.

³Survey of 500 cat owners, October 2006, Research Now.

Top tip

Spread the word about the 'Spot the Signs' campaign and help keep cats healthy and happy, whatever their age!

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Spot the Signs

You know your cat better than anyone, but are you missing the subtle signs of chronic pain?



Jess the Cat

is taking time out from his Postman Pat duties to support the 'Spot the Signs' campaign, aimed at keeping cats happy, healthy and pain free.

Visit www.spotcatpain.co.uk for more information, or facebook.com/spotcatpain



 fabcats

 **Boehringer Ingelheim**

Age matters

Cats are natural athletes and highly active, but over the years this can take its toll. As a consequence, older cats may suffer from wear and tear on their joints. According to veterinary experts many older cats suffer with arthritis, and with cats living longer this is a growing problem¹.

As in humans, arthritis causes joints to degenerate over time, resulting in reduced mobility and pain.

Spotting the signs

Cats are known and loved for their independent nature and athleticism, yet these qualities can make it difficult for us to identify when they are in discomfort. Furthermore, cats have evolved to instinctively hide signs that they are in pain.

As cats are relatively small and very agile they can hide mobility difficulties caused by arthritis. For instance, unlike dogs, cats with arthritis don't generally limp. Instead, cats are more likely to show subtle changes in their behaviour.

Top tip

You know your cat best, so you are well placed to keep an eye out for any signs that they are in pain.

Feline fact:

Vets consider cats over the age of eight to be 'getting older'.

Cat pain in the spotlight

"We've devised four simple questions to help you spot the behaviour changes that could indicate your cat is in pain. If you answer yes to any of the questions below, it is best to consult your vet for advice."

Claire Bessant, leading feline author



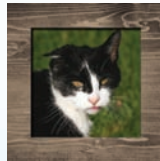
Reduced mobility

Have you noticed your cat hesitating, or being more reluctant to jump up or down e.g. into your lap/the furniture/through a cat flap?



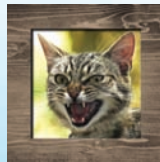
Reduced activity

Have you noticed your cat slowing down e.g. sleeping more – especially in one place, or moving stiffly?



Changes in grooming habits

Have you noticed deterioration in your cat's appearance e.g. matted or scruffy coat?



Changes in temperament

Have you noticed any changes in your cat's attitude or daily routine e.g. less tolerant around people, or more withdrawn?

Top tip

Research shows that just 2% of owners take their cat to the vet if they observe changes in its behaviour².



Feline fact:

A 2002 study revealed that 90% of cats aged 12 and above had X-ray signs of arthritis³.

"Cats are programmed by evolution not to show obvious signs of pain to protect themselves from prey. Unlike dogs, they rarely cry out or limp, preferring instead to hide and shy away from contact. Dog owners are more likely to notice pain during routine walks, whereas a cat will just move less to limit their pain, which can often be put down to your cat just getting old."

Vicky Halls, cat behaviour counsellor

"Activity wise, the signs to look out for are your cat taking several smaller jumps rather than one large leap to reach a surface, a reluctance to be picked up or petted, a lack of grooming and mood changes including aggression that is out of character. If you notice any of these changes you should talk to your vet."

Pete Wedderburn, practicing vet and journalist

