



Peninsula Humane Society & SPCA

Excessive Meowing

The Cause

The single most common reason a cat will meow excessively is that he has been trained to do so. He has learned that all he has to do is speak and he gets whatever he wants--food, attention or affection. Often, what starts as a demand for attention, soon becomes a self-reinforcing habit. Now, Kitty will meow all day just for the fun of it. This situation becomes even worse if the cat is lonely or bored.

A cat who suddenly starts meowing may also have a medical condition. Take her to the vet right away to rule out a medical cause.

Treatment

The first step in breaking this habit is to exercise your cat daily by active play sessions and training. Don't expect the cat to exercise himself. Find toys that your cat likes. Many cats will swat at a pingpong ball or a catnip mouse once or twice and then lose interest, unless the mouse is pulled slowly, temptingly, and repeatedly across the floor. See flyer titled *Cat Training* for other ideas of games to play with your cat.

Of course, you should indulge your cat's every whim and desire, but only when he is quiet. Ignore him whenever he begins his vocal blackmail. Each time you give in to his noisy demands, you are teaching him to meow even more. If you wait until he is quiet, he will soon learn to associate silence with rewards.

Cats will often caterwaul when in heat or when a neighborhood cat is in heat. Add peace, quiet, and sanity for you, your cat, and your neighbors to the list of reasons for spaying or neutering Fluffy/Tiger.

If your cat's favorite meowing time is at 3 AM, read our flyer titled *Nocturnal Activity*.

For more info, call our free Behavior Helpline (650/340-7022 x783 or, for Spanish, x786) or consider a low-cost consultation. To make a consultation appointment, call 650/340-7022 x667. The PHS/SPCA Behavior Department, like many shelter programs, is funded by donations.