

## Handling Aggression in Cats

Ouch! The cat just bit me! And all I was doing was petting her. Aggression is not an uncommon emotion in cats, and can be displayed both adults and kittens. This is why all pet owners should know how to handle their cat's aggression. Alpha cats are (the top cats in the pack displaying leadership qualities) should be given special consideration.

These cats use aggression to obtain certain benefits for themselves in preference to other cats. They can turn aggressive over toys, baths, food, space, and the attention another cat might be getting from the owner.

Cats may use aggression as a way to stop something they deem unpleasant. For instance, an alpha cat may jump onto your lap when it wishes to be petted and then bite and scratch when it wants you to stop. This phenomenon is termed petting-induced aggression. It is common in cats that have a low threshold for physical affection. This is also a way that aggressive cats show who is in control.

Surprisingly, kittens can also show a high degree of aggression. Aggression in kittens is a normal biological response termed play-aggression. It is an built-in drive to play rough. Play-aggression usually occurs when your kitten starts growing up and needs to practice its survival instincts. It is, fortunately, a phase that most kittens outgrow.

It is important that you deal with aggression in a firm manner. If, when you are petting it on your lap, an alpha cat bites you, you should make show your disapproval by not allowing it on your lap for a few days. When you do allow it to sit on your lap again, ensure that you are in charge of petting activity. You must initiate and conclude the petting session. After a few days, the cat will learn to accept your role as its owner and may learn to be more patient.

In the case of an aggressive kitten, it is you who needs to be patient. Learn to read your cat's body language so that you do not give it a chance to attack you. You could also get another kitten as a playmate. This gives your cat an outlet for its play.

Learning more about your cat and taking control of its aggression don't just benefit you, the owner. They also allow the cat to live a happier less stressful life.