



Tips for Socializing a Cat who Overstimulates

A cat that overstimulates means that he/she likes some petting, but only in certain areas and, after a little while, even that can become irritating. While this is a normal cat behavior, we don't want to encourage their irritation. Generally, the cat will give warning signs that he/she is becoming uncomfortable such as tense body, dilated pupils, swishing/lashing tail, increased respiratory rate, and/or flattened ears. We can help them by being aware of these warning signs and stop petting before they become irritated.

- Always sit away from the cat and let him/her approach you before petting. Rubbing up against you is one of the best indicators that they want attention.
- Focus petting on the cheeks, head, and neck instead of the body.
- Watch for warning signs that the cat is becoming uncomfortable (wagging/twitching tail, dilated pupils, tense body, body rippling), and stop petting immediately when observed. If you continue petting when a cat is trying to tell you she is uncomfortable, this may lead to the cat biting or scratching you to let you know "I've had enough!"
- When petting the cat, take breaks every now and then. Just sit and talk to the cat for a minute or two. Wait for the cat to tell you she wants more attention before petting again.
- If the cat starts to swat, vocalize, run away, etc, that's when it is time to leave her apartment and give her time to recover.