

# Cat Personality

By Brad Kollus

Scientists often assert that humans are separate from animals because we have individual personalities. Recent research is demonstrating that cats have individual personalities that can be measured, suggesting that maybe we are not that different from our feline friends after all.

## Personality of Cats

Scientists have developed measures to determine the different personalities of cats. Of course, every cat has its own unique personality, but these methods measure different personality types. In one study by Sir Patrick Bateson, Dr Michael Mendl and their colleagues, cats were rated using several different behavioral characteristics including: agile active, curious, aggressive, equable, fearful of cats, fearful of people, hostile to people, hostile to cats, playful, sociable with cats, sociable with people, and solitary. The researchers performed statistical analysis on these scores which resulted in clusters considered the basic dimensions of personality in cats. Three dimensions were found, which are: active-inactive, social-unsocial, and equable-inequable (even or uneven temperament). "They certainly have distinctive personalities, we can confirm that," said Bateson.

Each cat can be measured along each dimension and could score anywhere from 1 to 100 or 1 to 1,000, etc., on each of the three dimensions, depending on how complex you want the measurement to be. If we simplify and use just three possible scores for each measure: High, Moderate and Low, then there are a possible 27 different personality combinations. One cat might score high on activity - it loves to play and race around the room; moderate on being social - it doesn't jump in a person's lap but won't hide from people either; and low on temperament - it is terrified of storms. One of the most interesting aspects of this study is that the famous Myers-Briggs human personality test has four dimensions, only one more than that used for cats.

## What Makes Up a Cat's Personality?

What determines personalities - genetics, how we are raised or both? This question has been asked of people for decades. The same question pertains to our cats. Researchers have examined the evidence and come up with some interesting conclusions.

## Nature

As it does with people, genetics plays an important part in the personality of our cats. Paternity plays a major genetic role in a cat's boldness, which also includes their being friendlier to people. Studies performed by Dr Sandra McCune, Animal Behaviourist at the Waltham Center for Pet Nutrition, found that the paternity effect was related to boldness or being curious. Fathers which investigated new objects and people had kittens which did the same. "It was that they were willing to approach and investigate something that was novel and interact with it, touch it, smell it, get on it, whether it be a person or whether it be a novel object. It just happens that's the way we interpret friendliness," said McCune.

Other studies have found that coat colour may play a genetic role in a cat's personality. One study found that some black cats which have a specific gene handled crowding better and had an easier time living in cities. Another study of 84 British shorthair kittens found that cats with red, cream or tortoiseshell coats tried to escape more and struggled more when being held by an unfamiliar person than cats with other coat colours. This may be linked to a specific gene. Another researcher suggested that aggressiveness may be linked to a gene that male cats with orange coats have. The genetic connection between coat colour, genetics and personality may be caused by a biochemical process which selects for coat colour and determines the level of the brain chemical dopamine, which plays a role in personality and behaviour, according to Harcourt and Mendl.

## Nurture

The second aspect of a human's personality, and it turns out, a cat's personality, is how they are raised or 'nurtured'. According to Dr Dennis Turner, Editor of *The Domestic Cat: The Biology of Its Behaviour*, kittens that are petted between the second and seventh week of their life will grow up to have a personality which is very trusting and social to people. In addition, kittens which are socialized with humans up to their 12th week may also have a personality which is somewhat social toward people. Kittens which are not handled until after their 12th week may develop a personality which is social if an owner works hard to socialize it, but the kitten will grow into a cat which is sociable with that one person and not others. That kitten will also be more likely to have an uneven temperament and be afraid of different situations, people and animals.

A cat's personality toward other cats is largely determined by the size of the litter in which they grow up and whether they remain with their mother for some time, according to Turner. Kittens that grow up in a litter of four or more and remain with their mother have a social personality toward other cats, while kittens that grow up in small litters or are taken from their mothers early, at seven or eight weeks, are unsocial to other cats. McCune says that kittens which only have one handler have the most friendly relationship with that person. Kittens which have been socialized to many people will be friendly to most people. However, the kitten that has one handler will fear other people.

These studies demonstrate that cats have unique individual personalities. This is more evidence of the similarity of cats to humans. As cat lovers we should use this evidence to ensure that society treats each cat as a unique living being and gives each cat the respect and care it deserves.

Turn over to page 22 to take our cat personality test...

Now it's *purr-fectly safe* to let your cats play outdoors with a kitty-safe

## Catmax Clearnet Enclosure!

Cats adore the outdoors. But roaming cats can have problems with cars, dogs — and sometimes even other cats!

Now, thanks to the revolutionary kitty-safe technology of a Catmax Clearnet Enclosure, your best feline friend can finally climb, leap, jump and explore the outdoors in *purr-fect* safety!

🐾 **Ideal for patios, balconies or backyards!**

🐾 **Variety of sizes available**

🐾 **Custom-designed and installed**

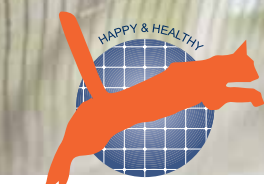
Request more information today and you'll receive a **FREE** information kit that includes photos of Catmax enclosures to inspire your own design!



Strong, safe, protective. Caboodles avail.



**FREE Catwalk**  
with every  
**Enclosure**  
Must Present Value Voucher, Valid til 15.6.08



Request your **FREE** Catmax info pack 1300 306 605 [www.catmax.com.au](http://www.catmax.com.au)



## NEIL THORNEYCROFT

Dip Food Technology

Marketing & Nutritionist, 21 years' experience  
Advance Pet Nutrition.

Expert responsible for communicating, project management and strategic planning that Advances Australian dogs' and cats' lives.

## RAY CHARLES

Domestic Short Hair.

Expert responsible for coaching Neil  
in the art of tickling the ivories.  
(As long as it's closely followed by Neil tickling him.)

Cats are our life. Every day we're researching and investigating the latest ingredient and nutritional innovations and then taking what we learn to create the best cat nutrition possible. We use global science from the world's leading authority, local knowledge and source the highest quality Australian ingredients. So it's no wonder ADVANCE is recommended by vets and only available at your local vet or pet shop. Log on to [advancedpetnutrition.com.au](http://advancedpetnutrition.com.au) to find your nearest stockist.

**ADVANCE**<sup>®</sup>  
ADVANCED PET NUTRITION™

NOT JUST CAT EXPERTS. CAT PEOPLE

# What's Your Cat's Personality?

## 1. When you try to play with your cat, using a toy, does it...?

- A. Play with you for a long time?
- B. Run away from the toy's movement?
- C. Play sometimes, and when it does, only for a short time?
- D. Play for a while but then run around the house?
- E. Ignore the toy and continue to sleep on the couch or your lap?

## 2. How does your cat react to a severe thunderstorm?

- A. Stays by your side watching the thunderstorm
- B. Clashes with your other cats or dogs, or chases its tail
- C. Doesn't act any differently
- D. Runs around the house with every thunderclap
- E. Sleeps right through it on your lap

## 3. A stranger visits your house. How does your cat respond?

- A. Slowly approaches the stranger, eventually allows itself to be petted
- B. Quickly runs away to its most secret hiding place
- C. Goes up to the stranger and sniffs them but then slowly walks away, staying in the room
- D. Runs around the house, stopping to check out the stranger
- E. Stares at the stranger but then rests on a couch or chair, keeping their eyes open

## 4. If you get a new kitten, how does your cat respond?

- A. Approaches it soon and wants to play with it
- B. Immediately runs away and hides from this new competitor
- C. Goes up to the kitten, sniffs it, then moves on to its usual activities
- D. May go up to this new kitten and kiss and growl at it
- E. Could cuddle up to the sleeping kitten or just watch it play

## 5. How does your cat react when in its carrier going to the vet?

- A. Goes in the carrier and is happy to go for a ride
- B. Runs and hides in its most special hiding place, hisses and growls
- C. Runs, hides and freezes but lets you put it in the carrier, with some resistance
- D. Takes off all around the house. Fights being captured. Hisses, growls, spits, may pee or poop, and fights being put into the carrier
- E. Freezes up but lets you put it in the carrier

## 6. You have a new baby. How does your cat react?

- A. Is very interested in the baby and comes to it often
- B. Hides, especially when the baby cries, and may soil the baby's items
- C. Ignores the baby and goes about its usual activities
- D. May hiss and growl at the baby. May stay away from the baby
- E. May be jealous and paw at you to be petted more

## 7. Grooming, cutting nails. How does your cat react?

- A. Allows you to groom it
- B. Runs away and hides and also fights being groomed
- C. Runs away but eventually succumbs & allows itself to be groomed
- D. Takes off and fights being captured
- E. May show some resistance at first but eventually allows itself to be groomed

## 8. How does your cat respond when you vacuum?

- A. Sees it as a game and either tries to ride it or chase it
- B. Hides as far away as it can get
- C. Is startled but then is not concerned
- D. Is frightened and runs around the house terrified
- E. Leaves the room to continue resting elsewhere

## 9. How does your cat react at night when you go to bed?

- A. Plays with its toys or comes into your bed trying to get you up
- B. Due to the quiet it comes out to eat, use the litter box, etc.
- C. Goes about its usual activities, usually sleeping
- D. Enjoys the quiet, rests and relaxes
- E. Gets into bed to sleep with you

## 10. A cat approaches your window. How does your cat react?

- A. Follows the cat around trying to play with it
- B. Runs and hides, fearing this new cat may get in
- C. Goes to look at the cat a few times but then ignores it
- D. Goes to the cat and hisses and growls through the window
- E. Goes to the window to see the cat but then goes back to sleep

## 11. A dog enters your house. How does your cat respond?

- A. Chases the dog around the house
- B. Runs away from this new intruder
- C. Tries to ignore this new animal
- D. Hisses, growls and spits at the dog
- E. Runs away to a place where it can continue sleeping

## 12. An insect scurries across your floor. How does your cat react?

- A. Chases the insect, hitting it and seeing it as a game
- B. Hides, fearing the insect
- C. May chase the insect but gives up easily
- D. Immediately goes after the insect, growling and trying to kill it

## 13. A friend visits the house. How does your cat respond?

- A. Immediately approaches the person, expecting to be petted
- B. Checks out the familiar person, but still goes off to hide
- C. Slowly checks out the person and allows a little petting
- D. Runs around the house, stopping to look at and smell the person
- E. When sitting will allow the person to pet it and maybe even sit on the person's lap

## 14. A familiar pet-sitter visits your house. What does your cat do?

- A. Comes out and wants to play and be petted
- B. Runs and hides
- C. Will come out and see who the visitor is and may allow some petting
- D. Runs around, stopping to find out who the visitor is
- E. Sniffs, but having recognised the smell, continues to sleep

## 15. Moving to a new house. How does your cat react?

- A. Happily runs around to investigate the new space
- B. Looks for the best place to hide
- C. Slowly investigates the new surroundings
- D. Runs around the house trying to find its old furniture
- E. Looks for the most comfortable place in the house and settles in to rest

## 16. Visiting children want to play with the cat. How does your cat respond?

- A. Plays with the children, using cat toys
- B. Runs and hides in its most secret hiding place
- C. Ignores the children but runs away if approached
- D. Runs around the house and will hiss and growl if the children approach it
- E. Allows the children to gently pet it

## 17. Feeding your cat. How does your cat respond?

- A. Immediately comes out to eat
- B. Waits for everyone to be gone or even eats at night
- C. Comes to eat when hungry
- D. Runs around, excited at being fed, then eats when owners leave
- E. Comes over to eat at its own pace

## 18. Being given a pill at home. How does your cat react?

- A. Accepts pill easily – it is used to behaving
- B. Almost impossible to give pill – runs off to hide
- C. Will struggle but eventually accept the pill
- D. Will run around the house making it impossible for you to catch it
- E. Will freeze up and while not enjoying it, will take the pill

## 19. Brushing its teeth. What does your cat do?

- A. Finds it a game
- B. Hides so you can't find it
- C. Is hard to catch, but will eventually give in
- D. Will run away
- E. Will allow it but not be happy

## 20. Petting your kitty. How does your cat respond?

- A. Will love being petted by most family members
- B. May allow regular petting by one person it has become attached to
- C. Will allow all family members to pet it, but not for too long
- D. Will allow being petted but only for a short time
- E. Will allow almost anyone to pet it

## Personality Characteristics

Researchers have studied different aspects of the personality characteristics of cats and have determined every cat has three main dimensions of personality.

### 1. Active – Inactive

An active cat runs around the house, loves playing and is constantly looking for an opportunity to get its human to play. An inactive cat spends most of its time sleeping or resting, with no desire to play.

### 2. Social – Unsocial

A social cat comes to see visitors and strangers when they come to the house, enjoys being petted by them, and even sits on their laps. An unsocial cat hides from visitors and does not want to be petted or approached, sometimes even by certain family members.

### 3. Even Temperament – Uneven Temperament

A cat with an even temperament does not get scared easily by thunderstorms, loud noises or visits to the veterinarian. A cat with an uneven temperament will hide the moment there is any loud noise, thunderstorm or party, or when you try to put it into a cat carrier.

Each cat will fall somewhere on each of the three dimensions. Some be at one end of the spectrum, some at the other, but many cats will fall somewhere in between.

### Fun Fluffies Score:

- 1. High on activities
- 2. High on being social
- 3. High on having an even temperament

### Nervous Nellies Score:

- 1. Low on activity
- 2. Low on being social
- 3. Has a very uneven temperament

### Steady Sams Scores:

- 1. Average on activity
- 2. Average on being social
- 3. Has a medium temperament

### Hyper Hank Scores:

- 1. High on activity
- 2. Low-medium on being social
- 3. Very uneven temperament

### Cuddly Cutie:

- 1. Low on activity
- 2. High on being social
- 3. Has an even temperament

### Count your responses:

If you answered Mostly As then you have a Fun Fluffy  
If you answered Mostly Bs then you have a Nervous Nelly  
If you answered Mostly Cs then you have a Steady Sam  
If you answered Mostly Ds then you have a Hyper Hank  
If you answered Mostly Es then you have a Cuddly Cutie

What kind of cat do you have? Many cats will be a combination of the types listed above. We all know each cat has its own individual personality. That's what makes living with our cats so wonderful.



**BEST NEW PRODUCT FOR CATS AT PIAA EXPO 2007.**

Early detection system to let you know when your cat may need to be taken to the veterinarian.

Detects 4 common health problems with a colour change:

- Bladder infections
- Bladder Stones and Crystals
- Some Kidney Diseases
- Liver Disease

Health Meter Cat Litter also keeps your cat's litter box fresh and odour free.



## Taking care of your Pet's Health

A completely natural product, ProDen PlaqueOff™ is an effective supplement in combating bad breath, tartar and plaque. The granulated form means it can be easily added to your pets' food everyday to give them all the vitamins and minerals they need to maintain healthy teeth and gums.



For more information contact:  
J. LEUTENEGGER PTY. LTD.  
51 - 55 Carrington Road, Marrickville NSW 2204  
Ph: (02) 9558 3055 Fax: (02) 9559 5338  
Email: pets@leutenegger.com.au

