

# KATS' TALES

Volume 7, Issue 5



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May  
2016

## 10 WAYS TO DEAL AND GET REAL WITH CAT HAIR by Susan Logan McCracken

Cat hair ends up on furniture, floors, our clothes, and inside and outside of our luggage. Cat hair also goes where we don't expect it, because individual hairs can float in the air. Cats also can go where dogs can't, so you'll find it in most places, even surprising ones. What are all those cat hairs? *Guard hairs:* These are from the topcoat that protects cats from rain or snow; Abyssinians and Domestic Shorthairs have mostly these types of hairs. *Awn hairs:* This soft, fuzzy belly hair that keeps cats warm and provides insulation; Persians and many long-haired cats have this in abundance, not just on their bellies. *Down hair:* These dense, very short hairs close to the skin protect it from abrasion; only triple-coated cats, such as Siberians and Norwegian Forest Cats, have this type of hair. Let's face it, cat hair is everywhere. So here are some things to help you deal with it. 1. *Accept that cats shed—it's normal* For cats, shedding is "a normal process of hair growth and replacement," said Dr. James Brunt, a vet who founded the Cat Hospital of Towson in Baltimore and served as past president of the American Association of Feline Practitioners. "Unlike with humans and certain dog breeds, cat hair grows to a fixed length, dies, and falls out as it's replaced by a new hair," explained Dr. Gary D. Norsworthy, board-certified feline specialist and owner of the Alamo Feline Health Center in San Antonio. "That is why cats do no need regular haircuts," he said. Cats who go outdoors shed more in the spring, and new hair growth will accelerate in the fall and winter. "However, about 80 percent of my patients literally never go outdoors, so they are not as aware of seasons. This means there is not a significant difference in seasonal shedding in indoor-only cats," Norsworthy said. 2. *Cats can shed too much* Stress, parasites such as fleas, a poor diet, and certain diseases can cause cats to shed more than normal. "Diseases that affect the entire cat such as diabetes, hyperthyroidism, and kidney failure are more likely to increase shedding," Norsworthy said. "When the cat has significant illness, the hair coat suffers first." "Because of this, don't assume that an excessive amount of hair loss is a skin or coat issue," Brunt said. Arthritis and obesity can cause a cat to be unable to groom normally, which might cause coat abnormalities. Food allergies can cause itchiness, excessive grooming, and hair loss. "This can be a bigger problem than a normal shed cycle or grooming issue, so absolutely get your veterinarian involved," he said. (continued next issue)

(Source: *Catster.com*, September 17, 2015; retrieved 9/29/15)

## HOW TO KEEP YOUR CATS HAPPY (conclusion) by Marilyn Krieger

*Manage the litter boxes* Poor litter box management can cause problems for cats and their owners. Cats become stressed and unhappy when their litter box situations are not ideal. The type and number of litter boxes, their locations, and cleanliness determine whether they will be used consistently. Being mindful about litter boxes can stop problems before they begin and contribute to your cat's well being. Because cats prefer doing their business in clean litter boxes, scoop them at least once a day. Make sure there are enough large, uncovered litter boxes for the number of cats in your home. You need one box per cat and one extra. The locations of the boxes can also influence where cats eliminate. Place them throughout your home, in areas where your cats won't feel they can be trapped or ambushed. *Procure vertical territory* Cats need to have the option of climbing, jumping, and napping on high shelves, cat trees, and other tall furniture. Vertical territory helps keep the peace and promotes harmony between cats. Felines demonstrate their social positions in the household by where they hang out in relation to each other and the residents. It isn't static—the same cat doesn't continually occupy the top tier of the status ladder. Depending on the circumstances, they take turns. High places can also become safe areas for cats. In addition to being out of reach of dogs and other dangers, they can observe from up high the household activities. Encourage harmony between kitties and reduce their stress by placing vertical territory around your home. These are just a few of the things you can do that will help keep your cats contented, happy, and stress free.

(Source: *Marilyn Krieger, Cat Behaviorist; Catster.com*; retrieved January 25, 2016)

## WYATT



Hi! My name is Wyatt. I'm about a year old, just an energetic, (okay, mischievous!) young boy with a cute face and fairly big paws. I love getting into things...you know, just curious, really, like a typical teenager, maybe. They say I'm actually pretty smart, but I guess that's just an opinion. I'm still learning to get along with the other cats here, but I'm sure if you could give me a forever home, I'd settle down!

### \*UPCOMING EVENTS\*

- June 18 10:00 A.M. Pet Parade and Bark in the Park, Main St., St. J.
- 2017 Cat Calendar Contest; Photos accepted in June; \*Check our website\*



Sign outside a Lakeland, Florida, Animal Hospital: "If cats could talk, they wouldn't."

### KAS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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**Did you know.....One of the reasons a kitten sleeps so much is because it releases a growth hormone during sleep.**

**OUR MISSION STATEMENT** The purpose of the Kingdom Animal Shelter is to facilitate the placement of stray and unwanted animals and pets in desirable homes; to establish and maintain an animal shelter and associated procedures that promote health, care and handling; and to prevent overpopulation and the prevention of cruelty to animals. The animals in our care, our guests, are never euthanized merely because we lack space or because the animal's stay with us has exceeded a predefined amount of time.

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