



How Cats Can Be Purrfect for Your Health

Why you should rethink how you view cats and consider adopting one of your own.

Cats tend to get [a bad reputation](#) about their personality. And unfortunately, this perception can lead people to think that they offer nothing of value to their human companions.

The main reason for this bad reputation, according to the host of Animal Planet's show, [Psycho Kitty](#), Pam Johnson-Bennett, is that many people unfairly compare cats to dogs. But cats and dogs are two entirely different species, so it's only natural that they would react differently to similar situations.

Descended from wolves with a not-so-strict-but-still-hierarchical [pack mentality](#), dogs typically act more social. They spend more time trying to work together efficiently as a group, so they interact with each other and people through different body postures, facial expressions, and other positions that are recognizable to people. As a result, both dogs and people have an easier time reading each other's behavior. And this can lead to people viewing dogs as more overtly social and caring.

While it is true that dogs do emphasize their interest in their human companions, it does not mean that dogs are more empathetic than their feline counterparts. Cats just happen to show their care and interest in different ways.

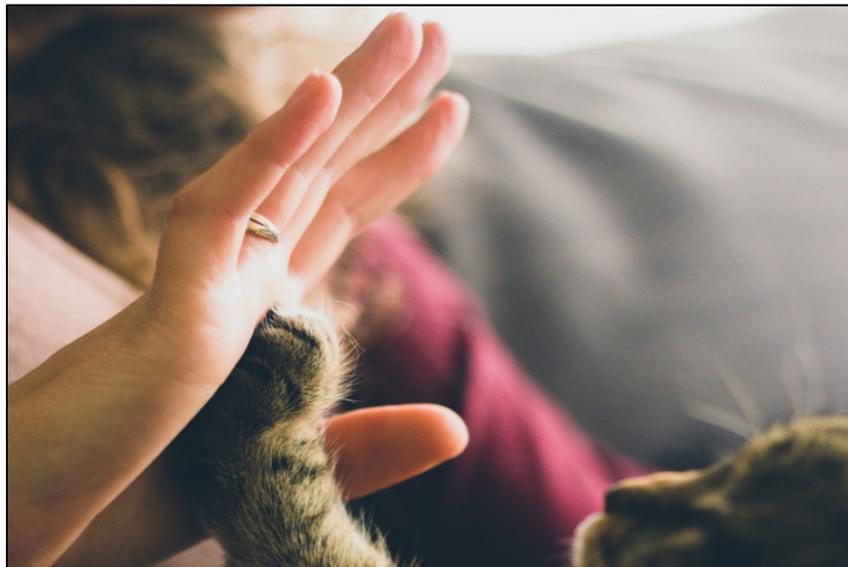
Cats are not above enjoying the social company of one another in groups. They'll even occasionally form [feral colonies](#) when they want to share a larger territory.

But they don't form strong attachments to everyone in that territory. In fact, cats are typically [solitary hunters](#), as they can only hunt enough food for one. So it's more likely that they'll establish a lone territory that doesn't conflict with other nearby cat territories.

Because feline socialization is built around the availability of food and territory, cats prefer to feel and know that they're secure. So domestic cats may seem standoffish at first, but they really just need the space and time to get used to anyone new who enters their territory and sounds, smells, and looks unfamiliar.

Once a cat has gotten the time and space they need to make up their mind about you, you'll find that they can be very caring creatures who offer a number of benefits to your life and health, including the ones listed here.

1. You gain a furriently caretaker.



Many cats have gone on to save their human companion's life, and your future kitty might just do the same. For instance, without any official training, [Lilly](#), a cat in Dorset, England, was able to save the life of her owner numerous times by alerting his family whenever he had an epileptic seizure.

Another cat in 1949, [Simon](#), even won the highest military medal available for helping save the lives of Royal Navy officers during the Chinese civil war. Despite suffering from severe shrapnel wounds from an attack on the ship he was on, the HMS Amethyst, Simon continued to protect the navy's stores of food from an ongoing rat infestation and continued to lift the morale of the surviving sailors.

Now, I'm not saying your future furry friend will, without a doubt, turn out to be your own personal Superman in four-legged disguise. But you may find that your cat will be able to help you in ways that you've never thought of before.

2. Cuddling them can improve your heart health.



You might not have considered cats to be war heroes before, but have you considered that they could be your own form of therapeutic help?

All cats offer a number of [natural healing benefits](#).

[Just by petting a cat alone](#), you can improve your cardiovascular health. This is because petting a cat lowers your stress levels, which in turn, lowers any anxiety you might have. Petting is a nice, calming activity proven to be effective by at least one study that discovered during a 10-year period, cat owners, unlike those who did not own cats, were 30% less likely to die of a heart attack or stroke.

3. Their purring alone is medically therapeutic.



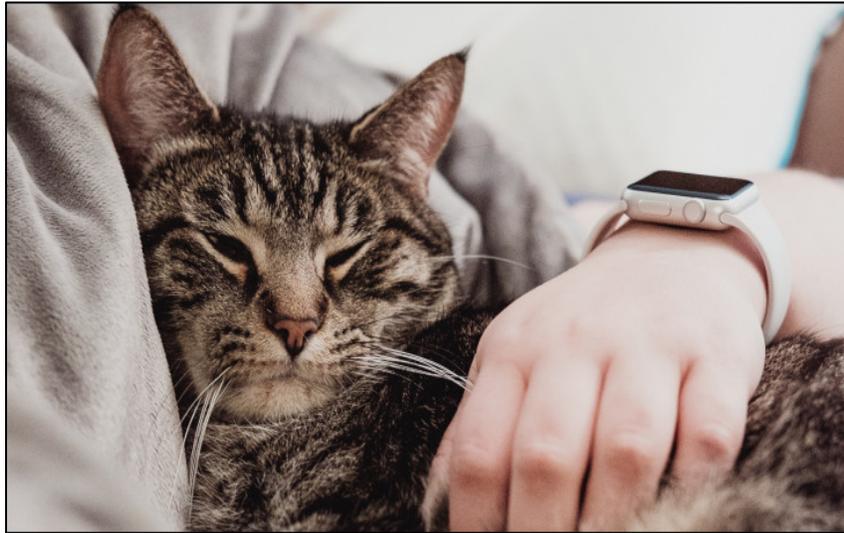
Another direct benefit to your body that cats can offer is their purring. Purring is not just a delightful sound for you to hear and feel whenever your cat is content to be around you. It's also a [form of healing](#).

Because cats purr within the 20 to 140 Hz range, they can help your body heal in a number of ways, including:

- Providing you with an additional way to lower your stress in combination with petting
- Lowering your blood pressure
- Promoting bone restoration and healing in your muscles, tendons, and ligaments
- Helping you heal from infections and swelling

These benefits can seem a bit New Age-y, but professionals have been given plausible [reason](#) to believe that purring can at least stimulate some healing.

4. You'll rest easier with them nearby.



Due to a cat's therapeutic abilities, it makes sense that [many studies](#) have found that people tend to report sleeping better with a cat than with a human.

Having a feline friend close by as you sleep can help you feel less lonely, anxious, or depressed. This companionship can even help you when you're having sleep troubles. Like many animals, cats tend to enjoy napping near your head or feet. So if your future cat ends up enjoying settling down to sleep at the same time that you do, you'll be able to take comfort in the added benefit of them acting as a living, breathing weighted blanket. This benefit has been [proven](#) to reduce the amount of time you need to fall asleep and to promote healthier sleep cycles.

5. Your kids will likely enjoy their presence too.



You're not the only person who can benefit from owning a cat. Your kids can too!

According to the [National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases](#), children who are raised in a home with multiple pets, such as two or more dogs or cats, are less likely to develop allergies to pets and other common allergies, such as ones to dust mites, ragweed, and grass.

It is important to note, though, that the cat parasite, [toxoplasma gondii](#), while usually harmless and not likely to produce symptoms, can be a threat to young children. However, you don't have to worry too much because [health officials note](#) that simply changing your cat's litter box daily and keeping your cat indoors should keep you and your kids safe from allergies.

In short: consider adopting a cat!

A cat may seem uninterested in earning your affection at first. But over time, they'll prove to be caring in their own feline way. And you'll find that they not only provide you with a furry friend, but they'll also provide you with several health benefits.