



Cats Fighting

Cats fighting in a household can be frustrating for you as well as the cats. They will often fight over resources, to defend their territory or out of fear. It is especially puzzling when cats that have been together happily suddenly turn on each other. The key to fixing the problem is to discover the reason why.



Fighting over resources

Cats may squabble over food, water, litter boxes, beds, sunny areas, perches, or attention from people. It may be due to how much control an individual cat wants to have over his environment. Sometimes there isn't even a true threat, but the cat thinks he needs to have more control over what another cat is doing.

Having enough resources for everyone so there is no need to share may help. You also need to place items in various spots around the house. This allows all cats to get away from each other. Providing "vertical space" with climbing towers, trees, and shelves on the wall can be especially helpful.

Social maturity

Cats reach sexual maturity before they are a year old. However, they don't finish maturing and reach social maturity until they are between the ages of 2 and 4-5 years old. At this age, the cat may want some control of the group. On the other hand, an older cat may want to control a youngster that reaches social maturity. This

can lead to conflict between two cats that used to get along well.

Territorial conflicts

Cats are territorial and don't readily accept other cats on their turf. This is why most cats need time to get used to a newcomer before they accept him into the group. This can also be the reason why a cat is upset when another one reaches social maturity. Suddenly there's a "new cat" in the house.

Fear based aggression

Some cats will start fighting out of fear. This can develop in several ways. One cat visits the vet and comes home with the hospital smells and the cat at home attacks. The strange smells have triggered fear.

Another situation may be that Felix is near a window and gets upset at a cat outside. Mittens comes up behind Felix and Felix attacks Mittens because he's the closest thing to attack. This is redirected aggression. He can't lash out at the object he wants to (the cat outdoors) so he attacks whatever is nearby. Some cats will attack humans for the same reason.



Here's another scenario: Mittens is looking at the cat outdoors but not bothered by it. Felix hates outside cats, sees the cat, and rushes at the window to attack.

Unfortunately, Mittens is in the way, sees Felix attacking, and gets defensive thinking Felix is attacking him. Now, both cats think the other one started the fight! This can lead one or both of them to fear the other and respond aggressively when they are together.

Cats that have lived together

Cat owners are puzzled and concerned when cats that have lived together in peace suddenly start fighting. It is often due to one of them reaching social maturity and one of them wanting to have more control.

It can also be due to fear, usually due to a “mistake” triggering the fear and aggression such as the examples above. It can be challenging to figure out what’s going on since you often don’t notice the trigger.

What to do

Chronic stress isn’t good for your cats. If there is an ongoing conflict, you need to manage it to allow all the cats to be happy.

Don’t let your cats “work it out”. This doesn’t work and the longer they keep fighting, the harder it will be to fix the problem. If cats are fighting **DO NOT touch them** or you may be seriously injured. Make a loud noise, spray them with water, or toss a soft pillow at them. Herd one of them into another room and close the door. Don’t punish the cats. This doesn’t work and may just make it worse and increase fear.



Provide plenty of resources in multiple areas around the house. Add additional climbing areas and perches. Reward them for being calm and acting friendly together. Spay and neuter all the cats.

Talk to us about supplements and medications that can help reduce anxiety. If nothing works, consult an animal behavior specialist

The ***most important thing is to separate the cats and slowly reintroduce them.*** You use the same process as you would when bringing a new cat into your home. This may take weeks or months depending on how serious the problem is.

If it doesn’t work

Some cats will never get along and never live peacefully in the same house. You do everything you can but it still doesn’t help. One or both of the cats are too fearful or too territorial to accept the other.

In this case, you don’t have many choices. You will need to keep them separated within the home all the time or find a new home for one of them. This is a difficult choice, but you owe it to your cat to give it a stress-free home.