

# FEAR BEHAVIOURS IN KITTENS

Kittens show some specific behaviours when they are fearful. Watch for things like ear, tail, and abdomen positions, motor activities, and other behavioural indicators.

NOTE: These behaviours occur in combination with avoidance when a kitten backs or runs away from an object or stimulus



## CROUCHED ABDOMEN

When a kitten's body is close to the ground with all four legs bent and their belly close to or touching the ground



## TUCKED OR LOWERED TAIL

When a kitten tucks their tail under their body or wraps their tail around their hind legs



## EARS BACK OR SIDEWAYS

When a kitten turns one or both ears backwards or sideways (think "airplane ears")



## PILOERECTION

When a kitten raises the fur on their neck, shoulder, back and/or tail, giving a puffed-up appearance (think "Halloween cat")



## FREEZING

When a kitten freezes in place and is immobile with their body tensed for at least 2 seconds



## SLOW MOVEMENTS

When a kitten walks slowly, more cowered and slower than normal, upright walking

## FLINCHING

When a kitten suddenly jumps or jolts

↓ Fear can progress to aggression ↓



## AGGRESSION

When a kitten swats, bites, or hisses

# POSITIVE OR NEUTRAL BEHAVIOURS IN KITTENS

Kittens show some specific behaviours when they are relaxed or in a neutral state.

Watch for things like ear, tail, and abdomen positions, and other behaviours like eating and grooming.

NOTE: These behaviours occur when kittens are in a positive or neutral state



## NEUTRAL ABDOMEN

When a kitten holds their abdomen lifted from the ground with their legs naturally extended



## UPRIGHT OR NEUTRAL TAIL

When a kitten holds their tail upwards, higher than the level of their back, or straight out behind them, in line with the level of their back



## UPRIGHT EARS

When a kitten holds their ears upright at the front of their head, directed and facing forward



## EATING

Kittens eating may appear crouched and move their ears around, but the act of eating indicates kitten is relaxed



## GROOMING

As with eating, kittens grooming themselves may appear crouched and move their ears around, but the act of grooming indicates the kitten is relaxed