

# Tellington TTouch® Southern Africa

Issue 7, August 2016

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Website of the month
Book of the month

#### **TTouch South Africa**

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# Eugenie's Letter

# Hello TTouch Friends!



Finally a hint of spring is in the air! And it's hard to believe that our International Trainings are only 6 weeks away! Yikes — really looking forward to having Instructor Edie Jane Eaton here from Canada to share her "expertise" with all of us.

Nancy tells me that this month she wants the Newsletter to be about cats. Now I always admit that I know far less about cats than I do about dogs. However one thing I do know if how much it is useful to TTouch a cat! It can help with so very many things. Anxieties, quarrels in a multi cat household, nervousness, dislike of being handled and many more.

I've had an interesting time with Shadow, my cat who just showed up at my house one night. She had been living on the street and while she wanted attention, she didn't want to be picked up or held. Of course I also still had Danilo in those days and it took us about a year to get the 2 of them to be friends, but friends they did become in the end! Now the challenge is that Shadow really would prefer not to have to deal with Skyla, our young dog of about a year. Skyla would so love to be friends with

"I have studied many philosophers and many cats. The wisdom of cats is infinitely superior." – Hippolyte Taine

the cat and gives her constant "calming signals" like play bows and looking away, etc. etc. but cats and Shadow specifically doesn't seem understand doggy body language – or being a cat – she doesn't want to! Ha!

I do sometimes wonder if at her age she doesn't just want to be left alone by a young rambunctious dog. Interestingly though, there are a few times when they seem to be content together. One is when they are outside by themselves – i.e. no human or other dog around - then life seems not to help any angst and they can be found lying together quite contently in the sun.



Here is Shadow deciding whether it's safe to jump up directly to her bed atop the furniture or whether she wants to risk stepping onto the bed with Skyla watching although it's an easier route.

Now I wish I could show you the video of the next picture and how Skyla who wanted to "pass" Shadow, did a beautiful circle around her staying as far out of harm's way as possible!



The other is of course around food! Occasionally I have something that Shadow likes – Eggs and Prawns! Then she is perfectly content to hang out with the dogs waiting for some titbits to come her way.

This winter saw us one night having Prawns in front of the fire... My friend Brenda had everyone's attention!



This picture with the morning eggs is of course with Harley but Shadow will also let Skyla be quite close in this particular situation.

So never a dull moment with animals around – I am quite sure that one day I'll see Skyla and Shadow being, if not "mates", at least tolerant of each other. It's slowly happening already!

Keep warm for the rest of the cold weather and I hope to see some of you at the trainings in September/October.

Cheers,

Eugenie

Instructor for Tellington TTouch Companion Animals

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# **Upcoming Tellington TTouch Trainings**

#### **For Companion Animals and Horses**

You need no previous Experience to join these Trainings

These trainings are for any person who wants to better understand their animals as well as for those who would like to work with animals themselves.

# **Companion Animals**

**5-Day TTACT Practitioner Trainings** 

#### With Edie Jane Eaton and Eugenie Chopin

Dates: 24th to 28th September, 2016

Venue: Sandton/Midrand, Johannesburg, Gauteng

Times: 9:00am to 5:00 pm daily

**Contact: Eugenie Chopin** 

at: <a href="mailto:info@ttouch.co.za">info@ttouch.co.za</a>
on: 011 884-3156

Full Price: ZAR 4850.00

Deposit: ZAR 2500.00

Early Bird Price: ZAR 4400.00

expires on 23rd July 2016

# 3 Day TTACT or TTEAM Training

This will be the first 3 days of the Companion Animal or Horse Training and will count as a half session for those interested in the Practitioner Program

Full price: R2900 Deposit: R1600 Early bird: R2600

(expires on 23rd July 2016 for Companion Animals and 31st July for Horses)

For more details, click here

## **Horses**

**5-Day TTEAM Horse Clinic** 

#### With Edie Jane Eaton and Lindy Dekker

Dates: 1st October to 5th October, 2016

Venue: Donnybrook Guest House and Stables, 66 Chattan Road, Glenferness, Midrand

Times: 9:00am to 5:00 pm daily

**Contact: Eugenie Chopin** 

on: 011 884-3156

Contact: Lindy Dekker at: equibalance@iafrica.com

on: 083 616 0577

**Full Price: ZAR 4850.00** 

Deposit: ZAR 2500.00

Early Bird Price: ZAR 4400.00

expires on 31st July 2016

#### **Tension Patterns in Cats**

By Sarah Fisher - TTouch Instructor and Behaviour Counsellor

ost Practitioners and Practitioners-in Training will have learnt how to look at the overall posture, areas of tension, gait irregularities or changes in the texture or appearance of the coat etc in dogs and horses but some may not have had the opportunity to apply these same observational skills to cats.

Posture is very important to cats; the way in which they present themselves can determine how other felines relate to them as well as how they feel and respond. Cats like humans, dogs and horse use their bodies to help relieve physical, emotional and mental stress and any inability to do so may cause psychological problems and distress. A cat that has tension patterns within its body will have a reduced ability to communicate and may lose confidence as a result.

The information you can gain by observing your cat on a daily basis encourages you to question why she acts in a certain way, rather than blithely assuming that it's just a quirk of character. It enables you to pick up on health problems earlier rather than later, and in the case of problem behaviours can help you to identify underlying causes and change them with TTouch work. It can also tell you not just how she's feeling physically, but whether she's actually enjoying (or merely tolerating) interaction between the two of you and enables you to watch for early warning signs that she might be about to react defensively.

By pointing out the postural tendencies of a cat to your client or shelter worker you will help them to gain a clearer understanding of why TTouch work is of benefit and will enable them to note when





## Why do tension patterns occur?

Tension patterns can occur for any number of reasons including:

Posture is very important to cats; the way in which they present themselves can determine how other felines relate to them as well as how they feel and respond. **Injury** - as with humans, the presence of pain can affect posture, movement, and reduce tolerance levels. Even after an injury has healed, the body may maintain the previous posture, which then continues to affect behaviour.

**Trauma** - shock as a result of an accident or emotional upheaval can cause tension within the body. Cats are often very sensitive to changes; not just major ones such as moving house or bereavement, but minor ones too, such as simply rearranging the furniture.

**Disease** - kidney problems, arthritis, etc.

**Born that way** - some cats show tension patterns from birth, rather than as a result of other factors.

#### How do you identify them?

The more you watch your cat, the more your powers of observation will develop, and the more you'll begin to notice even small but significant areas of tension in your cat. First study the way in which she moves – is she coordinated, balanced and supple or is she stiff? Is she relaxed and calm or is she anxious? Does she blink or are her eyes wide, hard and staring?

Next, look more closely and in more detail. Does she have a slight head tilt? Does she carry her tail to one side? Does one ear appear higher set than the other? Does her back and tail move fluidly or is any part of her spine or tail bone rigid and straight? Does she spasm through the skin when sitting? Can she jump on or off furniture or the windowsill easily or does she struggle to jump up or land awkwardly or heavily? Is any part of her coat standing up? Does she have dandruff over her back?

Beginning at the head, use your hands (or back of your hand) to gently stroke her all over, covering all areas of the body. Note any peculiarities which indicate the presence of tension including:

- Hot/warm/cool/cold areas; differences in temperature through the body can be easier to feel if you use the back of your hand rather than the palm.
- Changes in coat texture such as areas where the coat is rough.
- Lumps and bumps
- Feelings of tightness in the skin or underlying muscle tissue.
- Uneven muscle development particularly over the hind quarters.
- Whether your cat expresses concern when you touch certain places on her body; for example moving away from you, growling, or if the skin appears to spasm and ripple beneath your touch.

If your cat is reactive about being touched and likely to strike out with



claws or teeth, use a long handled artists' paintbrush or goose/swan feather so you can keep your hand at a safe distance and minimise her concern about being handled.

#### What can be done?

Although it's often possible to effect a very rapid improvement with TTouch, it's important to be realistic about how much you can achieve within a certain period of time. Generally, the longer an area of tension has existed, the longer it will take to restore the balance, as the cat will have become habituated in her pattern of behaviour and movement. Little and often is the key and cats are excellent at teaching you that a little bit of TTouch work goes a very long way. If your cat continues to

show extreme concern about being handled your first port of call should be your vet to determine if there are physical problems.

Cats are more prone to injury than we think and many are likely to have had an accident that has gone unnoticed as cats spend a large part of their time out and about without us. X-rays and health checks that I requested for shelter cats that were extremely reactive to contact and considered unhomeable, revealed fractures of the spine, tumours or advanced renal failure. In some of these cases the cats with old spinal injuries did go on to be successfully rehomed as the staff could then explain to prospective adopters that the cats were not being aggressive without good cause. They were also able to show them how to use TTouch to help keep the cats comfortable.

#### What to look for:

**Mouth:** a lot of emotion is carried in the mouth, so it can provide you with a lot of information as to how your cat is feeling. If tight in the mouth, the ability to use the tongue - used for grooming as well as a sensory organ - may be inhibited. Those with very tight mouths are often picky eaters, are more inclined to be vocal, and are often more likely to bite. When stressed, the whiskers will shoot forward and bristle, but some cats have so much tension in the muzzle that the whiskers may be constantly held in this position. When looking for tension in the mouth however, look for other factors such as the ear and tail set. Cats that are happy and relaxed will rub their whiskers against furniture or their owners legs. Stroking the whiskers backwards with a soft brush will mimic this calming response and is a safe and highly effective way of helping a stressed cat

relax. This is particularly useful when working with a cat that is unable to eat due to high levels or anxiety and is an excellent precursor to Mouth Work. Some cats naturally carry their whiskers more forward than others so you cannot rely on the set of the whiskers alone to determine whether the cat is concerned.

Eyes: The eyes are the window to a cat's soul. If the eyes are hooded like those of an owl, it can be a sign of stress and trigger



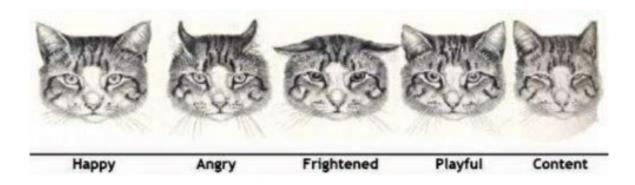
reactive behaviour, whilst staring eyes can be a sign of discomfort and/or escalating levels of stress. Very wide pupils can indicate a high degree of concern and that the cat is feeling threatened. Check the iris as well; felines that have suffered a lot of trauma, stress or have underlying health problems may have very blotchy or discoloured irises. Using feathers or soft paint brushes around the eye and over the head triggers blinking which helps the cat to relax and to feel more relaxed.

**Forehead:** Very anxious cats are often extremely tight in this area, which is often linked to the appearance of wide, staring eyes and tension around the base of the ears. If there's a lot of tension over the top of the head it may even feel hot to the touch, and the cat may be very reactive to contact over or near the head.

**Ears:** As with most animals, cats use their extremities to impart information; fast twitching ears although usually a sign of arousal or interest can also be a sign of nervousness. Flattened ears can be a sign of increasing stress levels and are often accompanied by a flattened back. Very taut, alert, pricked ears might indicate that your cat is



interested in something, but can also be due to over excitement and arousal. Lack of ear movement



may indicate deafness. Many cats will appear to be enjoying contact then attack without warning. This is referred to as 'relaxation induced aggression' and although it can happen without warning ear movement may be non-existent prior to the attack. For cats that exhibit this type of behaviour keep the TTouch sessions short and use a variety of different TTouches or tools. Cold ear tips (provided the cat is not actually cold or unwell) often accompany cold feet and can be a sign or timidity. Unlevel ears can be a sign of tension in the neck and/or jaw. As there are many acupressure points in the ear cats that dislike having their ears or parts of their ear touched may be suffering from ill health or tension or discomfort in other parts of their body.



Neck: Stiffness felt in the neck is often linked to a short, choppy stride when moving, and tension may be also present in

the back. It can give rise to issues with having vaccinations or being micro chipped. Cats that are tight in the neck and the jaw may also be difficult to pill as strain is often inadvertently placed on the neck when the cat is being medicated.

**Shoulders:** Tight shoulders are often linked to tension in the neck, and can create stiff-legged movement. This posture is likely to unintentionally trigger reactive behaviour from other cats as it looks like a stalking/preying/pouncing stance.

Sometimes the area between the shoulder blades has a gritty feel; it can occur as a result of getting caught up by a collar, or falling or twisting when descending from a tree or roof. Cats carrying tension and stiffness in the shoulders often lack confidence and may be less inclined to groom their faces with their paws because they have lost dexterity through the front limbs; as this can be a de-stressing action, an inability to wash and groom can cause them to become increasingly unhappy and stressed

**Back:** Arching of the back, with a gentle flick of the end of the tail when being stroked are usually good indicators of a happy feline, along with a sleek, well cared for coat. A cat that is stiff won't be able to groom properly and the coat may be rough and unkempt. Very reactive behaviour when touched, the presence of dandruff and scruffiness may all be signs of tension in the back. Rippling of the skin and fur, particularly if accompanied by a swishing tail or raised patches of hair can also be indicators of a tight back. When distressed, a cat will tend to puff up the fur along it's back and tail; tightness within the skin and underlying muscles can, however, also cause the hair in that area to stand up giving the appearance that she is adopting defensive/threatening posture. This can send the wrong messages to other cats and as with dogs may be linked to a permanent feeling of stress or arousal in the cat.

When a cat sits, the spine should generally follow a gentle curve, rather than being excessively straight in part or parts of the back. Cats that are notoriously difficult to pick up and handle often have immobile areas of spine. Since cats tend to get picked up a lot, discomfort in the spine or back can cause them to become increasingly defensive in their behaviour towards people.

**Stomach and flank:** Cats that dislike their flanks or bellies being touched may have tension in the



back but may also suffer from digestive problems or discomfort in the abdomen. As anxiety affects the stomach and

is linked to a tight forehead, nervous or stressed cats are unlikely to enjoy contact on or around their bellies.

**Hindquarters:** A timid or worried cat will crouch down through her hindquarters and back legs, shrinking the whole body to try to make them self appear less conspicuous.

A relaxed happy cat will often roll onto her side or back, but if pain or tension is present in the back or hind quarters she may be reluctant to do this, losing the ability to de-stress herself in this way. Tension around the hind quarters often also goes hand in

hand with noise sensitivity and timidity.

Tail: As an extension of the back, the tail can be a mirror of what is happening through the rest of the spine - if a part of it feels stiff or your cat dislikes an area being touched, check again for signs of tension you may have missed noticing in the corresponding area of the



back. A tail which kinks off to one side may indicate the hip is dropped on that side. Cats will use their tails a lot to express themselves, so also watch out for a fast waving tail (increasing stress), constant twitching (tension through the back), gentle twitching at the tip (happy), held high (welcoming), and lashing (get out of the way quick!).

**Paws & Claws:** Look at the shape of the pads, the spread of the toes and the wear on the claws. Scuffed claws are a sign that the cat may have been hit by a car or fallen from a tree.

Unevenly shaped pads, or toes that more spread than the others are indicative of uneven balance through the limbs as the pads will flatten more where there is more weight. Though this is often more obvious in dogs than in cats, injuries or long term stiffness can alter the way in which a cat moves placing greater strain on part of the foot or on one or more of the cats limbs.

Cold feet often accompany timidity or flightiness and sweaty pads can be a sign of stress. Cats that dislike having their paws touched may be nervous, as are those which tend to claw. A cat that is calm will usually slowly extend and relax her claws. Excessive kneading when handled can be indicative of a nervous cat.

**Purring:** Not all cats purr, and those that do aren't always expressing contentment. Cats that don't are

often very tight through the whole body, and may carry a significant amount of tension around their mouths. They may never fully relax. Cats can also purr when very stressed, even when dying. Don't always assume that just because a cat is purring when being handled that it's a sign she's enjoying the contact. As with all tension patterns and behaviours view purring and any other vocalisation or behaviour in context with the rest of cat's posture.

#### **TTouch for Cats**

By Sarah Fisher - TTouch Instructor and Behaviour Counsellor

high success rate in being able to improve wellbeing for cats and as such can provide owners and carers with invaluable tips on how to help their cat over come common problems such as spraying, sensitivity to contact, frustration and so on.

The approach is the same regardless of the animal species we may be working with at the time. Look for any signs of tension in the animal's body such as stiffness through the limbs and reduced mobility through the spine. Pay attention to the coat. Coarse hair, staring hair that stands up on end, dandruff and so on are usually a good indicator of underlying tension in the soft tissue. These may be the areas that trigger the cat to become reactive when contact is made in these areas.

A high number of cats that react to being handled and picked up show signs of discomfort through the body. If you think about the flexion of a cats spine it makes sense that it wouldn't take much for a problem to occur. Cats fall out of trees, slide of roofs, suffer glancing blows from cars, and then of course there are the accidents that can arise from interaction with other animals and humans.

Cats that are fearful will often carry tension through their hindquarters and tail and as a result may be triggered to display defensive behaviours when handled around the hind end. The good news is that a lot of these problems can be overcome with TTouch. If a cat is worried about contact start by initiating contact with long quills attached to long white dressage schooling sticks. If the cat is really concerned and likely to lash out try using two wands with feathers on the end. This diffuses



the focus and as the cat attacks one feather you can start touching the cat with the other one. The length of the wands also means that you do not have to threaten the cat by being too close giving them plenty of space to move or hide if necessary. This approach also keeps the person safe from flying claws and teeth and is a great way to start with cats that habitually hide under the bed or the sofa.

Keep the movement slow and rhythmical and remember to breathe and stay relaxed. Try stroking the cat a few times with one of the wands then give the cat and break and gradually extend the session over several days. A few minutes of TTouch goes a very long way and it is often in the break that most changes occur.

Practitioners also use fake hands, water colour paintbrushes, cloth on long sticks and so on to give the cat the experience of being touched with a variety of textures. You can also use a paintbrush or feather to stroke the whiskers against the side of the cats face and work over the head to encourage the blinking reflex. A happy cat will rub his

A high number of cats that react to being handled and picked up show signs of discomfort through the body.

whiskers against his owners leg and will also slow blink. By creating these behaviours with the use of the brush we can encourage a better sense of mood. It could be likened to

encouraging a person to smile when they are feeling low or afraid.

Stroking any animal with the back of the hand is far less threatening that being stroked with the palm. This approach also ensures that the contact is not heavy. Cats are perfect for teaching people the slowly, slowly approach. It is better to work little and often perhaps no more than 5 minutes at a time. If the cat is accepting of contact with the back of the hand or back of the fingers progress to hand contact with a sheepskin mitt covering hand which reduces the amount of heat the cat might feel from the palm of a hand. If the cat is happy with the sheepskin mitt move on to light finger tip contact, gently moving the skin of the cat in slow, one and a quarter circles noting the cats responses and reactions at all times. If the cat is unsure at any point go back to the step where contact was acceptable and the cat remained calm.

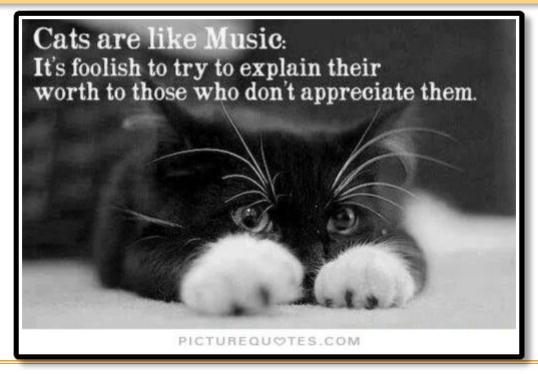
Cats are perfect for teaching people the slowly, slowly approach.

Over stroking a cat may be the trigger for **Relaxation Induced Aggression** – that is the cat seems happy being petted then suddenly lashes out and runs away growling.

Taking a slow approach and working below the threshold at which the cat has to react can improve the cat's tolerance levels and builds trust and understanding in a quiet, respectful manner.

Every interaction we have with a cat will affect his behaviour for better or worse. A cat that is stressed at the vets will benefit from being transported in a cat carrier that is in two parts. The top can be removed slowly and as the lid is taken off a towel can be slid in under the lid to cover the cat and help him to feel safe. A few gentle TTouches can be done to settle the cat before the examination and taking this extra few minutes will save time as the cat will be calmer and more likely to accept the injection, blood test, examination and so on. Many vets and veterinary nurses use this approach with great success and it is far more pleasant (and safer) for all concerned.

Every interaction we have with a cat will affect his behaviour for better or worse.



# The Gap Between House Cats and Wild Cats

by Dr. Becker

umans have been hanging out with cat companions for nearly 10,000 years, but despite all the quality time we've spent with them, we still know very little about how kitties became domesticated.

Humans and canines have been living cooperatively for around 30,000 years, and <u>pet dogs are</u> <u>considered fully domesticated</u>. Cats, on the other hand, are only "semi-domesticated" according to Washington University School of Medicine's Wesley Warren, PhD.

"They only recently split off from wild cats, and some even still breed with their wild relatives. So we were surprised to find DNA evidence of their domestication," says Warren, who is senior author of an analysis of the cat genome published late last year in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

#### House cats vs. Wild Cats

Scientists learn about the genetics of domestication by assessing what parts of the genome are altered as a result of animals living with humans. The research team lead by Washington University compared the genomes of domestic cats to wild cats to look for specific areas of the domestic cat genome that experienced rapid changes.

They discovered that compared to wildcats, house cats have more mutations on genes involved in mediating aggressive behavior, forming memories,



#### Story at-a-glance

- Even though cats have been a part of our lives for thousands of years, we know very little about how they became domesticated
- An international research team recently found DNA evidence of feline domestication through genome sequencing
- The researchers discovered that housecats have evolved away from wild cats in the areas of aggression, memory formation, and rewardseeking behavior

and controlling the ability to learn from either fear or reward-based stimuli. The cats with domestication-friendly gene mutations mated and passed those traits down from parent to kitten until there was a good-sized population of less aggressive cats.

According to Stephen O'Brien, another of the paper's senior authors and chief scientific officer at the Theodosius Dobzhansky Center for Genome Bioinformatics in St. Petersburg, Russia:

"There's a big difference between house cats and wildcats. A house cat will sit on your lap, but a wild cat will hand you your behind." The researchers hypothesize that thousands of years ago, humans probably grew to appreciate cats for their rodent control abilities. In order to entice the kitties to stick around, the humans offered food rewards.

#### **Cat Genome Project**

This research is actually part of a larger cat genome sequencing project that began in 2007 to study inherited diseases in house cats. Some of those diseases are similar to human diseases, including neurological disorders, and infectious and metabolic diseases.

For this study, the researchers sequenced a female Abyssinian cat named Cinnamon whose lineage has been traced back several generations. Cinnamon's sequencing provided the reference genome. The researchers also sequenced the genomes of certain purebred domestic cats and determined that certain features such as coat color, texture, and pattern, as well as facial structure and how docile a cat is are markers of their domestication.

They also compared the cat genome with the genome of other mammals, including a tiger, cow, dog, and human, to learn more about feline biology. The differences they discovered in the cat genome help explain why kitties are obligate carnivores, and how their eyesight and sense of smell differ from other animals.

For example, the researchers found specific fatmetabolizing gene mutations in cats and tigers that give them the ability to digest fatty meals of animal protein. These mutations aren't present in the genes of cows and humans.

The team also discovered that cats have fewer genes for smell than dogs, probably because they rely less on smell to hunt than dogs do. But they have more pheromone-detecting genes that allow them to seek out mates, which can be a bit of a challenge for naturally solitary animals.

Kitties also have better hearing than most carnivores, and their <u>vision</u> is extraordinary in low light, which makes sense since they tend to be more active at dawn and dusk.

So while the genomes of house cats have changed very little since splitting from their wild counterparts, it's still possible with sequencing to see markers of more recent domestication.



Compared to wildcats, house cats have more mutations on genes involved in mediating aggressive behavior, forming memories, and controlling the ability to learn from either fear or reward-based stimuli.

#### Website of the month

www.littlebigcat.com/

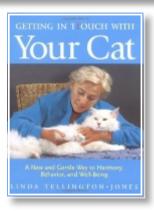


ittle Big Cat



If you're looking for reliable information on holistic health, behavior, and nutrition for your cat (or dog!), you've come to the right place! Holistic veterinarian Dr. Jean Hofve and cat behaviorist Jackson Galaxy are here to help!

Book of the month



# Getting in TTouch with your Cat

Widely known for its powers of healing, training, and communicating, Tellington-Jones' TTouch Method has proven enormously beneficial for all kinds of animals, from horses and dogs to elephants and cockatoos. Now this celebrated author has written a book specifically for cat owners, breeders, and veterinarians, offering advice on how to solve a wide range of behavioral and physical problems. Tellington-Jones shows how the TTouch Method can help cats adapt to new environments, calm timid or nervous cats, and correct aggressive behavior like biting, scratching, and fighting. The book also illustrates the physiological benefits of TTouch and how it helps to ease pain and stress caused by arthritis, carsickness, digestive problems, and other disorders.

# Bits and Pieces





# TTouch® for Cats

TTouch Instructor Robyn Hood demonstrates the Tellington TTouch method for a cat, discussing way of using TTouch to introduce yourself to a new cat.

Part 1 - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eAfUiWqsJbo

TTouch Instructor Robyn Hood demonstrates how to touch a cat in a nonthreatening way without over-stimulating using different textures as alternatives to the hand.

Part 2 - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=claYCBZbsAQ

