



White Whiskers

AGING PET CARE

Mobility · Pain · Hospice

Senior Cat Mobility

Many of us who have spent a significant amount of time amongst cats are familiar with the cranky old cat trope. While any cat may be protective of his or her space, object to being held or prefer avoiding the attention of dogs, children or other cats, it's important to distinguish between the cats that have always preferred a more solitary lifestyle to those who only begin to lean that direction as they age. While our dog companions are often reluctant to share their vulnerabilities with us, our cats typically go out of their way to hide their discomforts, making the diagnosis of age-related pain particularly difficult in our feline friends.



Retrospective studies examining the joint health of cats that have died from natural causes reveal that the vast majority of senior cats live with significant degenerative joint disease. At the same time, many if not most of these examined cats were without a pain or arthritis diagnosis in their medical record. As a result, most were never put on a pain modulation program despite the presence of significant disease. So why are cats so challenging to help and how can we do better?

The first challenge we must overcome is in the diagnosis of age-related pain. Our cats show pain more through subtle behavioral changes within the home than they do through palpation in a stressful clinic environment. In such an environment, under clinical scrutiny and while handled by strangers, our cats modify how they act to stimuli to ensure that nobody finds their weak points. That's why quiet, gentle and thoughtful examination in their home environment can be so useful in accurately pinpointing where things hurt.

Once diagnosed, our second challenge is how best to relieve that discomfort? Our kitties are traditionally challenging to orally medicate with many cats taking exception to our attempts to help them. Furthermore, due to the predisposition towards kidney disease in our senior cats, many veterinarians have historically been reluctant to use traditional arthritis medications like NSAIDS (kitty aspirin) which can tax the urinary system. Luckily, we have options that can provide a balance between our cats' therapeutic needs and the challenges of feline consent. We take the time to chart the course that's right for YOUR cat. And when we find that correct balance, one of the first things clients tell us is that their cat is jumping on the counter again, eating better or getting along better with their housemates.

We all deserve comfort during our golden years and just because cats are better at hiding their pain than dogs or humans does not mean they deserve it any less. It may take a little more time and effort on our part to read between the whiskers and diagnose the pain and then a bit more to find the best solution for your cat, but it is a challenge that we can overcome together. We welcome the opportunity to help both you and your cat.

Welcome to the White Whiskers Family!

www.WhiteWhiskers.vet