

Why does my cat wake me up so early, and what can I do about it?

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Credit: Beyzaa Yurtkuran from Pexels

You've got an important meeting in the morning and your cat wakes you at 4am. Why? And what can you do to stop this happening again?

Although cats are evolved for night-time activity, during domestication they have adapted to human lifestyles.

Domestic cats tend to be most active early in the morning and at dusk, not in the middle of the night. They also change their [activity cycles](#) to fit in with their human housemates.

This means if you sleep at night, your cat should also be resting. And a lot of people do sleep with their cat. In a [survey](#) of women in the U.S., around 30% slept with at least one cat.

So why do some cats want to play in the wee hours?

The reason *why* your cat is waking you up will often help you understand how to stop them. Here are three reasons your cat might be waking you up and how to address the issue.

1. They're hungry

This is among the most common reasons. Unfortunately, one of the first things a sleepy person will do is feed their cat. This rewards the behavior and makes the cat more likely to repeat it.

To start addressing this problem, make sure your cat is getting enough to eat throughout the day. You can feed them a meal or a satisfying snack right before you go to bed.

If you usually feed your cat in the morning, you need to make sure your cat is not associating wake up time with breakfast time. Leave a gap between when you get out of bed and when you feed kitty breakfast—aim for at least half an hour.

You can also train your cat to associate something else with getting fed,

such as saying "breakfast time!"

2. They don't have a routine

Cats love predictability.

Keeping a regular routine has even been associated with [reduced stress levels](#) in cats.

To maintain a routine, keep mealtimes, play times and any grooming close to the same time each day.

Empty litter at regular, predictable intervals (dirty or disturbed litter may also be a reason your cat is waking you up). Try not to move litter trays, bowls or scratch posts around unless needed.

If something changes in their environment—you go on holiday, move furniture or have a new house guest or pet—your cat may return to early morning wake up calls. This is typical for cats.

Keep the routine as consistent as you can and eventually your cat will settle in to the new normal.

3. They're not using up their energy throughout the day

It's common knowledge cats love to sleep, but they also love to play and move their bodies just like us.

It's important to give your cat access to a variety of toys and resources around the house to interact with, especially if you're not home often.

Scratch posts offer cats a place to climb and stretch. Balls, soft and motorized toys give them an opportunity to play and exercise.

When you are home, engage your cat with an interactive toy (like a cat wand) or play a game of chase around the house. You can even try making up a game your cat will enjoy.

Cats get bored easily. Keep variety in your play times. And don't play with your cat in the hour before you want to go to bed. Ideally, a play session before you go out and once you get home should help to keep your kitty quiet overnight.

Help! I've made these changes and my cat still woke me up!

Your cat might still wake you up for some time. This behavior may even get worse in the short term as your cat adjusts. The key is to ignore your cat's behavior at night or in the early morning. Don't get up and, if you can, don't interact with your cat when they wake you.

If you've tried everything and your cat still wakes you up, it's time to go to see your veterinarian. There might be a health reason causing the behavior.

Hopefully, you and your cat can come to an agreement about when it's sleep time and when it's wake-up time. It is definitely possible to love your cat and still get your sleep.

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