



Paw Prints

Jodi Schneider
Columnist

Unusual feline behaviors

Cats often surprise us with their unpredictability and, at times, they may even seem downright eccentric. Weird cat behaviors may look unusual to humans, but for the most part it's completely normal for them.

As you've probably noticed, if you've had kitties, cats spend much of their day snoozing, despite having the athletic ability of an Olympic sprinter. Plus, they're known to be most active at night, when their instinctive prey attitude is out, and they are ready to pounce. All these factors combine and manifest into the "3 a.m. crazies," when you suddenly hear your sweet cat racing around the house in the middle of the night like she had a pack of dogs in pursuit. Yes, this means streaking around the house in a maniacal frenzy, knocking stuff over, trampling over your (sleeping) body, and yowling in foreign cat tongues.

It's nothing to be overly concerned about. Your cat's nocturnal hyperactivity can often be attributed to pent-up energy without an appropriate outlet for release.

Has Kitty ever jumped up onto your lap while you're sitting in a chair, start purring and then move closer to your face and literally butt her forehead against your cheek or chin? And sometimes it's a gentle nudge, but other times it's almost a head to head bone-crusher.

Head-butting is a high honor that your cat bestows on those accepted members of her tribe!

This behavior, often described by cat parents as "head-butting" is actually head-bunting. Cats have scent glands all over their body, and they use them to leave a scent mark on objects (including you). The bunting and rubbing are a cat's way of being social and friendly.

So, when your kitty engages head-bunting or head-rubbing, she is placing her scent there as a

social and affectionate gesture. Bunting may also be used as an attention-seeking behavior. Like if she comes up to head-bunt your leg right around her dinner time.

According to cat behaviorist Pam Johnson-Bennett, cat head-bunting is typically used for bonding and social purposes.

"For the cat to place his face so close to yours and engage in this bonding behavior is quite an act of trust," she said.

Cats are amazing. They are masters at converting awkward places into cozy spots. Tiny containers, computer keyboards, hard or soft surfaces, and even people's heads can be ideal hangouts. Many of these places seem impossible for kitties to fit in. Yet, cats somehow manage to squeeze into tiny spaces, perfectly sized for animals who are no larger than hamsters. Then they contort themselves into unusual positions and fall asleep.

They also are great at making hard, cold sinks and bath tubs look like cozy spots in which to curl up and nap. Other times they are the masters of hiding — finding places deep in closets, in drawers, or behind furniture to hide and snooze.

Some cats have a penchant for human heads, sleeping and perching on them.

It's not just one factor that influences where cats hang out. There are many well-founded reasons that make some spots more appealing than others.

One of the reasons cats squeeze into tiny boxes, lounge deep in closets, nap on heads, and curl up in sinks is to regulate body temperature.

On a cold day, there's nothing sweeter than finding a warm place to curl up and nap. It's not unusual to find cats under covers, on high shelves (heat rises), or dozing on heat register covers.

Boxes have a lot of things going for them. Most, especially those made of cardboard, retain heat. Size and positioning make a difference, too. Depending on the direction they are facing, boxes can shelter cats from cold breezes. Tiny boxes are cozy, helping cats keep warm, especially when they are snugly curled up in them.

Boxes also provide an enclosed, secure space where your cat will feel safe. And they help reduce stress. Although all cats benefit from having access to them, a newly adopted cat as well



PHOTO BY JODI SCHNEIDER

Tinkerbelle loves being in a box.

as those in potentially stressful situations are helped when they have boxes they can retreat to.

A 2014 study conducted on shelter cats in The Netherlands found that cats who had access to boxes weren't as stressed, got used to their surroundings quicker, and had more interest in hobnobbing with people than kitties who didn't have boxes to hide in.

And sinks are ideal spots for keeping cool during hot summer days. A bonus is that tight confined spaces promote secure feelings for a couple of reasons. They

help some cats feel safe, protected by the tight sides of the container. The sides can act like armor — shielding them from predators and adversaries.

Basic survival instincts influence where cats choose to hang out. Their personalities and histories, along with the environment, dictate their choices of safe places.

Cats have many unique and amusing behavioral traits, so if you find your feline friend head-butting you while you're on the computer or find her hiding in an old shoe box, it's just part of her day.

CascadeSothebysRealty.com Cascade Sotheby's INTERNATIONAL REALTY

69991 Santa Fe Trail
Remarkable 6,150 sq. ft. custom home on 2.47 acres. 6 bedrooms, 4.5 baths and absolutely stunning Cascade mountain views! Cascade Meadow Ranch offers equestrian and recreational benefits for all lifestyles, including a community equestrian barn and indoor arena. \$1,149,000. MLS#201800046

Patty Cordoni
Principal Broker | 541.771.0931
patty.cordoni@cascadesir.com
Michelle White, Co-Broker

5858 Southwest Mt. Jefferson, Powell Butte

Come experience West Powell Butte Estates!
Country living only minutes from Redmond. This gorgeous 20-acre flat lot is ready for your dream home. Owner will carry or trade!
\$177,000. MLS#201808451

Debbie Brown
541-419-8156
Lic#200511204

Corrie C. Lake
541-521-2392
Lic#201218852

LEGACY REALTY
WWW.LEGACY.REALTY
262 S. Cedar St., Sisters
Behind Hop-n-Brew

Mountain Views & Privacy!

69820 Goodrich Road Sisters, OR \$2,100,000

Beautiful 4,095 square foot custom home on 80 acres with no neighbors apparent! Home features stunning wood work, huge windows, superinsulated ICF walls & engineered foam panel roof system, Travertine & tile flooring with in-floor radiant heat. Total energy independence (wood fired backup furnace, Finnish soapstone heating fireplace, solar, diesel generator, plus CEC grid power). Large Barn/Shop with guest quarters above, RV station, fenced horse compound with outdoor arena, large loafing area, round pen, Sisters Schools. MLS# 201806682.

Mike Mansker, PC
Licensed Oregon Broker
800-794-5727
mike@mikemansker.com
www.mikemansker.com

COLDWELL BANKER

Reed Bros. Realty
291 W Cascade Ave
Sisters, OR 97759