

Bizarre Feline Behaviors



By RITA REIMERS

Cats are known for their mysterious ways and off-the-wall behaviors in general. There are some cats, however, whose behaviors are just so quirky and bizarre that you don't know if you should laugh or call your vet.

Here are eight odd behaviors that I've come across, and I will attempt to explain just why some happen. Does your cat do any of these?

Staring at the wall

Have you ever seen your cat sitting perfectly still, just staring at the wall? My cats do that quite a lot. So then of course I start looking around, trying to figure out what they see that I don't. While it's a common and harmless habit most cats have, it does tend to make me wonder if my cats are a bit like Haley Joel Osment in *The Sixth Sense*!

Pushing things to the floor

Particularly when I am busy working in my office, my cat, Sonny, will come along and randomly knock objects to the floor. It seems the more I ignore him, the more things end up on my floor. While it's common for cats to play with their prey — and this behavior has been likened to that — I'm not so sure that's always the case. Personally,

I think Sonny is trying to annoy me just enough so I'll get up and open the bag of treats for him.

Stealing things

We've all seen those videos of cats stealing things from the neighbors and bringing them home. The reason it's so funny is that cats really do take things that don't belong to them, and quite regularly. When cats steal and then hide things, they're mimicking the hunt they would be doing in the wild, burying their catch to eat later.

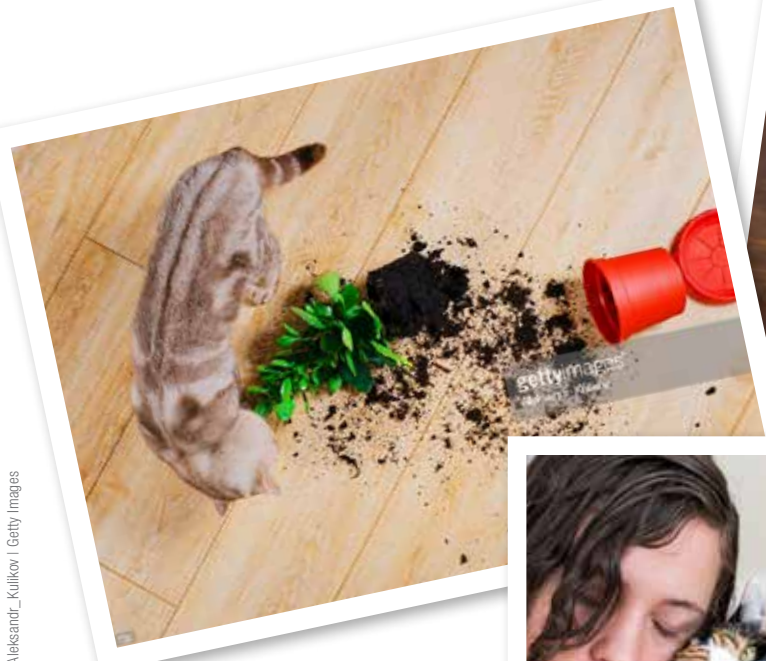
My friend Linda laments, "My cat,

Karma, is smart enough to open the jar where I keep my hair ties, take one, then put the lid back on. I am running out of hair ties, and I am bitter!"

Head butting

Bonk, bonk, bonk! That's the sound of a cat hitting a person with his head, trying to get some attention. Head butting, or bunting, as is the proper term, is a very high honor a cat bestows upon those accepted as members of his tribe. As he bunts, he's also marking them with his scent, declaring his ownership.

This behavior is used solely for social bonding, showing friendliness and acceptance. I also think this is how cats poke us to get our attention; my Punkin does this if I take too long to pet him when he sits next to me on the sofa.



Putting toys in the food dish

My friend Linda sent me a photo the other day. Her cat, Kizzy, had put a toy in his empty food bowl after he had eaten his dinner. “Why does he do this?”

This is another throwback to the wild when, as a wildcat, Kizzy would have been outside hunting and gathering food. Some cats will put their toys in their food dish as a safe place to keep them for later, just like a cat in the wild would bury his catch to hide it from predators.

“Oh that makes sense,” Linda says. “He never did that until we brought Karma home.” Sounds to me like someone doesn’t want to share his toys!

Teeth chattering and chirping

Did you ever hear a cat chirp? Usually it’s accompanied by the gnashing of teeth, which sounds like someone’s teeth chattering in the cold, and whiskers that stand on end. I saw my cat, Simon, doing the chirp n’ chatter the other day when he was staring at the wall (see item 1). Turns out, he was watching a tiny little bug who was just out of reach, so he couldn’t swat it down.

Frustration and excitement often



Playing/sleeping in boxes

We’ve all heard “If I fits, I sits” when explaining the cat-in-box syndrome. Even large cats in the wild will sit in a box given the opportunity (Google it and see!). But just why do cats love boxes so much?

A deep box is a cozy place to curl up for a nap, hidden away safely from predators while they take a comfortable snooze. Add a blanket to the box, or not — either way, cats love to cozy up inside. When our Chewy.com order comes, the cats can’t wait for the brand-new boxes to be emptied, so they can claim new napping spots. And let’s not forget the great fun they have tearing the cardboard into tiny bits, all over my carpet. Yeah, thanks fellas!

These are just a few of the more bizarre and quirky behaviors that are oh-so-common in the feline world. We can play into some of them and have a wonderful time bonding with our kitties in their zany little moments, now that we understand what drives them. 🐾



Rita Reimers’ Cat Behavior Coaching has helped many cat owners better understand their feline friends. Visit RitaReimers.com to read her cat behavior blog or to book a cat behavior coaching session. Rita is also the CEO/owner of JustForCatsPetSitting.com. Connect with her on Facebook and on Twitter at [@thecatanalyst](https://twitter.com/thecatanalyst).

cause the chattering behavior, especially when they see birds outside that they cannot hunt. I’ve seen my spoiled house cats staring out the window at birds, frustrated they can’t get to their prey. Believe me, they’re happier with the prey-in-cans anyway; no work required!

Zooming from room to room

Wait, what was that orange streak? Why is Colby suddenly deciding he MUST run RIGHT NOW with all his might from the living room into my office and back.

“Zoomies” are how cats burn off their pent-up energy, left over from their hard day of hanging around the house waiting for supper. Um OK, but why right then? And why at top speed in the middle of the night when the house is very, very quiet? Maybe your cat has a vendetta against you, and pay-back is, well you know, a zooming cat keeping you up at night!

