Cats: Creatures of Comfort. . . and Warmth

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As fussy as your cat's behavior might appear to be when it comes to staying warm, there are reasons for it. Although she understands little about how her need for temperature control works, she knows what she likes.

Five facts your cat wants you to know about temperature and her comfort:

1. **Cats seek warmth -** You may often see your cat following the sunshine along the floor, or stretching out in enjoyment in front of the heat registers. Cats like height, and often may be found on the top shelf of a bookcase, the top of the refrigerator, or on a fireplace mantel, napping. She knows these places are often the warmest places in the house, as well.
2. **A cat's ability to control heat varies with age -** Because newborn kittens do not generate enough of their own heat, they must rely on their mother. From the time they are born, kittens have a keen sense of temperature from receptors on their faces. This helps them find their mother before their eyes have opened.

   As cats grow into adulthood, they still seek heat. Compared to people, cats have fewer heat receptors on their bodies. Humans feel pain when their skin temperature reaches 112°F, whereas cats may not show pain until the temperature of their skin reaches 126°F. Cats can stay in longer contact with something hot enough to burn them without experiencing pain compared to a human. This is why cats can burn themselves, for example, walking across a hot stove.
3. **Breed makes a difference -** Some breeds are known to be more cold tolerant than others. For instance, Maine Coon Cats, with their thick coats, can be comfortable on an unheated screen porch in the fall, or even on a mild winter day.
4. **Seasonal changes may affect your cat -** When warm spring weather and longer days arrive, many cats will be more active and playful. There are birds and chipmunks to watch through the window, more smells to investigate, and the increase in human activity may provide more interesting things to watch and explore.
5. **Illness may cause a change in your cat's heat-seeking behavior -** Hyperthyroid cats may be less likely to seek out warm places to sleep. Other illnesses may cause a cat to seek out warmer places than normal. If your cat's behavior changes, please contact your veterinarian.

Here are some easy ways to help your cat set her heating controls to comfortable:

- Install a pet door to a safe, enclosed outside area so your cat can follow the sun indoors and out, and take full advantage of temperature changes.
- If your cat doesn't have such a perch available, set up a deluxe tree or kitty tower for her, ideally positioned near a window to catch the sun.
- Your cat, wanting optimum warmth while sleeping, will love the Cozy Cushion, a soft bed that contains a special thermo-reflective material that conserves her body heat and reflects it back when needed most.
- When vacant, our Heated Cat Cup bed maintains a temperature just a few degrees above room temperature to tempt your cat. When she climbs aboard, a special sensor raises the temperature a few more degrees, making it delightfully comfortable.

Pay attention to the changes taking place in your environment and with your cat. You will find that providing the warmth your cat craves can be easy and inexpensive.

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