

The Vocal Cat

Most cats use vocalization to communicate, with us or with other animals, but some cats are notorious for being talkers. Siamese and other Oriental breeds (and mixes with those breeds) are particularly known for it. If you pay attention, you can probably figure out what your cat is looking for: some meows are for seeking attention, some are looking for food, some serve as greetings, and more. For most of us, this communication with our cats is one of the things we enjoy. If your cat's vocalization is suddenly increasing or keeping you up at night, there are some things you can do.

Changes in Your Cat's Behavior

Cat that suddenly make lots of vocalization when they previously didn't talk as much, could be a sign of illness or discomfort. Have your cat checked thoroughly by your veterinarian; cats often don't show signs of sickness until they're very ill.

Asking for Attention

Your cat may be meowing for attention - it usually works, after all! If your cat gets anything at all as a result, whether it's petting, play, or getting pushed away or told to be quiet, they'll keep up the talking. Remember to give your cat lots of attention when they're quiet, so that they don't have to ask for it. Then when they do talk for attention, you can ignore it. Don't punish your cat for talking to you -- that can backfire by making your cat feel more anxious and needy.

Grief

A cat who's grieving is likely to vocalize more. If your cat has experienced a loss, of a person or other companion, they may go through a grieving period. You can help by keeping your routine as stable as possible and giving your cat companionship and playtime to help them through it.

Household Changes

Changes in your household can also cause your cat to vocalize more. Make sure to give your cat a routine they can count on as much as you can to help them through the transition, and to give attention, including cuddling and playtime that your cat enjoys, when your cat is quiet.

From Outdoor to Indoor Cat

The transition from outdoors to indoors can be difficult for cats to make. If you've decided to keep your cat indoors, your cat will take some time to get used to the change. Some things you can do to make it easier: schedule some very active playtime with your cat at the times they'd normally go outside to tire them out and establish a new routine, provide your cat with a view of the outdoors—a window perch looking out on a birdfeeder is ideal--and make sure your cat is spayed or neutered.

Growling and Hissing

If your cat is hissing or growling rather than meowing, chirping, or trilling, please see the handouts "Cat Aggression Towards People" or "Aggression Between Cats".