



The Feline Grimace Scale

How to read pain in your cat's face · a visual reference

PETSLIKEMINE
ARTHRITIS & MSK SPACE

Cats show pain in subtle changes to their face. The Feline Grimace Scale looks at five features, each scored from 0 (relaxed) to 2 (marked). **Look when your cat is resting calmly** — not just after handling, travel, or anything stressful, which can change the face on its own. Compare what you see to the photos below.

FEATURE what to compare	NO PAIN grade 0	MODERATE grade 1	MARKED grade 2
Ears Relaxed: Upright, facing forward Watch: Flattened and rotated outward			
Eyes Relaxed: Open, relaxed Watch: Squinted, partially or fully closed			
Muzzle Relaxed: Relaxed, rounded Watch: Tense, more elliptical			
Whiskers Relaxed: Loose, gently curved Watch: Straightened, pushed forward			
Head Relaxed: Held above the shoulders Watch: Held low, level with or below the back			

How to use. Glance at each feature when your cat is calm and at rest. The more features sitting toward grade 2, the more likely your cat is uncomfortable. This is a guide to help you notice and describe what you see, not a diagnosis — bring your observations to your vet. Pair it with the Feline Pain Observation Checklist to track changes week to week.

**THEIR FACE TELLS YOU
WHAT THEY WON'T.**

Based on the Feline Grimace Scale. Evangelista MC, Watanabe R, Leung VSY, Monteiro BP, O'Toole E, Pang DSJ, Steagall PV. *Facial expressions of pain in cats: the development and validation of a Feline Grimace Scale.* Scientific Reports 2019;9:19128. Licensed under CC BY 4.0.