



GATO AVOCADO

**Prepare your Cat for Winter
(including the Holidays)**

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gatoavocado.com

*ATTENTION: I am not a veterinarian. I am a proud member of the Felis Silvestris Catus family, (translates to “domestic cat” – an inside joke in the cat community) that kindly shares his knowledge of our species to you. I can’t provide specific treatments for your feline friend. Please refer to your veterinarian. Meow!



The bilingual 2 dimensional cat living in a 3 dimensional world.
Helping other beings understand their feline friends.



Protect your feline from the cold (‘Cause hypothermia is not fun)

Wintertime. Beautiful clear skies, snowy mountains, fire keeping the house warm. You feel like going out for a walk? You arm yourself with coats, hats and boots... us felines have to deal with it using the same coat we have all year round - which is fabulous if you are a big fluffy Maine Coon; but for those with short hair it can turn deadly.

Let me tell you a little very shameful secret: cats are awesome superheroes and like them, we have an archenemy. Its called Body Temperature as in it must be kept at a steady 100°F (38°C) or our system starts to fail. So when the weather turns cold our body's energy gets depleted trying to stay warm lowering the sugar levels to a dangerous degree... and that's when hypothermia creeps in.

A hypothermic cat may show symptoms like uncontrollable shaking and looking like their internal GPS ran out of juice. He needs immediate help. Here's what you can do:

- Wet kitty needs a warm bath, not too hot please! And none of that blow-drying stuff, use a towel.
- Dry but shaky kitty needs to be snuggled in warm blankets.
- Check the temperature every 10 minutes until it goes back to normal.
- A little spoonful of honey or syrup helps normalize sugar levels.

Now sometimes hypothermia brings a friend: frostbite. Happens when certain areas of the body, usually the ones with less hair - ears, paws, tail - are exposed to the cold. To treat the cat a warm bath is recommended, then kitty NEEDS a trip to the vet; no fooling around here.

Is there a way to avoid all this drama you ask? Of course!

- Best one: keep your cat indoors.
- If he's an indoor / outdoor one, keep his outings to a minimum.
- Make his sleeping areas as warm as you can. This means more blankets and / or bed blankets off the floor.
- Tap on the hood of your car before starting it in the morning! Feral cats find warmth anyway they can, cars are a good heat source. If the feral belongs to a colony, be a good neighbor, boxes with blankets away from the elements are safe hideouts for outdoor kitties.

Time for long, fluffy coats (Less shedding is good)

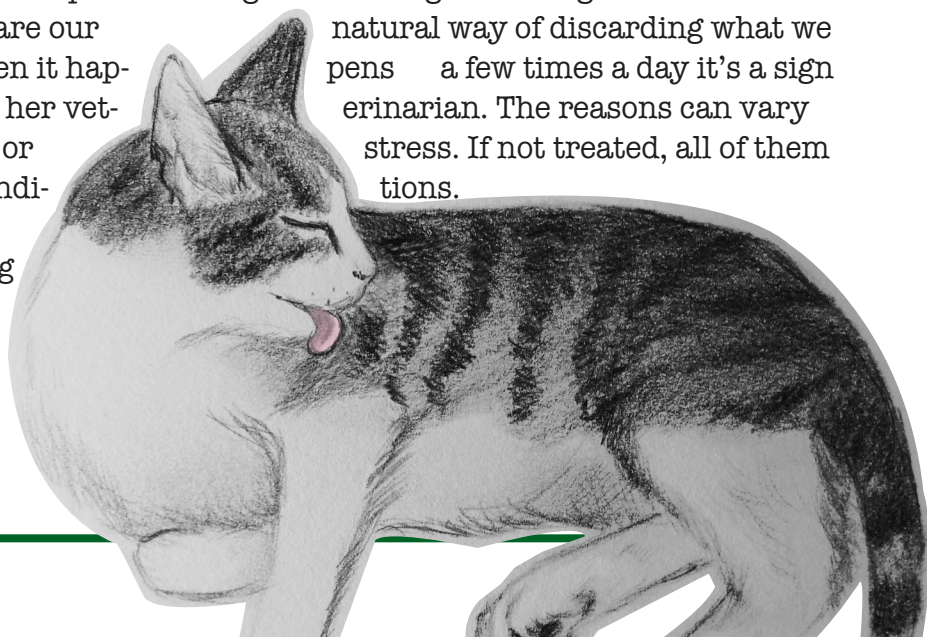
During the colder months of the year you will notice your kitty's coat getting fluffier. The shedding slows down considerably to keep us warmer in the winter. The process is more dramatic with outdoor or outdoor/indoor cats than the strictly indoor ones because sun exposure is a big trigger: the more hours we spend relishing those rays, the more our skin will protect itself.

Indoor-only cats still grow a thicker coat, but not as dramatic. Being pampered inside the house means keeping the temperature more or less even year round with some sun showers, but not as intense.

The best way to keep the new heavy coat in check is to groom it a few times a week; maybe daily if your feline has long hair. Why the extra work? 'Cause the more you groom the less chances of hairballs appearing in your carpet. That's right, your cat will bathe more aggressively to keep the hair in place, but in the process, more hair will be ingested... and it doesn't always follow the designed path, coming back up. Breaks the routine, but not in a fun way.

A health warning: If your cat fails in the bathing department, letting her fur lose its shine and get matted, it can be a cry for help. Something is not right. Same goes for excessive amounts of hairballs. Sure they are our natural way of discarding what we don't want in our bodies, but when it happens a few times a day it's a sign of concern. Have her checked by her veterinarian. The reasons can vary from dietary, allergies, infection or stress. If not treated, all of them are gateways to more serious conditions.

So there you go. A little grooming goes a long way. Keeps the home clean while your feline enjoys a wild oh-so-cool look.



Enjoying (Surviving?) the holidays with your cat

The end of October is the beginning of what the human community calls their holiday season, keeping the party going 'til January to the annoyance of the feline population. Sure, we enjoy the wild array of boxes that start showing up for our amusement but with all the stress we have to go thru to get them, are they really worth it?



For you guys is a fun change in your daily routine, and by now you know what changes in routine do to your feline: we are simply not happy with it. We like to know that everything is going to stay the way we are used to every hour of every day. Routine is our drug of choice.

So when you come home with a gigantic tree, move our sofa out of the way and start adding lights to every corner we hold dearly, it's going to cause chaos. Oh yes, be prepared. Your sweet kitty will defend her territory.

To avoid controversy, we all must compromise. If the holidays are so important to you that your cat's needs have to be shaken, something has got to give.

Chapter 1: VISITORS

We. Don't. Like. Them. First come the goons and creatures from hell demanding candy. The second ones arrive all dressed up and - I think - straight out of hibernation, devour-



ing everything on the table... And finally the last group comes bearing gifts (with fun boxes I must sadly admit), shiny objects and chanting; even worse, sometimes they stay over FOR DAYS!

You may notice your cat's attitude starting to shift towards the dark side; she will look for a safe place to hide... outside. It's a fact that most pets get lost during the holidays. It's a sad way to end the year. So this is what you have to do:

- Prepare a safe room with everything she needs. Bring in her food, water, fave toys, blankets and litter box. She won't be happy, but will feel safe. Check on her as many times during the day as you want to reassure her that everything will be alright. If someone wants to visit her, make sure you accompany them.
- If the visitors are (gulp) staying... Let them know that there is a cat in the house. Inform them of her routine, if she is skittish or way friendly so they know what to expect and how to approach her. If you get one of those annoying "I'm allergic to cats" relative, have a list prepared of all the hotels in the area. Cat was here first.

Chapter 2: DECORATIONS

So what you're telling me is that everything you add to the home either shines, smells good or lights up and I'm not supposed to play with any of them?!

The Tree: This one stands proudly in the middle of the room and is promptly decorated with lights and beautiful ornaments that beg to be play with. To make it "Cat Safe" this are the changes that have to be done:

- Cover the water bowl: For us is like you added another fountain. But that water is sometimes spiked with chemicals and aspirin to help the tree live longer making it very dangerous for any pet to drink. Even if you only use fresh water, the movement to go and get a drink can tip the tree over. Don't take chances cover it up!

- Ornaments: You can brag about your chill kitty and how he doesn't care about tree decorations; but that feline is part tiger and it will come out when you least expect it. Your tree is not the place to show off your expensive one of a kind ornament; that one stays inside a closed cabinet. Wood and plastic ones are safer options.

- Lights: Honestly, I think you like them more than we do. We find them kind of annoying really, but they do attach to the wall and THAT we find extremely interesting! Why? You can't handle the answer so I'll keep it to myself. But your job is to cover those attachments so we don't get zapped by electric currents that burn our tongues and kill the jolly mood.

And careful with having lit candles around... I think it is self explanatory...

Holiday Plants: Lovely poinsettias. Romantic mistletoe. Oh Christmas Tree... They are - all of them - poisonous to cats! Keep them out of our reach (and you know how far we can jump). If your kitty is very curious, consider getting fake plants. Better yet, get a fake tree. Save the forests.

Chapter 3: FOOD

Fall is candy season. All those bags that you buy "for the kids"? Yeah, we know better. We also know that sweet is not our favorite flavor. Being carnivores and all, sugary treats are NOT part of our diet, so please don't offer unless you like cleaning vomit. We



are scared of the costumes and can't eat the candy. Halloween is not our friend. But then we go to Thanksgiving, the one with the yummy turkey and the gravy and the buttery mashed potatoes. Maybe our favorite holiday. Except not every item on the menu agrees with our stomachs as much as we would like:

- Gravy
- Butter
- Mashed Potatoes
- Alcohol of any kind (talking to you eggnog)

What about the almighty pumpkin, queen of the season? Actually in small doses is very good for us. It is rich in fiber so helps our digestive system and keeps us in shape. But it has to be given au naturel, meaning without spices, preservatives and delicious butter.

A little bit of turkey is fine as well... just avoid giving kitty the fat and peppery slice.

By the time Christmas and Hanukkah arrive, we have probably gained a few pounds so may partake with the delicious dinner (along with lunches, snacks and what-the-hell-is-once-a-year treats) but definitely need a bit of extra exercise.



Chapter 4: GIFTS

'Tis the season for giving and receiving. It is totally fine to bring gifts to your cat. We love them!

A: they come wrapped in easy to rip paper and B: usually in a box.

The problem with gifting is when the present is a live kitty. Your friend loves kitties and the shelters are busting with cats that need homes so it is perfect, right? WRONG.

A lot of humans do this every holiday season. Giving a pet as a gift seems like a beautiful idea, but the person receiving the cat may not be ready for a pet either financially or psychologically. And guess what happens to that poor kitty? She gets sent back to the shelter a few weeks later. Traumatic experience for everyone involved. What starts as a genuine love gesture ends up a very sad mess.

A better way to do this is to go to the shelter, get all the paperwork, pay the adoption fee (shelters need all the donations they can get), wrap it all with a bow and THEN gift it to your friend. That way she gets to decide when the time is right to go and pick out her new companion.



WHO IS GATO AVOCADO?

“Born in black and white. Stuck in a rut was not his intension. He knew of other worlds where color, light and perspective are in constant motion. Curiosity along with ninja like skills and multilingual capabilities helped

Gato Avocado find a way out. Now his 2 dimensional paws trot our 3 dimensional world.”

So reads the movie trailer in thunderous James Earl Jones voice... in my head! Yes, I am a 2 dimensional cat - born from a deep love of classic illustrations and paper dolls - fluent in English, Español and Feline that jumped into this world to explore. But as I traveled I found that us cats were completely misunderstood, sometimes with very sad

consequences. This gave my mission a new purpose: to help other species figure out why cats do what they do so we can all live peacefully together.

To do this I needed to spread the message as far as my impossibly big eyes can see with a mixture of talking the talk (which is why the blog is written in English and Español), doing the catwalk and having some fun in the process.

Like every cat, I have mastered the art of social media and print so you can find me anytime.

Thanks for caring,
Gato Avocado

Wanna talk? iamgatoavocado@gmail.com

Prefer the social scene? Find me on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and Google +
and of course on the main source:

gatoavocado.com
