



# Uncling THE CLINGY CAT

BY RITA REIMERS

**A**fter a long day working, I grab an iced tea and head to my sofa to unwind. My tripod kitty, Smoochy, sees me, and the race is on! Even on three legs, she is lightning fast. Who will get to the sofa first? Smoochy will, of course. Then we spend the next few minutes trying to get comfortable as she wiggles her way onto my chest, making any hope of seeing the TV an impossibility!

Of course, I laugh.

I love her, but sometimes I just wish I could sit down for a few moments without 102 degrees of cat butt on my chest, or worse, my face! A few of my other cats are very attached to me, too, but none like Smoochy and her late brother, Sonny. Why is Smoochy so insistent upon being as close to me as she possibly can? Does she have sepa-

ration anxiety, or does she just love me that much?

## Behind the cling

There are a few reasons a cat can decide to stick to you like Velcro. Let's explore the more common causes.



**Separation anxiety:** If a cat has a rough start in life as a kitten or has been

passed around from house to house, she could develop separation anxiety. Likely it takes some time for these kitties to attach to a human, and when they do it can cause anxiety if their human is not around.



**Jealousy:** This can be jealousy of other cats, other pets or of other humans in their household. They don't want to share you with anyone or anything. My best friend and business partner, Linda Hall, has one of these kitties. Subra needs to be touching Linda or sitting on her all the time. At night, she does her best to wedge in between Linda and her husband. She does it when they kiss, too!



**Boredom:** Cats who spend many hours home alone may decide to attach at the hip to their humans when they finally come home from work. If your cat follows you to the bathroom, or anywhere else you go in the house, and constantly meows,



## New Cattitude

Mind + Body

you may have a cat who is bored and lonely. Adding some self-play toys, cat trees and outdoor bird feeders by a window may help alleviate her boredom while you are at work, as will daily play sessions with her once you get home.



**Illness:** If your cat isn't feeling well, she may seek to be with you for comfort, just like a human child would. If clinginess is a new behavior, have your vet examine her to be sure there is no underlying health issue.



**She's just that into you:** A cat who has imprinted deeply on her human may want to be with you all the time just because she loves you that much. This is often the case with cats who were separated from their cat moms way too young.

My Smoochy is one of these. Adopted by me at just 4 weeks of age with her brother, Sonny, when they

were found abandoned, the two of them began to look to me as their mother. Although Smoochy can be away from me without anxiety, whenever I enter her line of sight, she makes a direct beeline for me. Sonny was the same way, and he was affectionately named Mr. Inappropriate for his need to cling to my bosom.

### How to handle

The first step is to determine why she is so needy. After ruling out medical issues, it's pretty easy to put some space between you and your cat appendage.

But, is it even a problem? If your cat is clingy and you don't really mind and it's not causing a problem, that's great! But you may still want to incorporate some of these suggestions to make her world more enjoyable, and so you can roll over in bed without fear of finding your cat underneath you.

❖ **Cats love routine:** If you are

a cat parent, you already know that cats love routine and dislike the unexpected. Get her into the same daily routine; feeding, brushing, playing and cuddling should all be done at approximately the same time of day, so she begins to anticipate her time with you. She may stop being so demanding if she knows that she's going to be with you at a certain time of day.

❖ **Daily playtime is a must:**

Especially for bored and only cats, your kitty needs daily playtime with you. This strengthens her bond with you and helps to expend her pent-up energy from being home alone all day. Cats are used to being active in nature and spend a good part of their day hunting. Playtime with you mimics this natural action.

❖ **Self-play toys:** If you have an only cat, or cats who are naturally very active (Bengals, for example), they will need some self-play toys to keep them busy while you are working. Cat

needs adjusting  
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Coming Next Issue

MIGHT NEED ADJUST-  
MENTS TO AD SPACE



busy stations, outside bird feeders by a window and puzzle balls can all keep your cat physically and mentally active when you aren't with them.

❖ **Put space between you:**

Especially if you work from home, spend some time physically separated from your cat when you're at home. Close yourself inside your home office for a few hours a day to help your cat

gain some independence. If you work outside the home, don't make yourself available every moment you are at home. Out of sight means out of mind with most clingy cats.

❖ **Adopt a buddy:** An only cat gets lonely; they are not the aloof loners people think they are. Other than hunting, which cats do singularly (not in

groups), cats in nature live in colonies, called clowders, and they do have a social structure that includes emotional bonds with one another. Adding a cat pal can help alleviate boredom and curb those clingy behaviors — and also give your cat the natural social structure she needs.

While you want your cat to be “into” you, it's not healthy for either of you if she is “that” into you. If you help build her independence while still reinforcing her bond with you, you both will be much happier, and you will have even more emotional closeness than ever before. 🐟



**Rita Reimers** and Linda Hall are cofounders of The Cat Behavior Alliance, offering a unique duo-approach to cat behavior correction. Visit them at [CatBehaviorAlliance.com](http://CatBehaviorAlliance.com) for more information. You can also find Rita and Linda on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and TikTok @CatBehaviorAlliance.

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