



After a long day of work you sit down to relax and watch some TV or read a book. Your sweet cat decides to jump up with you and enjoy your company, so you begin petting her while you relax when out of the blue she swats/bites you. What was that for?! Your cat may have become overstimulated and her warning signs went unnoticed because you were engrossed in that amazing book or the dramatic tv show. Follow these steps to ensure you both experience enjoyable petting sessions in the future.

- If your cat has a history of this behavior you can no longer absentmindedly pet her, you must pay attention to her body language and warning signs
- Sudden changes in ear position, tail lashing, skin twitching (specifically on back) and a sudden look back at where your hand is are all common signs of budding overstimulation
- Be aware of your timing and touch-
 - **Are you petting too rough?** *Adjust how you pet your cat and attempt a few short and light strokes in a single direction in a favorable area, avoid rustling of fur*
 - **Where are you petting?** *If this behavior occurs when you pet near a certain spot, your cat may be in pain and/or communicating she does not like being pet there- consult with your vet to determine if this is an underlying medical issue*
 - **Were you petting for too long?** *If you're not paying attention to your cats body language it is easy to assume she is enjoying the petting, after all, she was a few minutes ago! Pay attention to your cats signals so you can stop petting at the first warning. Shorten the time petting your cat to avoid overstimulation, reward her with a treat and a break in petting. In many cases the length of time you are able to pet your cat will increase.*