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Like

0

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Home

Welcome

Our Cat Blog

Free E-zine

News About Cats

Cat Adoption

Beginner's Guide

Cat Adoption

Cat Rescue

Senior Cats

Cat Breeds

Cat Breeders

Cats & Kids

Health

Cat Health

Cat Scratch

Cat Fleas

Cat Allergies

Feline Acne

Cat Hair Loss

Feline Asthma

Cat Pregnancy

CH in Cats

Diet & Nutrition

Cat Food

Senior Cat Food

Canned Cat Food

Cat Treats

Cat Care

Cat First Aid

Choosing a Vet

Neuter & Spay

Declawing

Pet Insurance

Cat Boarding

Cat Litter Box

Cat Carrier

Behavior

Cat Training

Cat

50 Shades of Purrrr

by Melodee Currier
(Dublin OH)

It may shock you to know that my eight year old male cat, Seiko, nurses on himself. And his sister, Suki, nurses on him at the same time. They have been doing this since the day we brought them home when they were ten weeks old.

Veterinarians I have asked say they had never heard of this. And friends look at me cross eyed when I tell them my cats do this. So I felt relieved when my Internet search resulted in stories about kitties just like mine. There are even videos!

I discovered this type of suckling is self comforting for the cat, as if they are feeding from their mother. It usually happens if they are removed from their mothers before the age of twelve weeks. They might also suckle on human's toes, fingers, blankets, and their own paws.

In our house, there is a precise ritual that must be performed, and as Seiko's cat mom, I must confess, he has trained me well. My presence is an important part of this ritual which usually takes place twice a day – in the morning when I wake up and just before I go to sleep. If I spent as much time exercising, I'd be in great shape.

Strangely, Seiko will not begin his ritual if my husband is in the room. When the coast is clear, he waits until I lie on my right side with my right arm extended. Then he will stand next to me so I can pet his head and side. Purring like a freight train and circling in front of me a couple times, he will plop down very close to me so I can cradle him. That way he can sit up, making it easy for him to nurse himself. I hug him close making him feel secure, like a momma cat would, and as he purrs and kneads the air, he nurses himself.

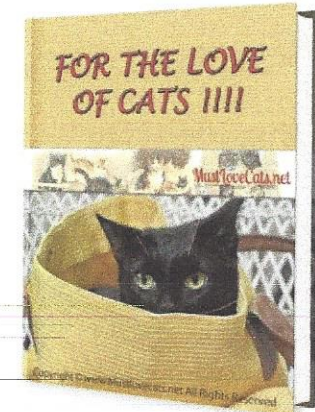
Around this time, Suki will hear him and will often join him. Upon her arrival, they will lick each other's faces before she locates one of his nipples and begins to suckle. And he will continue to self nurse. They will do this for up to a half hour. When they start to groom themselves, that is the sign they are nearly finished -- and Suki will lick her lips as if she has just had some milk. If I need to get up before they are done, they will immediately stop what they are doing and run away – until it's time for their next rendezvous.

Some reasons not to encourage this behavior include: if the suckling is interfering with a cat's quality of life; if it's damaging their skin; or if they are suckling in response to stress. I am certain none of these reasons apply to my kitties and they are simply re-living the comfort of nursing their mom.



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Whatever the reason -- my husband and I agree -- our house hasn't seen this much action since it was built!

Comments for 50 Shades of Purrrr**Average Rating ★★★★★**[Click here to add your own comments](#)May 24,
2016**Great story NEW
by: Jeanie Henderson**

Your 50 Shades of Purrr is outstanding and got me so interested from the very beginning. I had no idea that cats do this and am so glad that you are giving them a safety net which probably gives you a warm fuzzy feeling as well. Great writing. Great storytelling.

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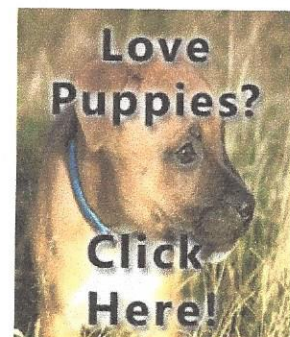
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