

The Preferred Petting Zone

Discover where cats like being petted most. Your cat will thank you for it!

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Where do cats like being petted the most? Susan Soennichsen and Arnold S. Chamove of the Psychology Department at Massey University in New Zealand decided to find out. They conducted a research study on the responses of cats to petting by humans, and the results were published in the academic journal *Anthrozoos*.

Soennichsen and Chamove studied nine different cats. Each cat was petted for 60 minutes on four different locations on its body:

1. Between the ear and eye (the temporal gland located on the upper cheek).
2. The chin and lip area (the perioral gland).
3. The lower back at the base of the tail (the caudal gland).
4. On one of three non-gland areas, either the head, the back or the chest.

The researchers' results showed that cats strongly preferred being petted between their ears and eyes on their upper cheek the most (the temporal region), and the caudal region on their lower back near their tail the least. The perioral gland area on the chin and lips and the non-gland areas of the head, back and chest were preferred second.

The researchers theorize that cats like to be petted on their upper cheek or temple the most because they are able to mark us with their scent glands when we pet them there and this is their way of socially bonding with us. Cats rub against other familiar cats and objects with their cheek and temple for the same reason. If you want to please your cat the most pet it on its upper cheek and temple between its ear and eye. They will think you are the cat's meow!

- More Fun for You and Your Cat -