

CatChannel Exclusive: Meet Author Elizabeth M. Hodgkins, DVM

Learn more about the inspiration behind her book **Your Cat: Simple New Secrets to a Longer Stronger Life.**

By Stacy N. Hackett

1. What was your inspiration for writing the book?

As an ailurophile and veterinarian with a lifelong special interest in cats, I have been frustrated for some time by the seeming lack of attention to this species from my profession and other experts. Many years ago, my own pet cat, an orange tabby named "Punkin," developed diabetes at the age of 4 years. For months he and I struggled to manage his disease. I knew from my own medical practice that diabetic cats were common and their disease difficult to control. From my study of this one disease I learned that the cat remains a true "red-headed stepchild" among companion animals, notwithstanding its "most popular pet" status. Almost no cat-specific research has ever been done to elucidate scientifically even the most serious and commonplace feline diseases.

2. What other books have you written?

This is my first book.

3. What is your writing process?

My process is very boring and routine ... I sit down when I have at least three hours to spend, and I start writing. I don't believe in writer's block, because I know that there is always something I can write about. If the "perfect" sentences don't seem to be coming, I just write down what does come, knowing that I can always edit later. It's important to write and allow the ideas to start flowing through the sheer act of writing something, anything. And it always works that way.

4. What has the feedback been on the book so far?

The many friends, relatives and experts who have read it have been extremely positive. I think this is because *Your Cat* really is different, and unlike any other book out there on the subject of caring for pet cats. What I have to say resonates with what many pet owners subconsciously know already, and the book gives them permission to use their own intelligence when making decisions about how to care for their beloved felines.

5. Are you a cat owner? How many do you have? Tell us about them!

I own a number of wonderful felines. I breed Ocicats on a very small scale and have two rescued "Heinz 57" kitties, as well.

6. Do your cats influence your writing? How so?

Punkin made *Your Cat* not only possible, but necessary, and knowing that I may be able to improve the lives of other cats around the world certainly gives me the drive to work as hard as I have on this book.

7. Were certain parts of the book more difficult to write than others? Which ones?

I wouldn't say that parts were more difficult, but some chapters were easier simply because they are part of my deepest passions about feline care. Specifically, the chapters on obesity and diabetes were a joy to write, because the information is so crucial not only to the management of these health problems, but to their prevention, which is the most important part of all my efforts. I honestly believe we can eradicate diabetes, and even most obesity, if my ideas become well understood.