

# FELINE GRIMACE SCALE<sup>®</sup>

## FACT SHEET



### WHY?

Pain-induced behavioral changes are unique and can be subtle in cats



### WHAT?

The Feline Grimace Scale<sup>®</sup> (FGS) is a quick and reliable tool for acute pain assessment based on changes in facial expressions



### WHEN?

Pain assessment should be performed in all cats as often as needed on a case-by-case basis



### WHO?

The FGS can be used by the veterinary health care team and by cat caregivers

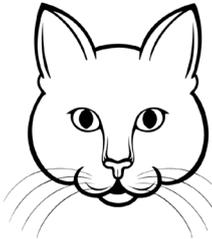


### HOW?

There are five action units (AU)

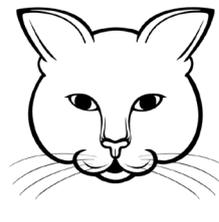
1. Ear position
2. Orbital tightening
3. Muzzle tension
4. Whiskers position
5. Head position

- Each AU is scored on a 0-2 scale
- The final score is the sum of all scores
- Analgesia is suggested with final score > 4/10



### 0 = AU is absent

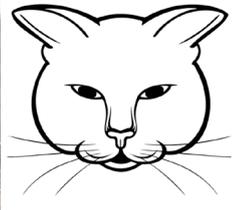
- Ears facing forward
- Eyes opened
- Muzzle relaxed (round shape)
- Whiskers loose and curved
- Head above the shoulder line



### 1 = AU is moderately present\*

- Ears slightly pulled apart
- Eyes partially opened
- Muzzle mildly tense
- Whiskers slightly curved or straight
- Head aligned with the shoulder line

\* The score of 1 can also be given when there is uncertainty over the presence or absence of the AU



### 2 = AU is markedly present

- Ears flattened and rotated outwards
- Squinted eyes
- Muzzle tense (elliptical shape)
- Whiskers straight and moving forward
- Head below the shoulder line or tilted down (chin towards the chest)

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Download the FGS App to learn more and practice your skills. Check our linktree for additional information.

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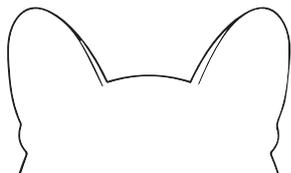
# Facial expressions of pain in cats: the development and validation of a Feline Grimace Scale

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## Ear position



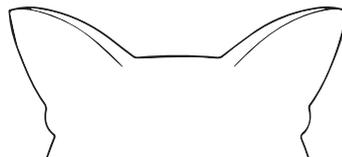
0 = absent



Ears facing forward



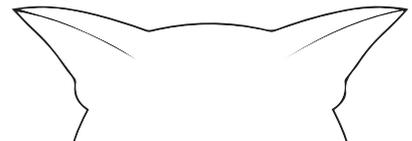
1 = moderately present



Ears slightly pulled apart



2 = markedly present

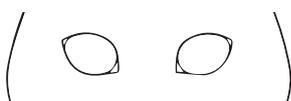


Ears rotated outwards

## Orbital tightening



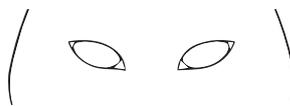
0 = is absent



Eyes opened



1 = moderately present



Partially closed eyes

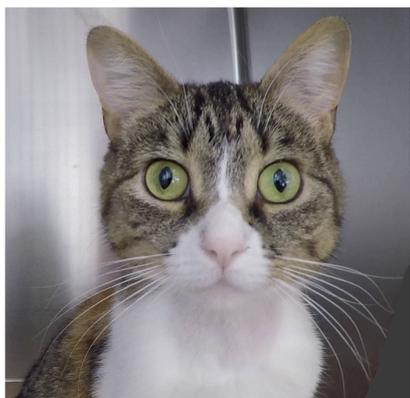


2 = markedly present



Squinted eyes

## Muzzle tension



**0 = absent**



Relaxed (round shape)



**1 = moderately present**



Mild tension



**2 = markedly present**



Tense (elliptical shape)

## Whiskers change



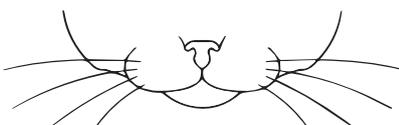
**0 = is absent**



Loose (relaxed)  
and curved



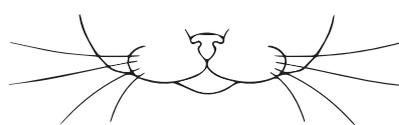
**1 = moderately present**



Slightly curved or straight  
(closer together)



**2 = markedly present**



Straight and moving forward  
(rostrally, away from the face)

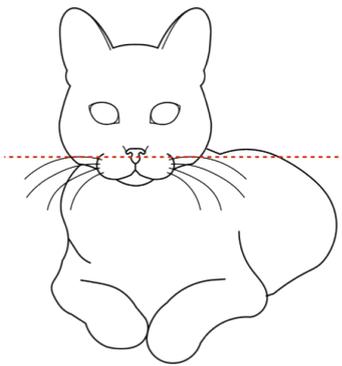
# Head position



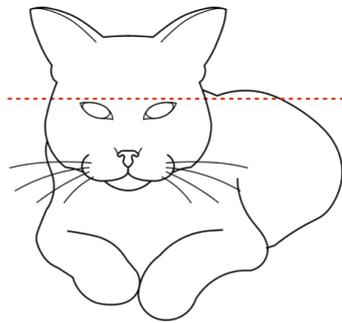
**0 = absent**

**1 = moderately present**

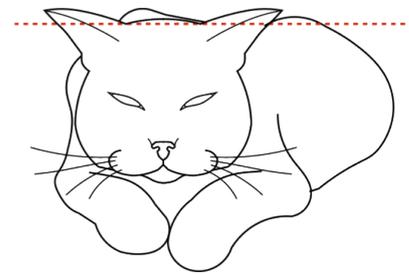
**2 = markedly present**



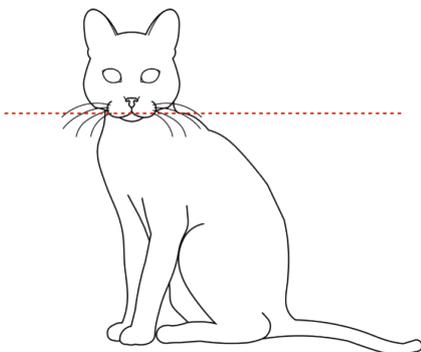
**OR**



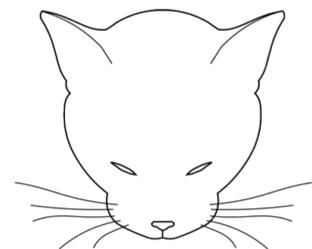
Head aligned with the shoulder line



**OR**



Head above the shoulder line



Head below the shoulder line or tilted down (chin toward the chest)