



(Pictured: Kitty at the Treehouse Humane Society in Chicago, kneading their brand new CFC blanket.)

Why Cats “Knead”

Many of our volunteers picture cats and kittens kneading their creations, as they make each blanket. I’ve often seen my own kitties kneading away on their blankies, until they snuggle down. So why do they knead the blankets anyway? It’s been a long-held misconception that a cat’s kneading is the result of being weaned too early, or too late. This thankfully, is not true.

The motion the cat is creating when kneading, is exactly what they did as a nursing kitten, massaging their mother’s belly to keep the milk flowing. A happy kitty is one that continues to knead soft surfaces, repeating a comforting behavior they learned early on. Sometimes a kitty will even suckle their blanket a bit, further reinforcing that this behavior was learned while nursing. Not every cat kneads the same way. Some will extend their claws, others will not. Some will even use all four legs to knead!

Mother cats have also been known to knead the sleeping area for her kittens to make it more comfortable. The kittens obviously learn that kneading the bedding is a great way to make a bed more comfortable. So all in all, kneading is associated with happy memories for a kitty.

If you find yourself being “kneaded” by a cat, consider yourself lucky. If you see that your kitty is kneading the beautiful blanket you’ve crafted for them, be assured that they are happy and comfortable indeed!

