



Stress Review



Identify any factors in a cat's home environment that may be causing stress, and then think of ways you can reduce, remove, or manage these stressors to create a more comfortable setting.

This stress review template was created to supplement 'Carrying Out a Stress Review' in *Chapter 8: The Fundamentals of Behaviour Analysis* of my book *A Professional's Guide to Feline Behaviour: Understanding, Improving and Resolving Problems*. ISBN: 978-1032171999. Published by: CRC Press (Taylor & Francis Group).

Focus of Review	Assessment	Things to Consider / Ask	Physical Environmental Changes
Resources inside the home	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Are they sufficient, plentiful and well distributed?*	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Check that in multi-cat homes resources are aligned with MEMOT†	
Core territory	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Is the area safe, secure and can the cat eat, relax, sleep and play without disturbance or stress?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Has there been any recent disturbance e.g. decoration, renovation etc.	
Provision of food and water	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Are there separate feeding and drinking stations?▶ Is food and drinking provision optimal?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Ensure there are opportunities to drink inside and outdoors.▶ Look for a cat centric approach to feeding.	

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Layout of the home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Is the home: minimalistic or open plan? ▶ Does it require adaptations? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Cluttered homes tend to be a better environment with more places to hide and investigate. ▶ Discuss practical solutions to optimise a minimalistic setting, e.g. provide boxes, maximise elevated space using furniture and fittings. 	
Escape routes and safe havens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Are there opportunities to easily access safe elevated sites and escape routes? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ These sites should ideally be located close to their essential resources. ▶ Check these are available inside and outdoors. 	
Mental enrichment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Is there a variety of toys to prevent boredom? ▶ Can the cat engage with puzzle feeders and games without triggering frustration? ▶ Does the caregiver provide appropriate interactive play? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Demonstrate play and discuss suitable toys and resources. 	
Cat flap	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Are resources well clear of the cat flap? ▶ Can it be breached by outsiders? ▶ Are there plenty of camouflage and hiding opportunities immediately outside the cat flap? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Having resources in the vicinity of the cat flap may encroach security. ▶ A cat flap can represent a weakness in the cat's physical defences. ▶ Microchip operated cat flaps can protect against despots. 	

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Visual challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Can the cat be easily overlooked from outsiders? ▶ Is the cat hypervigilant around windows/patio doors? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Blinds, curtains and frosted transfers on windows can help reduce visual disturbance. ▶ Food stations, litter box and beds should be in private locations. 	
Garden and other outside spaces (e.g. catio)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Is the garden or catio barren? ▶ Are other unfamiliar cats/animals frequent visitors to these spaces? ▶ Have there been or are there any plans to change or disrupt the outside space? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Shrubbery, trees, pots and garden ornaments can provide climbing opportunities and hiding places. ▶ Apply measures to prevent 'invasion' e.g. cat-proof fencing, fitting safe deterrent strips to line the tops of fences/walls. ▶ Changes to outside locations may disrupt recognised toileting areas, ability to escape, hide or take cover. 	
Range outside the garden	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Is the neighbourhood in an urban/ rural location? ▶ Is there a high density of unfamiliar cats, other animals, people, and traffic? ▶ Any new building work in the home range? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Check for potential and actual social stressors. ▶ Construction (e.g. new housing) in the home range can disturb the usual area where a cat roams. 	

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Relationships, social tensions and emotional upheaval	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Assess human-cat relationships ▶ What is the general atmosphere in the home? Is it calm, tense, busy, noisy etc.? ▶ Any changes to social arrangement? ▶ Any social conflict in the home? 	<p>Are there any of the following situations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Bereavements ▶ Fostering another animal ▶ Visitors ▶ Young adults home from university ▶ Absent caregiver (hospitalised, vacation) ▶ Divorce ▶ Newcomers (baby) 	
Smells and aromas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Are there over-powering scents? 	<p>Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Air fresheners and diffusers ▶ Scented candles ▶ Cleaning products 	

* See *Chapter 3: Identifying and Fulfilling the Cat's Needs* in my book *A Professional's Guide to Feline Behaviour*.

† Multimodal Environmental Modification (MEMO) framework, developed by Dr Tony Buffington, a professor of veterinary behaviour. Also discussed in Chapter 3 of my book.