

Pet Photography Phobias



by
Julie S. Crawshaw

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Is your pet a “photo phobe?” Take heart! Though getting a great shot of Fifi or Fido is a bit more difficult when your subject has a camera issue, with a little patience and perseverance you can help your pet get over the photographic “phobias” described below.

The shy or camera-shy pet

Some animals initially feel uncomfortable or frightened when you stare intently at them through a camera lens. Some, like the adorable little hedgehog on the cover, are simply shy by nature; others associate fixed stares, which are a hallmark of predators, with being considered as dinner.

My own Carolina Dog Antoine was a great example of “photo nerves” when he first came to live with me. I decided to make a game of taking his picture by looking at him through the lens for a couple of seconds at a time while telling him what a good dog he is. Like everyone on the planet, Antoine loves being praised, so he quickly came to associate being praised with being viewed through a camera. Now I can snap pictures of him any time, any place!

The camera hog

In sharp contrast to the camera-shy models, some animals just love the feeling of receiving close attention so much that they become camera hogs. My mustang mare Astarte fell into this category. Anytime she saw me with my camera, she would immediately shove her pasture mate out of the way, then run up and stick her nose on the lens—and nose shots were definitely not her most flattering pose!

The totally bored subject

Then there are those animals who won’t do anything except look bored so long as you’re holding your camera. My cat Katie is an excellent example. Normally, Katie will play at a moment’s notice. She leaps, she bounds, she stands on her hind legs and boxes. She is graceful, gorgeous and highly photogenic—until the camera comes into view, when she freezes up like an aging actress without her makeup and refuses to cooperate at all.

Ah, but Katie does love a new catnip toy. Every time I bring one home, she begins mewing in greedy anticipation before I even get the toy out of the bag, then grabs the toy, racing around the room triumphantly with it in her mouth, giving it a good shake every now and then just to let it know who’s boss. She rolls around the floor clutching the toy to her belly and purring ecstatically, providing me with absolutely wonderful photo ops!

Once you’ve identified and resolved your pet’s camera problems, you’ll find that taking pet photos is a truly delightful hobby—so much so, in fact, you may find yourself taking so many pet photos you need new ways to display them.

If that becomes the case, consider these great ways to display your great pet photos:

- **Coffee mugs and coasters:** If you can’t take your pet to work with you—or your son or daughter who’s away-at-college is homesick for the family pets—a pet photo mug can do a lot to soothe that “missing you” feeling;

- **Calendar:** A wonderfully way to enjoy a variety of pet photos all year long;
- **Tote bag:** Carry your books, papers and other stuff in style in a canvas tote bag decorated with your favorite pet photo;
- **Greeting cards:** Wish family and friends happy holidays on greeting cards customized with your pet's picture.

To see some great examples of just how great your pet photos can look on any or all of these go to: <http://www.howtotalkwithanimals.com/gifts.html>

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