



At-home Pet Dangers During The Winter Holidays

When hanging decorations for the winter holidays, be sure to place them out of reach of curious paws.

Winter can be a magical time of year for family, friends and furry companions, alike. To help keep everyone happy and safe, consider which holiday traditions might be potential hazards for your pet and take proper precautions...before the season begins.

Deck the Halls

Jingling bells and other holiday decorations can offer a host of new toys for pets to play with or explore, which may put them in danger. Dr. Karen Todd, a New Jersey veterinarian experienced in emergency medicine, cautions, "Pets are curious and observant. They can find things you may not even notice." Therefore, decorate with safety in mind:

- Place ornaments higher on the tree, away from playful cats or dogs.
- Move surface decorations that pose a choking hazard out of reach. Bite-sized adornments, such as dreidels or nativity scene pieces, may cause severe internal injury if ingested.
- Tie back or tape down electrical cords, so animals who love to chew won't nibble and get a jolt. Loose cords can also tangle around a pet, posing a risk of strangulation or possibly capsizing heavy decorations, such as a Christmas tree.
- Keep open flames inaccessible. Open chimney fires, menorahs and other flame sources can burn animals or cause a house fire if disturbed.

Chestnuts Roasting

During holiday feasting, pets should not participate in the gluttony. Feeding a pet scraps can cause serious stomach and intestinal upset from overfeeding or more severe illnesses if the foods are toxic to animals. Pets hanging around the kitchen should be kept away from any alcohol, chocolate, macadamia nuts or raisins that may have been left out.

For a more comprehensive list of toxic foods and poisonous houseplants, visit the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) Animal Poison Control Center's website (<https://www.aspc.org/pet-care/animal-poison-control>) or call 888-426-4435.

Owners can dole out dog biscuits and other healthy treats, such as carrots and green beans. That way, pets can enjoy the gastronomic aspect of the holidays without their health being put at risk. Even wholesome pet snacks can be unhealthy if given too often, so avoid overindulging a pet's appetite for treats. □



Five Simple FIRST AID Tricks Every Pet Owner Should Know

by Dr. Mary Fuller, D.V.M.

Just the thought of something happening to your pet is enough to get your heart thumping in your chest. Despite your best intentions, accidents can and do happen. But if you're prepared, your pet has a better chance of making it through a crisis situation.

In any medical emergency, the best course of action is to bring your pet to a veterinarian as soon as possible. Since time is of the essence, don't waste precious moments surfing the internet for suggestions or trying to handle the situation yourself. And never give any medication to your pet unless you get the green light from your vet.

It's always good to know some key first aid techniques, but keep in mind that you should only use them to stabilize your pet until you can get to a veterinary hospital. That said, here are five common emergency situations and the simple steps you can take to help your pet.

Scenario: Poisoning

If you suspect that your pet has eaten something toxic, *call your veterinarian or the ASPCA Pet Poison Hotline (888-426-4435) immediately.* UNLESS instructed to do so by a veterinarian, *NEVER induce vomiting.* Many toxins are corrosive, and vomiting may damage the esophagus or cause choking.

Should your veterinarian instruct you to induce vomiting, he will provide you with a recommended dose of 3 percent hydrogen peroxide, based on your dog's weight (do not use salt or syrup of ipecac). Take your dog outside or cover the floor with newspaper. Measure the dose and use an eyedropper to administer the hydrogen peroxide into your dog's mouth. If your pet does not vomit within five minutes, repeat the dose one more time.

Since there are no at-home products that can be used to induce vomiting in cats, you'll need to take your feline to a veterinary clinic for treatment. In either case, get your pet to the veterinarian as soon as possible.

Scenario: Cuts, Punctures or Bites

All cuts, punctures and bites have the potential to become infected, so they need to be examined by a veterinarian. If your pet is bleeding profusely, cover the area with sterile gauze and a clean towel, and then apply direct pressure until a clot forms. If there is an object pen-

(continued on next page)

(“Five Simple FIRST AID Tricks” cont.)

etrating the wound, such as a stick, do not attempt to remove it.

If the wound is not bleeding, remove any debris and clean the area with sterile saline solution or clean water (*do NOT use alcohol or hydrogen peroxide, which can damage the tissue*). Apply clean gauze and wrap a bandage around it to keep the area clean and prevent your pet from licking it.

Scenario: Car Trauma

Lay your pet on a flat board, and then strap him down to help prevent movement. Avoid putting pressure on the chest, which can hinder breathing. If your pet has sustained a head injury, tilt the board so that your pet’s head is slightly above the body during transport.

If you notice any broken bones, do your best to minimize excessive motion, but don’t attempt to splint them. This may only make the situation worse, plus you don’t want to waste any time getting your pet to the veterinary clinic. Once inside the car, cover your pet with a blanket to help prevent shock.

Even if your pet does not appear to be injured, it’s still critically important that you have a veterinarian examine him. Many pets suffer internal injuries that are not obvious, and they may be very serious if not given immediate professional attention.

Scenario: Choking

If your pet is choking but he can still breathe, try to keep him calm, and get him to a veterinarian immediately. But if your pet’s gums or tongue are turning blue and he’s in obvious distress, place your hand over the top of his muzzle and lift it up to open the mouth (*do NOT cover or occlude the nostrils*). For an object that is clearly visible, you can use needle-nosed pliers to remove it, but be careful not to force it farther down into the throat. Also, a pet in this situation may panic and bite, so be careful.

If that doesn’t work, lay your dog on his side, and then place your hands at the very end of his rib cage. Push down and slightly forward, applying pressure in quick, firm strokes. If you are unable to dislodge the object, get to the veterinarian immediately.

Scenario: Seizures

If your pet has a seizure, try to move furniture and other objects out of the way to prevent further injury. Do not try to restrain your pet, and keep your hands away from your pet’s mouth since they will not swallow their tongues, but chances are that you will be bit.

Since pets often lose bladder or fecal control during a seizure, you may want to place a towel under your pet. Talk to your pet in a calm and soothing manner while you time the seizure. Most episodes will last under five minutes. Regardless of how long the seizure lasts, your pet needs immediate veterinary attention.

Numbers You Should Have On Hand

With any luck, you’ll never need to use these first aid techniques, but just knowing what to do in an emergency situation can help to reduce your panic level. You can 7

(“Five Simple FIRST AID Tricks” cont.)

also reduce your stress levels by making a list of important emergency phone numbers

1. Your veterinarian,
2. The closest emergency veterinary clinic,
3. The ASPCA Pet Poison Hotline: 888-426-4435

Program these numbers into your phone, as well as post them to the refrigerator for quick access. It’s also a good idea to print out the driving directions to your nearest emergency clinic so you don’t waste any time. □



How to Stop Your Dog From Begging For Food at Dinner

from PetPav

Our dogs are social creatures and love to eat, so, when your family gathers for dinner, there’s nothing more that combines a dog’s dual love of being social and eating your food! However, even though your dog want to join you in the festivities, there’s nothing fun or amusing about a dinner dominated by whining and pawing from under the table. If this bother you, it is better to get the ‘table begging’ under control sooner rather than later.

Table begging can be harmful to your dogs

Table begging is more than just an annoyance. It can be potentially harmful to your dog. Dogs who are frequently fed at the table can suffer any of the following problems:

Obesity, choking on bones, hyperactivity, anxiety and even seizures (a possible result if chocolate, which contains theobromine, is consumed, and bad behavior).

Table begging needs to end before it begins

Dogs beg at the table because we let them and it only takes one time for the habit to begin. Unfortunately, attention-getting behaviors like begging don’t have to be indulged often to become a bad habit. The most effective way to get a dog to stop begging at the table is to completely ignore her, a task that’s often easier said than done. This means not talking to the animal or even making eye contact. By scolding your dog, it scares them and engages them. They might not understand the difference.

Teach your dog to go to specific spot when you eat dinner

Try teaching your dog to go to a designated spot, usually a bed or a mat, and stay there. This skill can be useful in a variety of other situations, too. If you’re watching a movie with friends and you’d like your dog to occupy herself for a while, you can ask her to go to her spot and chew a bone. If your dog jumps up on people when they come to the door, you can ask her to go to her spot whenever the doorbell rings and wait there to greet visitors. If you take your dog somewhere with you, you can bring her bed or mat and have her settle on it when you need her to be calm

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(*"How to Stop Your Dog From Begging..." cont.*)

and quiet. Leave a chew bone or toy there to keep your dog occupied and distracted.

Your dog's table begging will get worse before it gets better

Expect your dog's begging to get worse before it gets better. If whining at a low volume doesn't result in food, she'll think she isn't trying hard enough and turn it up and start howling. As unpleasant as this may be for a few days, stand firm. Eventually, your dog will realize that her efforts no longer work.

However, if you train your dog consistently, you should see positive results within several weeks. Consistency is the key. Even one tiny snack from the table here and there *can erase everything* you've worked so hard to achieve. The smallest morsel can turn a trained dog back to a begging dog! And make sure all family members and dinner guests understand what you're doing and why you're doing it, so no one sneaks your dog a treat when they think you're not looking.

Here are a few more tips to stop your dog from begging:

Feed your dog at the same time you eat. If your dog is enjoying her own food, she can't beg for yours.

Give her something else to do. Try sticking some healthy treats stuffed in a few Kong toys so she'll have something to play with while you eat.

If your dog has been crate-trained, place her in her crate to prevent her from begging at the table. But, the goal is to have your dog nearby and not begging, so this would only be on a trial basis.

Take your dog for a long walk just before dinner. If the dog is worn out, the intensity of the begging behavior will decrease. Tired dogs are better behaved dogs.

You can still feed your dog human food at the correct time

Some people worry that feeding their dogs' human food (anything except dog food and treats made for dogs) will encourage begging at the table. But when teaching a dog new skills or treating certain behavior problems, using treats like small pieces of chicken, cheese or beef can accelerate the training process. Luckily, dogs can learn very specific rules. It's okay to give your dog foods you eat, too. Just avoid feeding your dog from the table so your pup learns that she never gets human food in that context. □

Pet Travel Tips for the Road

from *TripsWithPets.com*

It's almost time to go over the river and through the woods and start your holiday travels with your pet, possibly staying at pet friendly hotels along the way. Before you start thinking of presents and eggnog, keep in mind that it's important to plan ahead for pet travel and always keep the best interests of your furry, four-legged friend in mind. Traveling with your pet can be a wonderful and bonding experience or a not so pleasant one. It's all a matter of proper planning and preparation.

Your first decision is whether to bring your pet along with you on your trip. Not all pets are suited for travel. While it may be very tempting to bring your pet with you, keep in mind that not all pets are happy travelers. Things to consider include your pet's temperament, any physical impairments or if your pet suffers from an illness. If you're uncertain whether your pet is suited for travel, you may want to consult with your veterinarian.

If you determine that your pet is up for the trip, then following some common sense tips will help to ensure that your holiday travels with your furry friend is enjoyable for both of you!

Pre-Travel Preparation

• **Healthy Start:** The last thing you need is a sick pet when traveling. This means a visit to the vet for a medical checkup and to ensure that your pet is up-to-date with all necessary vaccinations. The veterinarian can also issue a health certificate for your pet. If you and your pet will be *traveling across state lines*, you *must* obtain a recent health certificate and a certificate of rabies vaccination. If your plans include traveling with your pet from the United States to Canada, *you will need to bring along a certificate* issued by a veterinarian that clearly identifies the animal and certifies that your pet has been vaccinated against rabies during the preceding 36-month period.

Be sure to contact the government of the province you plan to visit as each province has its own requirements.

• **Plan for Restraint:** Have a plan for how you're going to properly restrain your pet in your vehicle. This is a crucial element of pet travel that is not taken seriously enough. The reality is that hundreds of pets are injured or even killed each year because they are allowed free reign in cars, trucks, RVs, and SUVs. Even more real is the toll in human life and property damage caused when an "enthusiastic" animal distracts a driver, leading to an accident. Vehicle pet barriers, pet seat belts, pet car seats and pet travel crates are all excellent ways to keep your pet (and you) safe when traveling in your vehicle. It's important to familiarize your pet with the vehicle restraint of choice weeks or months before traveling so that they are comfortable.

• **Temporary ID Tag:** In the unfortunate event that your pet runs off while you're traveling. A temporary identification tag, along with

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(“Pet Travel Tips for the Road” cont.)

a photo of your pet will help ensure their safe return. Attach a temporary ID tag to your pet's collar in addition to their permanent tag. Include the address and phone number of where you'll be staying along with your cell phone number and perhaps your email address. This is *one of the most important aspects of traveling with your pet*, but also one of the most overlooked. In addition, bring along a *current photo of your pet*. A photograph will make it easier for others to help you find your lost pet.

- **Packing Essentials:** When packing for your pet include an ample supply of your pet's food. Don't rely on stopping along the way to pick up their food or picking it up at your final destination. Their particular brand of food may not be readily available and it is not advisable to introduce your pet to a new brand of food while traveling. Other essentials to pack for your pet include collapsible travel food and water bowls, bedding, litter and litter box, leash, collar and tags, favorite toys, grooming supplies, a pet first-aid kit and any necessary medications. Of course, be sure to always have an ample supply of water available for your pet.

- **Secure Pet-Friendly Accommodations:** If you're planning a long journey and will need to stay in lodging on the way to your final destination, be sure to secure these pet friendly accommodations before you hit the road. Map out where you'll be spending the night and arrange for lodging along the way. Our Search By Route will allow you to find pet friendly lodging along your route by plugging in your origination location and final destination. Pet policies do change some times without notice and accommodations may be limited so it's recommended that you make reservations in advance.

- **Medical Records:** In case of a medical emergency while traveling, it is advisable to bring along your pets medical records along with your vet's contact information should they be needed for consultation.

Hitting the Road

- **No Heads Out the Window:** Although many pets find that sticking their head out the window is the best part of the road trip, it's not safe. Your pet can easily be injured by flying debris. This should go without saying, but NEVER travel with a pet in the back of a pickup truck. Some states have laws restricting such transport and it is always dangerous.

- **Frequent Pit Stops:** Always provide frequent bathroom and exercise breaks. Most travel service areas have designated areas for walking your pet. Be sure to stay in this area particularly when your pet needs a potty break, and of course, bring along a bag to pick up after your pet. When outside your vehicle, make sure that your pet is always on a leash and wearing a collar with a permanent and temporary travel identification tag.

- **Proper Hydration:** During your pit stops be sure to provide your pet with some fresh water to 'wet their whistle'. Occasionally traveling can upset your pet's stomach. Take along ice cubes, which are easier on your pet than large amounts of water.

- **Watch the Food Intake:** It is recommended that you keep feeding to a minimum during travel. Be sure to feed them their regular pet food and resist the temptation to give them some of your fast food burger or fries (that never has a good ending!).

- **Don't Leave Them Alone:** Never leave your pet unattended in a parked vehicle. On warm days, the temperature in your vehicle ↗

(“Pet Travel Tips for the Road” cont.)

can rise to 120 degrees in minutes, even with the windows slightly open. In addition, an animal left alone in a vehicle is an open invitation to pet thieves.

- **Practice Restraint:** Be sure that your pet is safely restrained in your vehicle. Utilizing a pet safety harness, travel kennel, vehicle pet barrier or pet car seat are the best ways to keep your pet safe. They not only protect your pet from injury, but they help by keeping them from distracting you as you drive. A safety harness functions like a seat belt. While most pets will not have a problem adjusting to it, you may want to let them wear the harness by itself a few times before using it in the vehicle. If your pet prefers a travel kennel, be sure it is well ventilated and stabilized. Many pet owners prefer vehicle barriers, particularly for larger pets. Vehicle barriers are best suited for SUVs. Smaller pets are best suited for pet car seats. The car seat is secured in the back seat using a seat belt and your pet is secured in the car seat with a safety harness. In addition to it's safety features, a pet car seat will prop up your smaller pet, allowing them to better look out the window. No matter what method you choose, back seat travel is always safer for your pet.

- **Safe and Comfortable:** Whatever method you choose to properly restrain your pet in your vehicle, be sure to make their comfort a priority. Just as it's important for your “seat” to be comfortable for your long road trip, your pet's seat should be comfortable too. Typically their favorite blanket or travel bed will do the trick. There are also some safe and very cozy pet car seats available that your pet may find quite comfy.

Careful preparation is the key to ensuring that you and your pet have a happy and safe trip.

Editor's note: In my opinion, it's best to enclose your pet in a hard, plastic crate because if you ever have a car accident, your pet will be confined (and won't be able to run away if a car door, window, etc. is accidentally opened). Also, your beloved pet will be better protected in the event your car might be crushed in an unfortunate accident. ☐

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Check out our “Links” on Sheltie Pacesetter’s website because I’ve just *added* many informative and valuable links!

If you encounter any link which doesn’t take you to that website, let me know so I may reconnect any inactive link. Thanks!

http://sheltie.com/Sheltie_Pacesetter/Links_For_Dog_Owners.html



Five Reasons Not to Punish Your Cat

by Marilyn Krieger

Recently I helped Anne (a cat behavior client) change her cat Suki's feelings about her litter box. Suki's issues started gradually. First she urinated outside her box every couple of weeks, then the problem gradually escalated until Suki eliminated everywhere in the house but the litter box. It got to the point that Suki refused to venture into the room that housed the box.

I asked Anne to break down Suki's behavior from the beginning. When Suki started urinating outside her litter box, Anne tried new litters and different boxes and she increased cleanings, but with no success. Despite Anne's efforts, Suki continued to urinate outside the litter box every couple of weeks.

Anne became frustrated, resorting to 'aversives' and punishment to stop the behavior. Anne yelled at Suki. When that did not work, she squirted her cat with water and swatted her on the butt. The behavior increased until Suki stopped using her litter box and avoided the room. Although Anne's behavior did not solve the problem, it did have other repercussions. Anne sadly noticed that Suki (a normally affectionate cat) shied away from her. She stopped sitting on Anne's lap and soliciting her for cuddles and strokes.

Punishment and 'aversives' might seem like the best way to solve behavior problems, especially in moments of frustration when nothing seems to work. Although force and punishment can suppress or decrease behaviors, it doesn't teach the cat what to do. In addition, there is fallout that can make these types of methods poor choices for behavior change.

Dr. Susan Friedman, a highly respected behavior analyst who teaches behavior basics to animal behaviorists, says in her class, "The problem with punishment is that it doesn't teach the learner what to do, and the side effects that can be experienced by the individual being punished are detrimental."

Here are some of those side effects:

1. Stress: There is always reason for behavior. Cats are not bad, nor are they mad at their people when they do unpleasant activities. What people perceive as bad behavior is often a stressful response by your cat to something in his environment. It is natural for stressed cats to engage in instinctual behaviors. Often, these behaviors are unpleasant to live with.

Punishment will also increase anxieties and cause cats to feel insecure. Like all animals, cats need to feel secure in their world. It is challenging to feel safe and happy while periodically being punished or yelled at.

2. Increased unpleasantness: Punishing your cat can escalate the original behavior and the development of new ones. Because these forceful methods are stressful, the situation often deteriorates.

Suki's response to Anne's attempts to stop her unwanted behavior illustrates this. Initially, the cat urinated outside her litter box every couple of weeks. As Anne's frustration increased, so did the punishment. First Anne yelled at Suki. When that did not work, she squirted Suki with water, and then finally swatted her. As the ↗

("Five Reasons Not to Punish Your Cat" cont.)

punishment escalated, Suki became more anxious and fearful and shunned her litter box entirely. She also developed a new, heart-breaking behavior—avoiding Anne, who adores her.

3. Threatened relationship: Cats have a different perspective on their behaviors than people do. They do not perceive their own activities as "bad" or destructive. That's a people thing. When you punish your cat for behaviors you find unpleasant, your cat will associate the punishment with whoever is delivering the message and not with his own behavior. Often this leads to him shying away from you. The people the kitties originally loved and trusted are now perceived as scary and hurtful (case in point: Suki and Anne).

4. Areas become taboo: Often, cats will refuse to go near the spots where they were punished. For instance, if litter boxes are located near where they were reprimanded, cats may avoid using them. Some, like Suki, become so fearful and anxious, they steer clear of the litter box and the room where the box is located.

5. Punishment reinforces the punisher: One frightening side effect that is overlooked is the reinforcing effect punishment has on the punisher. Regardless of the fallout, you'll learn that punishment can immediately stop or decrease a behavior, and so you may be more likely to use such forceful methods again.

As in Anne's situation, when punishment doesn't stop the problem, the person, feeling frustrated, will escalate their actions, attempting to change the behavior.

Another insidious side effect is how it makes the punisher feel. Yelling and punishing helps release feelings of frustration when an unpleasant situation seems unresolvable. It can feel good to yell.

As you can see, although punishment might seem like the solution in the moment, its side effects can be harmful. You can learn to change behaviors and teach new ones with force-free methods that may take a little longer, but the results are worth the effort. They also build bonds between you and your cat, and everyone is happier. □



Does Your Cat Eat Like a Cow?

by Dr. Marty Goldstein

I'm sure you'll agree that one of the best things about cats is how independent they can be. Your furry pal is fine with handling their own bathroom needs, entertaining themselves for hours on end, and even managing many of their own grooming needs! So it's safe to say, cats are incredibly self-sufficient.

However, when it comes to their eating schedule...your kitty needs a little guidance. You see, many cat parents put a full daily serving of food in their cat's bowl and leave it out all day. This allows their cat to slowly eat their food throughout the day much like a cow grazing on grass. But the truth is: “grazing” can actually be bad for your cat's health.

Here are the three most common dangers of letting your cat ‘graze’:

Grazing danger #1: Constant snacking can exhaust your cat's pancreas and their insulin-making cells. This can cause weight gain or, in some cases even feline diabetes.

Grazing danger #2: Small meals throughout the day can cause many ups and downs in your cat's energy. This means they'll go from calm to hyper, sleepy to playful, at all hours of the day and night.

Grazing danger #3: Scattered meals keep your cat in a constant state of digestion. This can prevent your cat from truly resting, and lead to grumpy or anti-social moods.

The good news is, you can easily adjust your cat's feeding schedule to fit their unique biological needs. Simply feed your cat twice a day, leaving 6 to 8 hours between their morning and evening meals. The end goal is to give your cat half their daily serving of food in the morning, and half in the evening

To make the transition as smooth as possible for your kitty... here's an easy 3-week plan:

Turn your cat from ‘Grazer’ to ‘Hunter’ in 3 Weeks

Week 1: In the morning, give your cat ¾ of the amount of food they usually get in a day. Then, give them the last ¼ serving in the evening.

If they still have food left in their bowl by dinner time, that's fine. Go ahead and add the last ¼ for their evening meal. You're showing them when their food is going to be served from now on.

Week 2: Gradually reduce the amount you give your cat in the morning and increase their serving at night. By making small changes, you can help your cat adjust to their new routine.

Week 3: Continue to reduce the size of your cat's breakfast meal and increase the size of their dinner until they're eating half their daily serving in the morning and half in the evening.

Note: Try not to give your kitty treats between their mealtimes until they're used to their new schedule. If you like, you can feed them a treat right after their meal as a reward.

Before you know it, your kitty will be on the prowl for their morning and evening meals. ↗

(“Does Your Cat Eat Like a Cow?” cont.)

And you'll be able to see how much better your cat looks and feels with their ‘hunter’ eating habits.

Then the fun really begins, because your independent kitty can enjoy more playtime, happier moods, and extra snuggles with their favorite person... you! ☐



The Do's and Don'ts of Introducing Two Cats

by Jackson Galaxy

As we all know, cats are intensely territorial beings. And yet, when the subject of introducing two cats has come up through the years, I would constantly hear people advise, “Just put them in a room together and they'll work it out.” Does it work sometimes? Sure, but it's cat Russian Roulette. Just as often, they might work out who loses an eyeball, but they will not magically work out how to be friends.

Instead, bringing a new cat home can trigger the territorial panic switch in your existing cat, and this often means war. So, do yourself and your cats a favor, and follow this time-tested, step-by-step recipe to a ‘T.’ It will give you your best chance for a smooth integration.

Step 1 - Prep: Scheduled Meals and Basecamp

Before you bring your new cat home, there are some fundamental steps to accomplish that will give you a significant leg up on the process:

A. **No free feeding** — Make sure you have switched your existing cat over to a routine of meal feeding, rather than free feeding her. This concept is foundational to my approach, and nowhere is it more important than during the introduction process. Once these scheduled meal times are established, it will set the stage for both your existing cat and your newcomer to experience a shared, ritualistic way of being — they get fed, around the same time, x-number of times per day. (More specifics about this shared meal time in a moment.)

B. **Separate Base Camp** (and the mandatory isolation phase) — Base camp is a defined area of your home that is the heart of a cat's territory. So first, decide where you're going to set up base camp for the new cat, so he feels like this space is essentially all his own. This could be the master or a spare bedroom, an office or even the bathroom when there is no other option. As long as the human scent is strong, it will help the cat establish a sense of home by commingling scents.

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("The Do's and Don'ts of Introducing Two Cats" cont.)

In addition, here are a few other important elements associated with successful base camp protocol:

Scent soakers: Because cats are all about scent, make sure that you have plenty of 'scent soakers' in their base camp. Scent soakers are soft items that absorb a cat's scent, and basically say "I live here," and allow for rubbing, scratching or lying in. Beds, blankets, carpets, cardboard scratchers and scratching posts are all excellent scent soakers.

No Peeking: One of the hallmarks of this integration method is that the new cat and the resident will not initially lay eyes on each other. This is a nonnegotiable. Ignore this part of the introduction process at your own peril!

Once your new cat demonstrates a notable comfort level in his base camp, it's time for...

Site swapping: This is where each cat gets to explore the other's territory without ever laying eyes on each other. This is also an opportunity for key signposts (like cat trees, litter boxes, etc.) to take on a shared scent. This is crucial to the 'getting to know you' process with cats, since so much of their communication is based on scent.

Follow this simple process for harmonious site swapping:

1. Carry the newcomer out of his base camp, put him in the bathroom, and shut the door.
2. Allow the resident cat to walk into the newcomer's base camp, then shut that door.
3. Allow the newcomer to explore the rest of the home.
4. Rinse and repeat.

And by the way, your new cat will let you know when he's ready to move out of base camp and explore the other parts of the house. (It could be anywhere from a few hours to a few days.)

The 'Other Side of the Door' Feeding Ritual:

This feeding ritual, which is all about creating a positive association between the newcomer and the resident cat, has evolved over the years but, by and large, has always worked for me. What's involved? Very simply, mealtime will consist of bowls set up on either side of a closed door. These bowls should start out far enough apart so the cats will walk up, eat and walk away without incident, but close enough that they sense there's another cat on the other side of the door. From there, we gradually move the bowls closer.

Eventually, this will lead us to...

Step 2 — Visual Access

With both cats now acutely aware of the other's scent, it's time to let them actually see each other. The work you've done up to this point has resulted in predictable behavior between the two cats and a cordial (or at least tolerant) 'scent handshake' at every meal. It's a mistake, though, to assume that they will be just as cordial once the visual element is introduced. Instead, begin at the beginning and reset the 'Challenge Line.' Take the feeding line back all the way to where they can see one another and eat with little or no disruption. And now, do the 'move-bowls-closer-to-the-door' process all over again, but this time, add the element of increased visual access.

But first, you have a choice to make...

A. Choosing a 'buffer barrier' — Do you simply crack the base camp door, or set up a pet gate or screen door? In my experience, the better option is to introduce the cats by either using a pet gate or

("The Do's and Don'ts of Introducing Two Cats" cont.)

a screen door. A pet gate works better than a baby gate because pet gates are high and have a walk-through door in them, so that the human doesn't have to disassemble the base camp door every time he wants to cross that threshold.

Once you've decided on your method, consider...

B. The 'Raising the Curtain' technique — Drape a blanket over that gate or use clothespins to hang it from the screen (or, perhaps less effectively, a cracked door). This gives you a much greater sense of control over the degree of visual access because you can 'raise the curtain' gradually over a period of time. The curtain allows you to start with the absolute bare minimum of visual access. For many cats, this added layer of security makes all the difference in getting comfortable with their new friend.

Step 3 - Eat, Play, Love

The idea here is to get both cats in a room together, (without any sort of barrier) and keep things as harmonious as possible for increasing segments of time. Philosophically, this is an extension of the 'other side of the door' exercise. Before, you were just creating a positive association based on food. Now, as you arrange to have both cats co-exist in a room together, you are going for the whole enchilada as a way of facilitating the ultimate positive association. You are looking to create the highest of high-value experiences we humans bring to our cats in the course of a day, in these three things: eat, play, love

Remember, the worst thing you can do for any kind of in-person/no barriers introduction, is to bring both cats into a shared space without giving them something to do. In that ill-advised scenario, the other cat becomes their 'something to do,' and you'll likely find that the 'staredown' soon turns into a 'throwdown.'

A. How it Works — The gist of Eat, Play, Love (EPL) is pretty simple: You're bringing one cat into a room where there's another cat who is already engaged in a high-value, fully engrossing activity. And your challenge is to keep them preoccupied for as long as possible through treats, positive reinforcement, play, and...well...love—without that 'staredown'/'throwdown' happening.

I suggest having a partner to assist you in this process:

1. Start with One Cat: Begin by playing with only one cat in the room at first. Make sure she is engaged, and keep her moving...either with treats or a toy.

2. Bring in the Other Cat: Casually have your partner bring the other cat into the room and immediately engage him. In a perfect world, you would lead the cat into the space with whatever is their favorite food or toy.

3. Keep the 'Rhythm' Going: The most important component when you bring the cats together is establishing and maintaining a rhythm of play once they hit the room. This is where your partner's help is invaluable, because he or she can work to focus the other cat on the session while you do the same with yours.

(continued on next page)

(*"The Do's and Don'ts of Introducing Two Cats" cont.*)

4. **End the Session:** The session will end in one of two ways: either the cats will end it or the humans will. It goes without saying that you would prefer the latter every time.

B. **Final Goal for Eat, Play, Love** — Once you are secure in Eat, Play, Love (when you can accomplish EPL without having to end it prematurely, and it's a ritual that has become a part of the everyday cycle), congratulations, you are pretty much home free. From there, you can break down the door/gate barrier for mealtime and end the session by feeding the cats on the side of the room that they occupy.

As the title suggests, this is but an overview. For even more detail on this Cat-to-Cat Introduction process (an entire chapter, in fact) check out my latest book, *Total Cat Mojo*.

— <https://www.jacksongalaxy.com/> □

BARK BACK

IF YOU WANT TO "BARK BACK" WITH CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES
OR SIMPLY SHARE A THOUGHT WITH OUR READERS...PLEASE DON'T HESITATE—SEND THEM IN!

Dear Sheltie Newsletter,

I want to comment about the subject area 'foods' for dogs' (article printed in the FALL 2019 newsletter which was titled "These Are The 21 Healthiest Foods For Your Dog").

Although you listed apples as okay to give dogs you did not mention that apple seeds are highly poisonous.

You did mention the seeds of another fruit, but you forgot to list the apple seeds.

— M

Hello, Nancy Lee,

The reason I sent the above email (about the apple seeds) being poisonous to dogs) is because a few years ago one of my dogs grabbed and ate the core of an apple. I immediately phoned the ASPCA Poison Control center and they told me that even a few seeds can harm a dog I had to then watch my dog to see if any of the side effects were going to appear.

Apple seeds contain amygdalin, a form of cyanide, which is very poisonous to every living thing. Cyanide prevents the blood from carrying oxygen throughout the body.

A few seeds may not hurt but who would even let a dog eat one of these seeds!!!

— M

Editor's note: This is the information I downloaded from the internet:

Eating one or two apple seeds is considered harmless to dogs, but consuming small amounts of apple seeds over time can lead to a build-up of poison in the dog's system. Therefore, dog owners should core apples prior to feeding to prevent gradual toxicity.

Apples contain high amounts of vitamin C, omega-3 fatty acids and fiber. □

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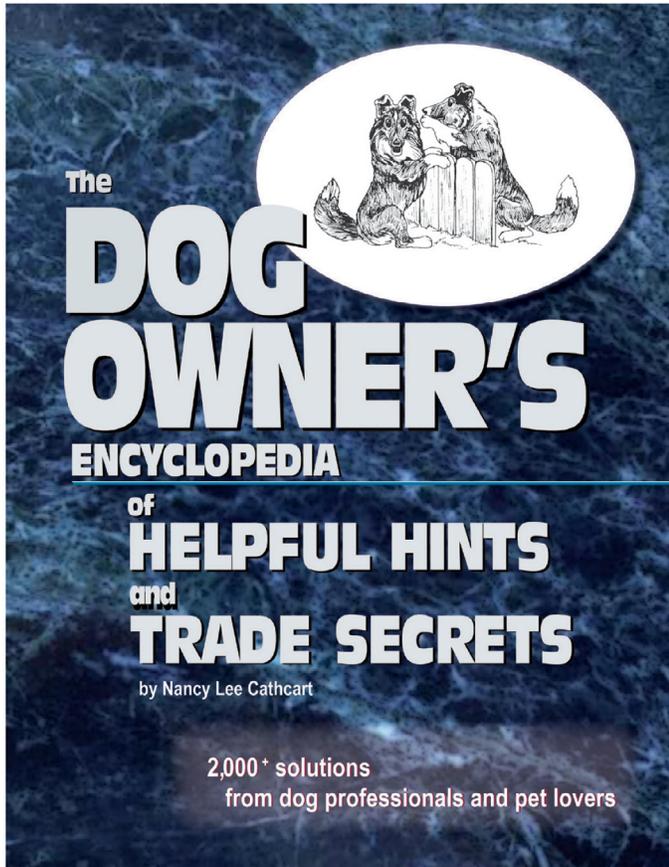
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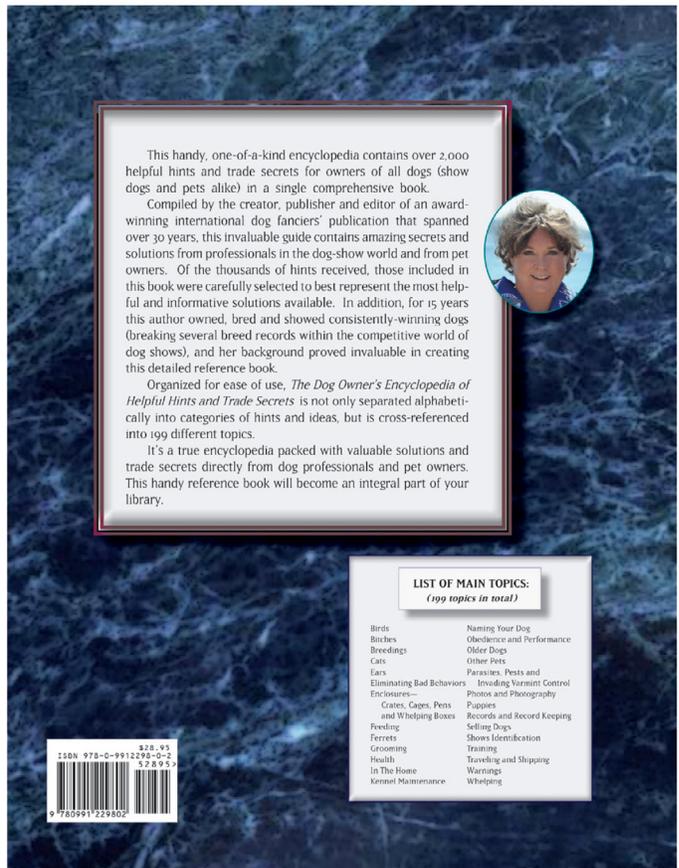
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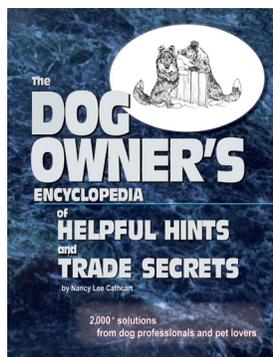
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