

My apologies...

My computer crashed and have been working with the 'professionals' for months to re-install my system software, along with all of my applications and programs.

Unfortunately, I lost much of my data...so if you sent me something to publish in this newsletter or on my website (and it hasn't been included), would you be so kind as to send it again to: s.pacesetter@sheltie.com. Thanks!

Also, I am running out of educational articles to include in this newsletter. Please send me articles you'd like to see printed.

Because I've been without the program (in which I create each newsletter), I am combining three newsletters (Winter, Spring and Summer) into this single newsletter. Thank you for your patience while I was rebuilding my computer. □



Nine Natural Remedies For Your Dog

by Paula Fitzsimmons

When your dog is feeling under the weather, your vet should be the first person you call. Seemingly minor symptoms may be indicative of a serious underlying medical condition, in which case do-it-yourself remedies could be ineffective or cause more harm than good.

But if your dog has a minor ailment, such as dry skin or a mild upset stomach, some home remedies can be quite beneficial. Here are nine simple, vet-approved home remedies that can provide relief for your canine companion.

1. VITAMIN E OIL FOR HEALTHY SKIN

Vitamin E is a powerful antioxidant that helps fight aging, says Dr. Judy Morgan, a holistic veterinarian based in New Jersey. (Antioxidants prevent free radical damage, which scientists believe contributes to aging.) While your dog couldn't care less about maintaining her youthful glow, she can still benefit from Vitamin E oil. Morgan says it adds protection against UV radiation, which is especially beneficial if your dog spends a lot of time outdoors.

It can also be used to moisturize your companion's dry skin. Morgan recommends massaging Vitamin E oil on your dog's coat. "Vitamin E capsules can also be broken open ▷

("Nine Home Remedies For Your Dog" cont.)

and used on warts, calluses, or dry spots," she says, adding that there is no cause for concern if your pet licks off the small amount of the oil.

2. ELECTROLYTE-REPLACING LIQUIDS FOR DIARRHEA

Flavorless electrolyte-replacing liquids (such as sports waters or pediatric drinks) not only help athletes to rehydrate and babies to recover from illness, but also can supply your sick pooch's body with much-needed fluid and electrolytes if he's suffering through a bout of diarrhea.

"Dogs lose fluids and electrolytes when they have diarrhea, so offering them a drink that contains both can be appropriate, particularly if their appetite hasn't fully returned to normal," says Dr. Jennifer Coates, veterinary advisor with petMD.

Consult your veterinarian as to the appropriate dosage before giving these types of liquids to your dog and to determine whether additional treatment is necessary.

3. YOGURT FOR DOGS

Delicious, plain yogurt can be a healthy treat for your dog. The live probiotic organisms in the yogurt may also help keep the bacteria in your dog's intestines in balance, but "the canine digestive tract is not the same as ours," Coates cautions. "There are better options out there that are made specifically for dogs."

Probiotic supplements for dogs are widely available through veterinarians and over-the-counter. Coates recommends ones that are made by reputable companies and that have the National Animal Supplement Council (NASC) seal on the label to ensure that you are purchasing a safe and effective product.

4. CHAMOMILE TEA FOR UPSET STOMACH AND MINOR IRRITATION

Chamomile soothes the stomach by decreasing muscle spasms and cramps, Morgan says. "It also decreases inflammation of mucous membranes, so it decreases inflammation of the stomach and intestinal lining." Chamomile tea can be added to dog food or your dog's water bowl, or given by mouth with a syringe, she says.

Getting your dog to drink something new is not always easy, however, admits Dr. Patty Khuly, owner of Miami, Florida-based Sunset Animal Clinic. She primarily uses chamomile on dogs with minor rashes and irritations.

Khuly recommends brewing a strong chamomile tea, pouring it into a clean spray bottle, and letting it cool in the refrigerator. "Then, spray liberally onto red or raw skin for an immediate soothing effect—with no sting."

5. OATMEAL FOR ITCHY SKIN

If you've had the chicken pox, you may have taken an oatmeal bath to soothe your itchy skin. "Oatmeal contains chemi-

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("Nine Home Remedies For Your Dog" cont.)

cals called avenanthramides and phenols, which have anti-inflammatory properties," Morgan explains.

Pets with skin allergies and superficial infections get immediate relief from oatmeal, says Khuly, who is a general veterinary practitioner. "It's especially helpful for dogs with really itchy feet. Plus, it's 100 percent non-toxic and delicious, too."

To create your own remedy, Morgan suggests grinding the oatmeal to a fine powder and mixing it with water to apply as a poultice (drying agent) on hot spots or inflamed areas. If your dog tolerates baths, you can add the oatmeal formula to warm water, and let your dog soak for five to 10 minutes.

6. EPSOM SALTS FOR WOUNDS

You might use magnesium-rich Epsom salts to relieve sore muscles. They have anti-inflammatory properties and are also useful for soaking and cleaning wounds, Morgan says. "They cause abscesses to open and drain, relieving pressure in the wound and allowing healing. We use these a lot for soaking feet of horses and also dogs with inter-digital sores."

To create a soak for your dog, Morgan advises mixing the Epsom salts with warm water and applying the soak on your dog for five to 10 minutes, three times a day.

7. OILS FOR FLEA PREVENTION

If you are reluctant to use conventional flea prevention products, you might have looked into natural options. "There are a lot of recipes out there—some good, some bad," Morgan says. Essential oils can be very effective, she says, "but must be diluted so they do not cause harm to the animal." (Note: Some oils that are safe for dogs *may be toxic for cats*. Check the ASPCA's Animal Poison Control for guidance and consult with your veterinarian.)

Morgan likes coconut oil, which you can either give your dog orally or apply externally on his coat. "The higher the lauric acid content in the oil, the more effective it will be," she says. "Many inferior coconut oils have very low lauric acid content." Coconut oil can also be used as a carrier oil for essential oils.

After using a dog flea comb daily to help remove fleas from a dog's coat, Integrative Veterinarian Dr. Carol Osborne recommends bathing your canine companion with a natural pet flea shampoo. "Start, for example, with a pint of organic oatmeal shampoo, and then add two tablespoons of either neem or tea tree oil, shake well and begin bathing. Pets may be bathed weekly or as needed." Keep in mind that improper dilutions of tea tree oil and other essential oils can be toxic for pets, so consult with your veterinarian first. And while natural options like these may help repel fleas, they are unlikely to solve a full-blown infestation on their own.

8. HYDROGEN PEROXIDE, BAKING SODA, AND DISHWASHING LIQUID FOR DEODORIZING

Aside from the redness, swelling, sneezing, and other symptoms a skunk encounter can create for your dog, is the offensive smell. A de-skunking remedy Khuly suggests is a mixture of hydrogen peroxide, baking soda, and dishwashing liquid, which she says works on skunked fur and everything the skunked fur has contact with. Mix four cups of hydrogen peroxide with one-third cup baking soda and a small squirt of dishwashing liquid, and apply it liberally to your pet's coat, she says. Rinse well after about five minutes and repeat if necessary.

While it's not the most glamorous topic, this solution also works well for stinky anal glands, Khuly says. ↗

("Nine Home Remedies For Your Dog" cont.)

9. LICORICE ROOT FOR ITCHINESS

No, this is not the same as the licorice candy you eat. Licorice root is actually a form of cortisone, and cortisone relieves skin irritation and reduces the urge to scratch, says Osborne, who practices in Chagrin Falls, Ohio.

You may see bottles of licorice root in stores that sell health products. Pet supply stores also offer licorice products formulated for dogs. Some dog-specific products designed to treat allergy symptoms in dogs may also include licorice root.

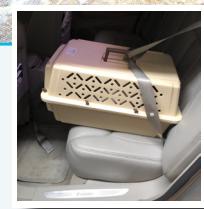
If you've given your dog a flea bath and dip and she's still itchy, Osborne suggests the following herbal, home remedy: "Take five drops of licorice root, five drops of dandelion root, and five drops of cat's claw. Mix all three together and give five drops of the final solution to your canine by mouth, once daily for 14 days in a row."

"Since cortisone is a type of steroid, it's important to talk to your veterinarian before giving these products to your dog to prevent any potential cross reactions and/or side effects with any other medications your pet may be taking," Osborne advises. Also, some licorice root formulations have been associated with low blood potassium levels, muscle breakdown, and kidney damage. Make sure you are working with a veterinarian who is well-trained in holistic medicine before you reach for any herbal remedy.

Baking soda, dishwashing liquid, hydrogen peroxide, and chamomile tea are a few items you may keep in your home that can also double as home remedies for your dog.

Remember to first talk to your vet about any unusual symptoms your dog has and whether these products are appropriate for her situation. Taking away your canine companion's discomfort may already be well within your reach. □

Driving With Dogs 101: How to Keep Your Dog Safe and Happy in the Car



Despite the number of car commercials starring an obedient, window-gazing pup, driving with dogs is a serious source of anxiety for many pet owners. Dogs are naturally enthusiastic, active, and curious: traits that are likely to intensify when transferred to a moving, bumpy vehicle. Ideally, driving with your dog provides an opportunity to bond and explore or to simply accomplish chores without leaving a squirrely pup home alone. Whatever your reasons, the following ideas prioritize the safety of both you and your dog as you travel to your next destination.

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(*"Driving With Dogs 101"* cont.)

Common Types of Car Restraints for Dogs: **FOR A SMALLER OR ANXIOUS DOG:** **MOBILE PET BED OR CARRIER**

This product provides a comfortable, protected space for smaller dogs who are less enthusiastic about car rides. To lessen their nerves, you can even provide with your dog with a distracting toy or a clothing item from home with a familiar smell.

Take note: The "Sleepypod" Pet Bed is the only mobile carrier that is safety-certified by the Center for Pet Safety. In general, mobile beds and carriers are well-suited for trips to the vet's office or other unfamiliar places, and usually have a shoulder strap to help you transport your pup in and out of the car.

To use: Place your dog inside, wrap the seat belt around the base of the bed, and pull the shoulder belt through the top handle. Some beds include a small D-ring inside, which can be secured to your dog's collar with a short tether.

FOR AN OLDER DOG: CAR HAMMOCK

While car hammocks do not provide as much security as other restraints, they are ideal for older, calmer dogs and shorter car trips.

Take note: You may want to purchase a lift harness to help an older dog into the car, particularly if their mobility or vision is impaired. Also look for non-slip, waterproof hammocks with durable fabric.

To use: Place the hammock on your backseat with the plush side up. Attach the adjustable straps around the front and rear headrests. Insert the handles in between the surface and the back of the seat to secure the hammock.

FOR BIGGER DOGS: TRAVEL CRATES

Big dogs are great for cuddles and outdoor adventures, but finding them appropriate car restraints can pose an equally large challenge. Thankfully, a sturdy travel crate ensures both the safety and comfort of your big dog. Regardless of size, the dogs best-suited for crates are calm, confident car passengers who don't require constant reassurance from their owners.

Take note: If you are placing your dog in the cargo area, check with your car manufacturer to confirm that this is not the crumple zone of your vehicle.

To use: Find the appropriately sized crate for your pup (smaller sizes are available!). Secure the crate in the boot or the backseat, depending on which is safest. Most vehicles have D-rings that can be used to tether your dog's crate on both sides.

FOR ALL DOGS: TRAVEL HARNESS

Travel harnesses are one of the easiest and most popular car restraints for dogs. They can be used both in the car and as a walking harness by attaching a leash.

Take note: There are hundreds of travel harnesses on the market, but only a select few are safety-certified by Center for Pet Safety. Make sure to safety-check potential purchases before investing your time, money, and trust into a product.

To use: Place your dog in the correctly-sized harness and insert the seat belt through both of the loops on the back of the harness. Buckle into the car's seat belt, but avoid locking it because your dog should be free to sit up, lay down, and change positions comfortably. ↗

(*"Driving With Dogs 101"* cont.)

FOR A DOG WHO LOVES JUMPING INTO THE FRONT SEAT: FRONT-SEAT BARRIER

Despite how much you love each other, you and your dog are safest when separated by the front seat (even if this requires a literal barrier).

Take note: These barriers are intended to supplement another form of dog restraint, such as a harness or a booster seat.

To use: Remove the headrests from the front seats. Slide the D-rings on the top of the barrier onto the posts of the driver's and passenger's headrests. Clip or hook the bottoms of the barrier below the front seats and adjust as needed.

FOR WINDOW WATCHERS: BOOSTER SEAT

Best for small dogs and calm travelers, the booster seat slightly elevates your dog so that they can fully enjoy the sights and smells beyond the window.

Take note: Booster seats should always be used with a travel harness. Steer clear of booster seats with long tethers that attach to your dog's collar, as these can cause strangulation.

To use: Place the booster seat on the backseat of your car. Secure your dog in a proper travel harness, which can be attached to the inside of the booster.

FOR TRUCK OWNERS: CRATES WITH A TETHERING SYSTEM AND TRUCK SHELL

All too often, you see dogs sliding around in the backs of trucks as their owners speed down fast roads. If the only space for your dog is in the truck bed, take the necessary precautions to maximize their safety.

Take note: A high-quality travel crate should have double-wall construction, guarding against both colder weather and car crashes.

To use: Using a crate in a truck bed is very similar to using a crate in the backseat of your car; however, it is especially important to properly tether the crate into the truck bed to prevent sliding. You can also purchase a truck bed shell and a canopy to shield your dog from road debris, harsh sunlight, and heat, particularly if you are stopping to camp.

Tips and Tricks

Travel with reusable water bottles so that you can always refill your dog's water bowl, regardless of how close you are to the nearest rest stop.

Windows can be cracked slightly but not so much that your dog's head can stick out! The wind quickly dries out their eyes, nose and mouth, and flying grit from the road can cause further irritation.

In the unlikely event of separation during a long road trip, make sure your dog's collar tag has your contact information. Better yet, consider micro-chipping your pet to ensure their safety.

Particularly during long trips, make time to get your dog (and yourself) out of the car and exercise! Breaks for movement will help unleash some of your dog's pent-up energy, turning their car time into nap time.

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(Driving With Dogs 101" cont.)

Be careful about what and how much your dog eats on the road since the bumpiness of travel can make them carsick.

When driving with dogs, it's always helpful to pack extra towels, stain remover, hand sanitizer, and any other cleaning supplies.

Facts and Figures

Not all dog car restraints are made equal. The car company Subaru formed an alliance with the Center for Pet Safety (CPS) to sponsor crash tests of 29 car pet restraints. Incredibly, 25 of the 29 restraints failed their tests.

Based on these and other findings, CPS urges pet owners to avoid products with long tethers or zip lines that attach to your dog's walking harness or collar. These products cannot stop your pet from launching forward in the event of a crash.

When deciding on a car restraint for you dog, always check to see if the product is certified by the CPS.

Remember: dogs should not ride in the backs of pick-up trucks without being properly secured.

According to the American Humane Society, an estimated 100,000 dogs die in accidents each year due to riding in truck beds.

Dogs, hot cars and hot pavement are a bad combination! According to the Iowa Veterinary Specialties, a dog can experience brain damage in just 20 minutes due to heat stroke. Watch out for the key signs of heat stroke, including restlessness, racing heart beat, heavy panting, and vomiting. Keep the AC running, and never leave your dog unattended in the car regardless of the outside temperature.

Final Takeaways for Canine Car Safety

Whether a nervous rider, a high-maintenance diva, or an adventurous sidekick, your dog should be treated like any human passenger. When choosing products to maximize your pet's safety while on the road, be sure to:

- Avoid harnesses with "zip lines" or tethers that attach directly to your dog's collar. These could seriously injure your dog in a car accident, as your dog's neck is the only connection point to the backseat.
- Check both the safety certifications and purchaser reviews of the products you consider.
- Match products with your dog's size, age, and travel temperament.

Although the sheer variety of safety products can be both confusing and intimidating, your goal as a pet owner remains simple: to protect both you and your dog whenever you take to the road. By paying attention to the safety certification and consumer reviews of different safety products, a routine car outing with your dog can become the recreation of an iconic car commercial. □

Editor's note: I strongly suggest that your pet always be placed in a closed, hard metal or plastic crate whenever traveling. This is because, if you are ever in an accident, a hard crate will offer great protection. A sturdy crate won't be as easily crushed as will most other enclosures. Also, run the shoulder strap through the crate's handle...thus securing the crate from any dangerous movements.

Make sure your crate is large enough for he or she to turn around and stand up, but not so large that they can be thrown around inside (in case a crash occurs).

It's best to have your dog or cat enjoy being inside an open crate before traveling. Put treats inside the crate and, when indoors, always make sure the door is securely open (so your pet won't think being in a crate is a punishment, but rather it is a safe and happy place to visit or spend time).



Study: Which crates and carriers will keep your pets safe?

by Lindsay Deutsch,
USA Today Network

Planning a summer road trip with your pet? An eye-opening series of tests hopes to clarify products to keep you and your furry friend safe.

The 2015 Crate and Carrier Crashworthiness Studies, a collaborative effort between the non-profit Center for Pet Safety and pet-friendly carmaker Subaru, announced its findings Friday, including top performing products as well as ones that failed tests despite marketing claims of safety.

"If you're a dog owner like me, you want to protect your pet in the worst case scenario," Lindsey Wolko, founder and CEO of Center for Pet Safety said. When it comes to pet-safety products for cars, "the words 'safe' and 'crash-tested' are often just marketing claims. It's very subjective, so this is working to bring oversight and accountability," she told the USA Today Network.

There are currently no test protocols or performance standards in the U.S. when it comes to automobile pet safety products. This study is a follow-up to the non-profit's 2011 testing of harnesses.

The top-performing products, according to the study? For crates, it's the Gunner Kennels G1 Intermediate with 8' Tie Down Straps as the 2015 Top Performing Crate. For carriers (for smaller dogs and cats), both the PetEgo Forma Frame Jet Set Carrier with ISOFIX-Latch Connection and Sleepypod Mobile Pet Bed with PPRS Handilock got top marks.

Wolko said that when it comes to car safety, there are products that are distraction prevention tools (which will help prevent a crash) and products that will protect the pet if there is an actual crash. For example, metal crates are simply a distraction prevention tool and do not help in the case of a collision.

"In the event of a crash, it is important for pet crates and carriers to contain the dog and prevent the animal from becoming a projectile. It is also important for the containment device to remain fully secured at the connection points. If a pet is unrestrained, or the structural integrity should fail, the dog can potentially strike and injure a human passenger," according to the Center for Pet Safety.

Subaru, which funded the study, is a company in which more than half of drivers are pet owners, and of that group, 69% own at least one dog.

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("Which Crates and Carriers..." cont.)

Other tips for pet travel:

- Make sure your pet has the right size crate. They should fit snugly with just enough room to be comfortable.
- Secure crates and carriers using strength-rated cargo area anchor straps. Wolko says that elastic or rubber bungee cords "do absolutely no good."
- Assess your dog's shape, size and personality before deciding whether to use a crate, carrier or harness when traveling. □



How to Break 7 Common Bad Dog Habits

by Shayna Meliker

"No! Bad dog!" How many times have you scolded your misbehaving canine with those words? Probably too many. But before you fly off the handle, one of the most important things to understand about correcting bad behavior is that punishment doesn't work. Many times, dogs don't understand what they're being punished for, and will respond by learning to hide the behavior.

To help you get a handle on your dog's conduct, we've listed common bad habits. We offer tips here and we also link to longer articles on each subject as well. But remember, it is always important to discuss behavior issues with your veterinarian who can determine if they are caused by a medical problem. If he gives you the all clear, consider enlisting the help of a trainer or behaviorist to teach your dog appropriate go-to behaviors.

1. Chewing Inappropriate Objects

Chewing is a natural behavior for dogs, since they explore their environment with their mouth. It also relieves stress and boredom, and helps keep their teeth clean.

When you catch your dog chewing inappropriate objects (like shoes, as many dogs do), redirect the chewing to an appropriate item, like a chew toy or stuffed Kong. Then praise your pup for selecting an acceptable outlet for his chewing behavior. Talk with your veterinarian about which chews are safe for your dog.

2. Barking at the Doorbell

Dogs bark at the doorbell for any number of reasons. They could be excited or anxious about visitors, or they might bark as a watchdog tendency. Some dogs even equate their barking with you opening the door, so they think they're training you to open the door when they bark. One of the best ways to stop barking at the doorbell is to teach and reward an alternative behavior, like sitting on a nearby mat and waiting for the door to be opened. □

("How to Break 7 Common Bad Habits" cont.)

3. Digging in the Yard

Digging is an extremely rewarding activity for dogs, whether they're digging to reach a scent or simply to release pent-up energy. Help your dog practice this behavior appropriately by giving him a sandbox or section of the yard where he's allowed to dig.

Make sure this area has clearly marked visual boundaries, and use treats and toys to make this new digging place more exciting than the old one.

4. Barking in the Car

Those shrill yaps from the backseat can be your dog expressing many emotions, from fear and frustration to exuberant joy. The best way to address barking in the car is to employ restraint equipment, like a harness or a crate to help your pet feel more secure. Other options include using a pheromone spray to help relax your dog, or giving him a chew toy to focus on during the car ride.

5. Begging at the Table

No matter how cute or desperate for food your dog looks, consistency is the key to curbing dinner-table begging. Make sure no one in your family feeds the dog from the table.

Even if his begging only works once in a blue moon, he'll repeat and escalate the behavior until all his barking and whining pays off with a rare food reward. Instead of giving in, provide your dog with an appropriate dinner time activity, like enjoying his own toys or food puzzles.

6. Urine Marking Inside the House

This is one of the most "eww"-worthy bad behaviors. Dogs pee on things to mark territory or leave messages for canine friends, which is generally acceptable outdoors. If you catch your dog urine marking (or even preparing to mark) inside the house, quickly interrupt him with a "no" or an "oops" and take him outside. Then reward and praise him for choosing to urinate outdoors.

To prevent frequent urination in the same household spot, remove the scent of previous urine marks with a good enzymatic cleaner.

7. Stealing Food Off Counters

Trainers call this bad behavior "counter-surfing." It's one of the more difficult habits to break, since Fido experiences a huge reward for stealing the food: He gets to eat it! The easiest way to solve this problem is to eliminate the opportunity. Don't leave food around, and use baby gates or fencing to restrict your dog's access to the kitchen when you're not there to supervise him. Teaching the "leave it" command is useful for when you catch him in the act of stealing snacks. □



How TO KEEP YOUR DOGS COOL IN THE HEAT

by Jenna Stregowski, RVT

Editor's note: These recommendations are obvious to pet owners, however, it's doesn't hurt to be reminded of ways to keep your pet in comfort.

Summer is a fun time of year for humans and dogs alike. Many dogs love to play outdoors despite the heat. Summer safety is no joke, and it's up to you to make sure your dog stays cool and comfortable. Fortunately, there are a number of steps you can take to keep your dog safe on the hottest days of the year.

Before You Begin

People can take their ability to adapt to hot weather for granted and forget that their dog does not have the same natural cooling capability. Dogs cannot cool themselves by sweating like humans. They might sweat a small amount through the pads of their feet, but the main way a dog cools off is by panting. Unfortunately, panting is not enough when it is extremely hot and humid. While you may not find that the temperature's too hot to be outside, your dog may be miserable or simply going along to please you.

On really hot days, it's best to keep your dog at home in the air conditioning. Heat stroke or exhaustion and injury can occur in dogs faster than you may think and your dog's safety should be your top priority. If your home is not air-conditioned, you will need to take appropriate steps to keep your pooch cool while you're away.

What You Need

Provide Cool Water

It is essential that you keep fresh, cool water available to your dog at all times. In hot weather, this is even more crucial. Make sure you keep the water dish in a shady location and change the water frequently.

To constantly keep fresh water available outdoors, consider installing a watering system that hooks up to a faucet. These are designed to provide water as needed and are usually triggered by motion or a specific action.

If you go to the park or somewhere else with your dog, take along as much water for it as you do for yourself so you both stay hydrated. In addition to water, you can try feeding your dog some delicious homemade chilled treats.

Shelter from the Sun

Your dog might enjoy a little sunbathing, but it ultimately needs a cool, shady spot to relax. Prolonged sun exposure not only leads to heat exhaustion, but it can also cause sunburn. Yes, dogs can get sunburned, too. □

(*"How to Keep Your Dogs Cool..." cont.*)

While sunscreen is available for dogs, it is not ideal. The best thing is to offer shelter. Shade from trees is nice, but it's not perfect either. An actual structure is better. Consider getting an insulated dog house, but make sure it is large and well-ventilated. Alternatively, you might put up an open-air tent or canopy. The addition of a fan will help cool things down further. If possible, put the shelter in a shady area to keep it extra-cool.

Of course, the ideal shelter is your home. If possible, install a doggie door to allow indoor access.

Try a Doggie Pool

If your dog loves water, then a large tub or kiddie pool (molded plastic, not inflatable so nails can't pop it) might be a great addition to your yard. You can find inexpensive tubs or pools at most home stores.

Many dogs enjoy playing and lounging in the cool water. Just make sure you supervise your dog at all times. Keep the pool in a shady spot and change the water frequently. Do not leave the pool full when not in use, as it may attract mosquitoes.

Instead of a pool, you might also try running a sprinkler to see if your dog likes it. However, most dogs prefer a pool to a sprinkler.

Cool Down the Dog Bed

Your dog's need for a cool, shady place to relax extends into the house. While a dog bed is nice and soft, it might also be too warm. That is why many people notice that their dogs prefer to lie on tile or concrete floors when it's hot out.

A cooling dog bed can offer the comfort and softness of a typical dog bed with the coolness your dog craves. These beds often use a gel-like material or water to keep the temperature nice and cool. They are especially great for senior dogs as an alternative to hard floors.

Preventing Problems With Your Dog During the Heat

There are several other products designed to cool off your dog. Some work better than others, and often it just depends on the dog. If you decide to try one out, just remember that nothing can substitute fresh water and shade. No dog should go for long without plenty of both.

One common mistake people make is taking their dog on a walk in the heat. Pavement gets very hot under the summer sun and can easily burn the pads of your dog's feet. If it's too hot for you to walk on barefoot, it's far too hot for your dog. Take your summertime walks in a grassy park or, in the least, direct your dog to walk on the grass next to the sidewalk.

Cooler air is the best way to prevent and relieve overheating in your dog. No matter how you try to keep your dog cool, the best thing you can do is to keep a close eye on it. When in doubt, get the dog to a cooler area. Be sure to contact your vet immediately if you notice signs of heat stroke. □



PROBLEMS WITH FREE FEEDING AND CATS

Is your kitty overweight, lethargic and listless? Is he picky about new foods, especially canned goodies? If your cat has a big bowl of dry food available at all times, he may show some or all of these symptoms indicative of improper feeding. Many people free-feed dry food to their cats due to its convenience, or out of the worry that their kitty will be hungry while they're out and about. In fact, free-feeding can actually undermine your cat's health and impair his natural biological cycle.

Cats in the wild are biologically identical to our domesticated feline friends, so we must look to Mother Nature to determine how to best feed our own house cats. A feral or wild cat operates on a twelve hour hunting cycle, give or take a few hours, with periods of rest in between each hunt. This regular cycle allows the cat's stomach to empty itself of food while resting and divert energy to the other parts of the body that need healing. This can include areas of bruises and bumps, cuts and scrapes, or even regenerative organs such as the liver which may be affected by disease. When cats have continual access to food their body stays in the digesting stage, and does not direct therapeutic energy to the rest of the body. This can result in a cat that appears healthy on the outside, but may be suffering from a depressed immune system, low white blood cell count or reduced organ function.

Another drawback to free-feeding is pickiness. So often we hear of cats that refuse to try new foods (usually canned options) and these cats are very often accustomed to having a big bowl of their favorite dry food available at all times. When their preferred meal choice is right in front of them, cats have little incentive to try something unknown that they may not like as much. Additionally, the grazing habit they have adopted has not allowed their stomachs to properly empty in the natural gorge and fast cycle, and they are lacking the important sensation of hunger.

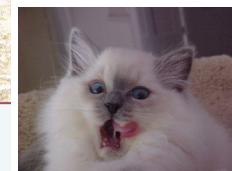
Ending the free-feeding cycle is a major component in successfully transitioning cats to new foods, and owners usually have a much easier time getting their cat to eat a new food simply by switching to scheduled, metered feedings before rotating in new food options.

Obesity and diabetes are two major health problems that have been linked with free-feeding. All too many cats graze throughout the day when food is left out, and eat more than their daily caloric requirement. With dry food-only diets already being a major contributor to feline weight gain, this grazing habit only serves to push cats further towards health-compromising levels of obesity. Because of the known correlation between obesity and diabetes, overweight cats become at risk for developing this condition which is also brought on or aggravated by ▾

(Problems With Free Feeding and Cats" cont.)

an abundance of dry foods. These carbohydrates turn to sugar in the body and cause spikes in the blood sugar levels which can increase the need for sugar-regulating insulin. The good news is that both of these serious and life-threatening conditions can quite often be easily prevented or regulated through diet change.

Worried about a day out of town? At times when you may be away overnight, a larger bowlful of food is fine, but don't let it dictate your day-to-day feedings. Keep your cat's best interests at heart and help her eat right, stay fit, and live a longer and healthier life with regular twice-a-day feedings (unless you're feeding a kitten or a pregnant queen). □



Free Feeding

by Jackson Galaxy

When I meet people at various events and on the street, I often get the same question: "How often should I feed my cat? Should I leave food out all the time?"

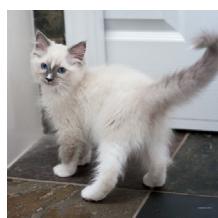
Firstly, I am against free feeding for a couple reasons. Cats, by nature, are not grazers. They're built to hunt, catch, kill, and eat — leaving food and treats out all the time will mess with their natural state of mind.

Instead, I'd advise you to feed your cat small meals throughout the day (every five to six hours is ideal). Plus, controlling when they eat may help with controlling their use of the litter box. Win-win! □

To Remove Cat or Dog Hair —

We love our pets, but removing their fur from every piece of fabric in the house can be a major pain.

Try this: grab a dryer sheet (either new or used will work) and swipe it across whatever piece of furniture or item of clothing you're trying to clean. The textured cloth will suck the fur right off! □



IT'S YOUR CAT'S TAIL

by Dr. Marty Goldstein

Every time your cat hooks, flicks or twitches his tail, he's communicating something different. Since some of these movements are so subtle, it may be difficult to understand how your cat is feeling.

The following tail movements are some of the most common tail movements which will help you decipher what your kitty is "saying"...so you can feel even closer to your feline friend.

If your cat raises his tail in the air and hooks the tip

This friendly "tail gesture" means your kitty is relaxed, confident and happy to see you. When cats greet someone he like, a high, hooked tail is his way of saying "hello."

So when your kitty holds his tail like this, give them a bunch of chin scratches and say "hi" right back.

If your cat swishes his tail back and forth

This tail expression can mean your cat is annoyed or ready to pounce. When my cat sits at the window with his tail low, and rigidly swishes it back and forth, it usually means he's watching a bird or a squirrel outside.

When your cat stiffly swishes his tail and he's NOT "stalking" prey, he might be telling you that he's irritated.

So take a look at your cat's environment and see if you can help. If not, he likely just need some space...and it's best to cuddle another time.

If your cat quivers his tail

Have you ever seen your cat stick his tail in the air and slightly shake it side to side? That means your kitty is extremely excited (for example: whenever he sees me open up a bag of treats).

But a cat tends to do this when he's extremely happy too, so don't be surprised if you see your kitty quivering his tail when he runs over to greet you.

If your cat taps his tail while he sleep

When your kitty appears to be taking a cat nap, but his tail is slightly flicking or tapping, it can mean he's relaxed and resting his eyes.

But pay close attention to his surroundings because sometimes when one of my cats is napping and my wife calls his name from another room, he'll actually tap his tail in response...instead of getting up. If your cat does this, it can mean he hear you, but he is choosing to "nap" instead!

At first, this gesture can seem pretty sassy, but the "sleepy flick" is actually a sign that he trusts you enough to fully relax around you, even when there's surrounding noise.

If your cat wraps his tail around you

I like to think of this one as a "kitty hug." If your cat wraps his tail around your leg or curves it around your arm, he's telling you that he loves and appreciates you. ↗

(*"It's Your Cat's Tail" cont.*)

Sometimes when my two cats cuddle, he'll find a way to wrap his tail around each other...which, as you can imagine, is pretty cute.

So when your cat does this, be sure to show him that you love and appreciate him right back.

With all the flicks, swishes and subtle movements, understanding your cat's tail can be tricky. So I hope this guide helps you "decode" your kitty's tail... and strengthens your special bond even further. After all, when you learn each little tap and twist, you'll be able to understand when your kitty wants to play, when he want his alone time or when he's simply telling you that he loves you :) □

FREE
Dog Care Support
For Seniors

ElderDog provides a range of assistance and supports for seniors in the greater Fredericton area, including:

- Assisting seniors with exercising their dogs;
- Delivering or picking up dog food from a grocery or pet store;
- Light tasks associated with animal hygiene;
- Minor grooming such as nail clipping or help with brushing;
- Transportation to and from vet or groomer; and
- Temporary care during hospitalization.

Please e-mail
elderdogfredericton@gmail.com
if you or someone you know could use our dog care support for seniors services.

Editor's Note —

In past newsletters, I've haven't previously included a super-long article, however, since this article is so informative (and thorough), I've chosen include "A Complete Guide to Pet-Proofing Your Home" in the following pages nine pages. By doing this, whenever a question arises, you'll be able to quickly locate the information which pertains to your home situation.



A Complete Guide to Pet-Proofing Your Home

A home should be a safe and comfortable retreat for every member of the household and that includes any four-legged ones that share this space as well. Pet owners have the added responsibility of making sure their pets can have a safe environment at home, and this is particularly true for those with puppies and kittens who are naturally inquisitive.

This guide will look at each room of the home, as well as outside yards. It will review potential problem areas and how owners can better "pet-proof" each. This complete guide will help pet owners determine which indoor and outdoor plants are toxic, why appliance and window cords can be hazardous to pets and how to go about making renovations to make a home even more pet-friendly. Whether you've just bought a home or are still living in your same home, these tips can help pet owners keep their furry friends safe.

Enjoy the peace of mind of making, and keeping, your home safe for your cat or dog.

Bedrooms — Drawers

Open drawers can be an almost irresistible temptation for puppies and kittens. Care should be taken to keep drawers closed to prevent accidentally trapping a small pet. If you discover an open drawer, check inside before closing. Open drawers can also serve as a ladder for cats to climb to even higher, potentially unsafe heights.

When upper drawers are left open, they can create a tipping issue for larger dogs or cats. Open drawers also provide an invitation for pets to chew on socks, undergarments and other clothing. There may be other items stored in drawers that contain buttons or other potential choking hazards.

The simple solution is to keep drawers closed.

Toothpastes and Cosmetics

Human toothpaste offers some dangers for dogs, in particular when they contain a xylitol (a sweetener often used in the product). When dogs ingest toothpaste that contains xylitol, it can lead to vomiting, seizures and in some severe instances, liver damage. Adding to the danger is ^

(*"A Complete Guide to Pet-Proofing Your Home"* cont.)

the fact that most toothpaste is packaged in soft, squeezable tubes which are inviting to pets and can be easily punctured by a dog or a cat's teeth.

Many common cosmetics contain ingredients which can be poisonous to pets including tea tree oil, minoxidil, toluene, formaldehyde, acetone and more. Hand sanitizers have large amounts of isopropyl alcohol which is dangerous to pets. Even common deodorants contain aluminum which can be harmful when ingested by small animals.

These products should be safely stored away in a cabinet or container. Care should be taken to make sure a cabinet door can't be sprung open by pawing from a pet. If it can be potentially opened by a pet, consider the use of childproof door locks.

Toilets

Some pet owners find it at least somewhat amusing that their pets try to drink from the toilet. Generally speaking, however, most pet experts agree this is not a good idea. A pet could slip and get trapped and potentially drown in a toilet. The toilet seat could accidentally come down on a pet trapping them or causing injury. There are also bacteria concerns that are present even in "clean" toilets.

Soaps and chemicals can cause issues as well. Many homeowners use in-tank cleaners to keep their toilets fresh. These bleaches, soaps and chemicals can be harmful to pets. Even when bowls are cleaned without in-tank cleaners, access to pets should be restricted until the toilet has been flushed multiple times, assuring any cleaner residue is rinsed safely away.

A safer alternative to toilet water would be providing your pet with clean water daily in a clean bowl.

Showers and Bathtubs

While showers and baths provide little safety risks themselves for pets, the same can't be said for the products commonly found in them. Soaps, shampoos, and hair or body cleaners often contain chemicals like non-ionic and anionic detergents that can be harmful to pets. This is the reason that human soaps and shampoos shouldn't be used on pets. Instead, it is safer to use specially formulated pet shampoo products.

Other products used in the shower (like sponges and loofahs) can be choking hazards when not kept safely out of the reach of pets. If there are products in the shower, keep shower doors closed. If that is not an option, restrict access to the area by keeping the bathroom door closed.

Sharp Objects

Bathrooms can have a variety of sharp items that pose safety risks to pets including razors, razor blades, tweezers, nail files, scissors, safety pins and more. These items can cause harm to curious pets and be potentially deadly if swallowed. Caution should also be taken when storing small mirrors that could be knocked off a counter top or sink and break into sharp pieces.

(continued on next page)

("A Complete Guide to Pet-Proofing Your Home" cont.)

Appliances and Cords

Curling irons and hair straighteners can reach temperatures in excess of 400 degrees. This is an obvious risk to pets when in use, but even when not in use, appliances in the bathroom can still pose dangers. The cords of electric razors and hair dryers can be tempting to chew on and potentially cause a shock to a pet. Hanging cords may be tugged upon, pulling both the appliance and nearby products to the ground where there are even more accessible to dogs or cats.

You can create a safer environment for pets by winding up cords properly when they are not in use and storing them safely out of sight and reach of your four-legged friends.

An additional step you can take to better ensure you and your pet's safety when using electrical appliances in the bathroom is making sure any sockets near water are GFCI (ground-fault electrical interrupter) sockets that can prevent shocks should a short occur.

Kitchen — Food

It is easy to think that any food we enjoy, our pets will also enjoy. The reality is there are foods that can be dangerous, and even poisonous to our pets. Here is a list of food products that the ASPCA Poison Control Center lists as potentially harmful for pets.

- Alcohol — Any alcoholic beverage or food product can cause everything from vomiting and diarrhea in a pet to tremors, coma and death. You should never give alcohol to a pet.

- Chocolate and Coffee — Generally, the darker the coffee and chocolate, the more dangerous it is for pets. The methylxanthines in cacao seeds are the dangerous ingredient that can lead to panting, vomiting, excessive urination and potentially death.

- Citrus — While a small amount of citrus fruit is generally considered harmless, citric acid in large amounts can be harmful to pets.

- Coconut, Coconut Oil and Coconut Water — Like citrus, in small amounts coconut can cause little harm to pets. Coconut flesh and oils, however, can cause stomach issues in pets. High potassium coconut water should not be given to pets.

- Grapes and Raisins — While the exact compound is unknown, grapes and raisins have been linked to kidney issues in pets and thus should be avoided.

- Macadamia Nuts — When ingested by dogs, macadamia nuts can cause weakness, tremors, and vomiting.

- Milk and Dairy Products — Since pets do not have a significant amount of lactase (from lactose), they can have a difficult time breaking down milk and dairy products resulting in diarrhea and other digestive issues.

- Nuts — Nuts that contain high amounts of fats and oils can cause vomiting and diarrhea in pets and should be avoided.

- Onions, Garlic and Chives — These can cause stomach irritation and potentially red blood cell damage especially in cats.

- Salty Snacks — Salty snacks like potato chips, pretzels and salted popcorn can cause excessive urination and thirst and result in tremors, fever, seizures and in serious cases, death.

- Yeast Dough — Yeast dough that rises can cause a variety of stomach issues some of which can be very serious. Raw dough can also produce ethanol and essentially have alcoholic effects on a dog.

Other food products that can be dangerous to pets include raw meat, raw eggs, and bones which can splinter. ↗

("A Complete Guide to Pet-Proofing Your Home" cont.)

Trash

What pet owner hasn't walked into the kitchen or come home from work to discover their furry friend has been exploring in their absence? Not only can trash contain food items which may be dangerous to pets, but old food may be bacteria-filled, causing severe stomach problems.

Trash also often contains plastics, bottle caps, twist ties, plastic bags and other choking hazards. Sharp edges on trash cans and trash can lids can be problematic for pets. Trash may contain broken glass, chemicals, soaps and a myriad of material which can create health issues. When a cat or dog goes rummaging through kitchen trash, it is not just an inconvenience, it can be very dangerous for them. A close eye should be kept on pets who have recently been exploring.

Keep trash more secure by investing in a heavier (but not top-heavy) trash can that may be more difficult to tip over and which has a secure top. Many pet owners decide keeping trash under the kitchen sink and making sure it is not accessible to pets is the best solution.

Pantry

If your home has a kitchen pantry, your pet probably knows about it and at least has an idea about the wealth of treasures within. They may not know exactly what the pantry contains but it will not stop them from trying to gain entry and finding out. If the pantry is used for storage of pet food and treats, it will pique your pet's interest even more.

While some items kept in a pantry are relatively secure in cans, jars and plastic storage containers, many items are in easy to open boxes and bags. These are the items that need to be kept up and out of the reach of pets. While many people tend to keep items like potatoes and onions on lower levels of the pantry, it can be more prudent to keep them higher, especially when kept in the original bags. Hanging these bags in a pantry may be an option.

The best solution for those with a pet and a pantry may be to keep the pantry door closed. Ideally, door handles should not be of the lever variety, as pets will have an easier time figuring these out if they're rather clever.

Cabinets

It is critical that cabinets, especially lower cabinets containing chemicals and cleaning products be kept secure from pets. Pets can be surprisingly good at opening cabinet doors, leaving owners both impressed and frustrated.

Beyond dangerous home chemical and cleaning products, pets can get tangled in plastic wrap or get a head stuck in stored plastic bags. Lower sink cabinets often contain trash cans. Smaller pets can get stuck in cabinets, have items fall on them, or knock items from the shelves of cabinets.

Check to make sure cabinet doors are closed completely after use. A door that is even slightly ajar can be manipulated by a prying paw. Spring-loaded hinges can provide more security, but often the simplest choice is childproof latches.

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(*"A Complete Guide to Pet-Proofing Your Home" cont.*)

Appliances and Cords

Modern conveniences mean more safety issues for pets in a kitchen. Generally speaking, major appliance cords are safely tucked behind the appliance. The issue is often smaller, counter top appliances that can provide pet safety problems.

Oftentimes, the biggest issues are cords that are exposed and may be tempting to play with, pull or chew on. Unplugging these appliances can remove the shocking hazard from chewing on a cord, however, chewed insulation and plastic can still cause choking hazards. Large dogs may easily have the ability to pull on a small appliance cord, toppling it from the counter top. Moving these smaller appliances further back on counter tops or storing them (when not in use) is advised.

Nooks and Crannies

An often overlooked area in kitchen safety is the potential problems posed by the many nooks and crannies that can be found in some kitchens. Pets, especially small and young pets, have a natural curiosity to explore, and this can include areas between and behind major appliances, between appliances and cabinetry and even open dishwashers.

The best solution is to block any access to nooks and crannies. This can be done through an appropriately-sized trash can or by sliding in a folding step stool or step ladder into smaller open areas. For those seeking a simpler solution, an expandable gate to totally block off kitchen access for your pet may be the answer.

Yard — Fences

Fences are the first line of defense in keeping your pet inside your yard. That is, of course, unless you have a cat. Cats are natural climbers and the best you may be able to hope for is that a fence will contain a cat for a brief period.

For dogs, however, fences can be quite effective in keeping them out of harm's way. Choosing the right fence will depend greatly on the size and jumping ability of a dog. For small dogs and puppies, a smaller chain link fence may work fine. For larger breeds or dogs who are good at jumping, a taller privacy fence may be necessary.

While most owners will spend time focusing on the height of a fence, there are other considerations as well. Pet owners need to make sure that their pet won't escape or get stuck between the vertical slats of a picket, iron or aluminum fence. If you purchase luxury real estate, the barriers that come with it may be beautiful but ultimately not suited toward keeping pets on the property. Decorative or pointed tips of a fence can cause injury should a dog be unsuccessful in jumping the barrier.

Finally, care should be taken to make sure a dog can't dig under a fence and escape. There are several ways this can be prevented. A trench could be dug along the fence line before installation and cinder blocks placed in the ground. When a dog then tries to dig under the fence, they will be greeted with an impenetrable barrier. The fencing could also partially extend below the surface to discourage digging. Even if a home is in a gated community that may prevent a pet from escaping to busy roads, residential roads can be unsafe for a dog to wander about.

Toxic Outdoor Plants

A pet who is allowed outdoors will eventually find, and perhaps even chew on, plants which may be harmful to them. Plants ↗

(*"A Complete Guide to Pet-Proofing Your Home" cont.*)

affect dogs and cats differently. If any of these reside in your garden (yes, even the ones that truly tie together the look your outdoor living space), consider removing and replacing them with non-toxic flora.

Outdoor plants harmful to cats include:

- Amaryllis
- Autumn Crocus
- English Ivy
- Lilies
- Narcissus Bulbs
- Sago Palm
- Spanish Thyme
- Tulip Bulbs

Reactions can include everything from mouth and skin inflammation to more serious issues to the heart and kidneys. Symptoms may include trouble breathing or swallowing excessive urination drooling, excessive thirst and an irregular heartbeat.

Outdoor plants that can be problematic for dogs include:

- Bleeding Heart
- Castor Oil
- Foxglove
- Hemlock
- English Ivy
- Jimsonweed
- Lily-of-the-Valley
- Mistletoe
- Oleander
- Peace Lily
- Rhubarb
- Thorn Apple
- Unidentifiable Mushrooms

If dogs demonstrate any unusual behavior or listlessness after being outdoors, owners should immediately contact their veterinarian.

Pools

While we tend to believe that all dogs are good swimmers and have an inherent ability to "doggie-paddle," dogs can and do drown. A dog's ability to swim is often based on the breed of dog. Dogs that have large chests have a greater ability to stay afloat and swim, with leaner breeds with shorter legs having a disadvantage in the water. Obese and geriatric dogs are also at a higher risk of drowning.

The problem is that dogs have a tendency to only use their front legs when paddling. This can ultimately place them in an almost vertical position in the water. After a time, they can become exhausted and the potential for drowning increases.

Many dogs can benefit from simple swimming lessons given by their owners. Owners can spend time in a pool with their dog, lifting their hind quarter to encourage the use of rear legs. There are also life preservers for pets that can assist dogs in staying afloat.

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(A Complete Guide to Pet-Proofing Your Home" cont.)

Owners can make pools safer by showing pets where the safe entrances and exits are to enter or leave the pool. These can be reinforced with visual clues like potted plants or an umbrella table in the area of the safe exit.

Beyond drowning, pets can be exposed to a variety of other pool related safety issues.

- Heatstroke — Dogs are susceptible to heat stroke just like humans. Take precautions if a dog begins panting excessively or is otherwise acting oddly in the heat.
- Proper Hydration — Make sure your pet has a good supply of cold, clean water available outside. If not, a dog might be tempted to drink excessive amounts of chlorinated water from the pool.
- Paw Care — Concrete surfaces surrounding a pool can be rough. A few hours of excited jumping in and out of a pool can cause scuffing to paws and even cause bleeding or worn down nails.
- Avoid Floating Pool Covers — A dog, or child for that matter, can get trapped under a floating pool cover. As such, these are not recommended for households with either in their care.
- Fencing — Many pool fences are designed to protect children from getting into the pool area. Make sure pool fencing can also keep your particular pet safe as well. If a pet can jump over the fencing, they may not have a way to get to dry land once they are on the other side.
- Consider Floating Alarms — There are alarms available that will sound when a wake is created in the pool. This can alert pet owners that a pet has entered the pool.

Taking proper precautions in protecting pets from harm around pools will keep a pet safe and give owners peace of mind.

Standing Water

Standing water can be a tempting play area for pets and may even provide a source of water for a thirsty animal. There are dangers to standing water, however, and it should be removed from your yard to keep pets safe. Standing water can also attract animals and serve as a breeding ground for mosquitoes and other insects.

• Canine Leptospirosis — This is a dangerous bacteria which can contaminate standing water if it has been urinated in by an infected rat, deer, cow or variety of other animals. Not all dogs have an adverse reaction to drinking contaminated water but for those that do, reactions can be severe. There is a vaccine available that may help and your vet should be consulted to see if it may be a problem in your area.

• Giardia — This is a microscopic protozoan that can live in standing water contaminated by animal feces. Symptoms include diarrhea and/or vomiting. Your vet can determine the presence of Giardia and it can be treated with medication.

• Pythiosis — Known as "Swamp Cancer" this is a rare condition that is more prevalent in standing water in Gulf Coast states. Pythiosis attaches itself to small wounds on the skin or in the digestive tract and can quickly grow. It often is treated with surgery.

If you have standing ground water in a yard, there may be drainage issues that need to be addressed. Check for standing water in other items like buckets, pails, bird baths or any item that may collect water as well. ↗

(A Complete Guide to Pet-Proofing Your Home" cont.)

Trash Bins

Outside trash bins often contain an assortment of items that can be choking hazards for pets. These items can include bones, plastic or metal bottle caps, plastic bags and wrappers and more. Food scraps and waste can provide a bacterial health danger to pets if ingested.

Outside trash bins should have lids that close firmly and should never be so full that tops cannot be firmly secured. If a pet has been successful at getting into an outdoor trash bin, owners should try to determine what items may have been chewed on and keep a close eye on your pet for any unusual behavior like vomiting, diarrhea or choking. If a pet appears lethargic following an adventure in a trash bin, owners should contact their vet to further investigate any potential problems.

Fire Pits

Outdoor fire pits are more popular than ever. They can serve as a centerpiece to a quiet evening outdoors or as a gathering place for cool nighttime parties. Of course, many pets will want to join in on the activity surrounding a fire pit. There are steps owners should take to keep a pet safer around fire pits.

• Keep the fire pit contained and under control — A fire pit should be just that, a designated area for a smaller fire. The size of the fire should not exceed the design of the pit. Take steps to keep control of the fire with water, sand or an extinguisher nearby.

• Set boundaries for your pet — Pets should be trained not to get near the fire pit or be restrained on a leash to prevent him from getting too close.

• Don't leave pets unattended — Pets should never be left unattended while a fire pit is burning. Burning wood can crackle and cause hot embers to spark out and away from the pit. Pits that are, or have been used for cooking meats, can be particularly attractive.

• When done, extinguish the fire completely — A fire pit that is left burning can remain hot for 24 hours following use. Fires should be extinguished with water, stirring the ashes to make sure they are all getting doused. Do not allow a pet near the fire pit for a while after use to prevent accidental burns.

Don't assume your pet knows that flames are hot or dangerous. Take precautions to keep your pet safe while enjoying the outdoors.

Garage — Tools

Garages are full of various tools that range from ladders to power saws to hedge clippers. Long-handled tools and ladders that are stored leaning against a wall can be easily knocked over by a pet. They can more safely be stored on hangers designed to hold them in place.

Power tools should always be unplugged to prevent electrical shock to a cord-chewing pet and safely stored so they won't fall or be pulled down on a pet. Small nuts, screws and bolts can present choking hazards and should be stored in containers or drawers.

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("A Complete Guide to Pet-Proofing Your Home" cont.)

Pet owners should pay particular attention to sharp objects like trimmers, hand saws, blades and others. Keep in mind, cats like to climb, so keeping workbenches and shelves clear can improve safety. Shelving safety can be enhanced by attaching units securely to the wall.

Chemicals

Garages often contain more chemicals, solvents and fuels than any other area of the home. Garages also have the potential for VOCs (as do many new construction homes contain volatile organic compounds). This is one of the reasons it can be an unsafe area for pets. There are some simple steps you can take to improve the safety of your garage.

- Keep chemicals and fluids in original containers.
- Keep lids tightly closed on containers.
- Keep containers stored in cabinets with the doors closed.
- Never place open bottles or cans with liquids on a workbench.

One of the most dangerous liquids for dogs in a garage is antifreeze. Only recently has antifreeze been made less appealing to dogs by reducing its sweet flavor. What makes antifreeze so dangerous to dogs is that it contains ethylene glycol, which even in small amounts will cause diarrhea, vomiting and weakness. Ingesting antifreeze can lead to kidney failure, seizures and a coma. Even after extensive therapy, many dogs do not survive antifreeze toxicity.

Other garaged chemicals that can be toxic to pets include gasoline, motor oils, cleaners and car waxes. Garages also contain other non-automotive related products and chemicals like pesticides, paints, paint thinners, yard chemicals and more.

Typically, the best solution for pet owners is to keep the garage off-limits to their pets if hazards like these are present.

Cars

Cars parked in a garage pose some specific problems for pets. Cats, for example, may find the warm engine from a recently running car comfortable, especially in cool or cold weather. You can help keep cats safer by checking an engine compartment before starting a car or by banging on the hood to scare any cat out from the area.

Cats may also snuggle against the tires of a parked car or climb in through an open window. Carbon monoxide from a running car can be dangerous or fatal to both pets and humans, so always avoid keeping cars running in enclosed spaces.

If a pet slips into a garage unknown overnight, they may quickly escape when the door is opened in the morning.

Know where your pet is every night before retiring and be sure to check the garage. Keeping garage doors shut and limiting access can go a long way in keeping your pet safer.

Heavy Objects

Your garage likely contains a number of heavy items that cause harm to a pet should they fall or a pet becomes entangled with them. These include:

- Heavy power tools
- Cans and containers
- Hanging tools
- Long handled yard tools like rakes and shovels
- Ladders and step stools
- Bicycles
- Outdoor grills
- Shelving units ↗

("A Complete Guide to Pet-Proofing Your Home" cont.)

Care should be taken to make sure these heavy items do not pose a risk of falling or tipping onto a pet. Shelving and shelving units should be stable enough to support a climbing pet without tipping or falling. While small dogs may not be able to create much havoc in a garage, climbing cats and large dogs can be problematic. Taking a quick inventory and securing larger heavier items can help protect your pet and keep them safer from harm.

Boxes and Storage

Many households use garages for additional storage. Boxed items can create several risks for pets.

- Stacked boxes can be a tipping hazard.
- Cardboard boxes can be chewed on and potentially accessed by pets.
- Pets may accidentally get trapped in an open box.
- Pets may gain access to choking hazards or dangerous products contained in cardboard boxes.

Boxes may contain stored holiday items like light strings, fragile glass bulbs, tinsel and garland that can cause health or choking issues for pets if ingested. Stored items may be boxed using plastic bags, rubber bands, paper clips or other items dangerous to animals.

Pet owners can make stored items in the garage safer by using plastic bins that can stack safely and that close securely as opposed to cardboard boxes.

Laundry Room — Detergents and Bleach

Whether a home has a specific laundry room or a laundry area, it can present some safety hazards to pets.

Detergents and bleaches are a significant issue which can be minimized by making sure caps are firmly reattached after use. Keep in mind that if something other than a cap is used for measuring a product, that container may have residue of the cleaning product. This should be kept out of the reach of pets and thoroughly rinsed.

Fabric softener dryer sheets contain chemicals that can be harmful to pets and can be a choking hazard when torn. All laundry related chemicals, including dryer sheets, should be safely stored in a cabinet with the door closed.

Washer and Dryer Safety

Beyond the products used in a laundry area, the equipment itself can pose safety risks to pets. An open washer may prove too tempting for a small cat. An open dryer door may be inviting for pets seeking a warm place to sleep or hide. Check washers and dryers before use and keep doors closed to prevent trapping curious pets.

Clothes left in a laundry basket near washers and dryers may become a playground for young pets with buttons posing a potential choking hazard. Care should be taken to minimize this risk.

Nooks and Crannies

Laundry areas have a number of nooks and crannies where pets, especially small ones, can get into trouble. Because of vents and hoses, washers and dryers cannot be placed up

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(*"A Complete Guide to Pet-Proofing Your Home" cont.*)

against the wall behind them leaving an area small pets may want to explore. Laundry areas may include ironing boards hanging racks for clothes, storage areas and shelves. This combination can create an almost endless source of areas to explore.

If it is not possible to secure your laundry area by closing a door, seek to find barriers to these nooks and crannies to prevent a small pet from becoming trapped.

Irons and Ironing Boards

Irons and ironing boards present a variety of safety issues for pets depending partly on how they are used and stored. Ironing boards are somewhat unstable whether they are leaning against a wall or even when properly set up. Add a several pound iron with a cord dangling down and you have a potentially dangerous situation for pets.

Ironing boards should be set up and irons plugged in only when they are being used. Don't allow dangling cords to be a temptation for pets. Store ironing boards where they won't fall on pets like in a closet or between a wall and refrigerator. Store irons securely away where pets won't chew or tug on electrical cords. Avoid hanging ironed clothes from the edge of an ironing board as they too, may serve as a jumping temptation for pets.

Irons and ironing boards may be an afterthought when not in use, but they shouldn't pose a safety risk to a pet when stowed away. Taking a few precautions can better protect your pet.

Living Room — Furniture

Pets and their owners often spend a significant amount of time in the living room. Furniture will play a big role in the enjoyment of this space, but it should be chosen with safety in mind.

Taller items like curio cabinets or bookcases should not be top heavy, and if there's any chance a climbing pet could topple it, steps should be taken to secure the top portion to the wall.

Large pets will appreciate larger moving spaces that will keep items on tables from being knocked over when playing. Surfaces of end and coffee tables should be scanned to make sure any item that is prized or easily toppled is placed in a safer place.

Rugs and Large Blankets

When rolling up and storing rugs or blankets, make sure to double check to see where your dog or cat is. With smaller animals, there is a danger that they might jump in and get themselves stuck without their owner noticing right away. When planning to move or store anything at home (especially anything that might be easy for a pet to hide in), it may be best to move pets to a different room or a crate until you are finished.

Safety does not stop here, however. Take care to know where rolled rugs are stored, and be vigilant whenever opening doors that access these rooms. Cats, especially curious kittens, can get trapped in or underneath stored rugs when exploring. Double-check to see where your pets are before and after going into these rooms to be safe, and do not assume they were where you left them before entering.

TVs

Today's flat-screen TVs can create some specific problems in homes with pets, especially medium to large size pets who may have the mass and capacity to topple table-mounted screens. While the feet on these larger flat screens are sufficient to keep screens safe in most

(*"A Complete Guide to Pet-Proofing Your Home" cont.*)

circumstances, an excited or playful larger pet could create a problem when bumping into it. Many pet owners prefer wall mounting their flat screens TVs to resolve this issue. Mount televisions high enough so pets can't reach up and scratch the screen or otherwise damage the unit and secure cords so they cannot be pulled or chewed on.

Another aspect to consider in a living room is the presence of remote remote controls. Remotes can be chewed into small parts that can harm a pet. Batteries can cause issues as well. Owners can make a living room safer by storing remotes in a drawer.

Cords

A living room may have more cords than many imagine. There are electric cords for televisions, lamps, sound equipment and perhaps external speakers. There are cords for electronic devices and chargers. All of these cords can harbor a danger to pets.

Cats, in particular, enjoy playing with and chewing on cords. This can cause a shocking hazard and potentially an electrical fire. If a larger animal decides to pull on a cord, the pet can hurt themselves with a falling object. Keep in mind that charger cords can create a shock even when a device is not being charged. Most chargers also have much thinner protective coverings that can allow them to be pierced by a pet's teeth easier.

There are a variety of cord management devices that can help keep cords neat and protected from pets. Channels, conduit and tubing can run cords along and attach to baseboards, streamlining their appearance and limiting their temptation to pets.

Heavy Decorations and Objects

Heavy decorative and other objects pose a safety risk to even larger pets in living room areas where pets and owners often play and spend quality time. These can range from taller cabinets and bookcases to free-standing lamps, plants, decorative pillars and artwork.

One of the best ways to keep the living room safer for pets is to be better aware of the "steps" that cats will use to achieve a high position in the room. If furniture and decorative items allow a cat to elevate their position from one piece to another, they will attempt it. Owners can avoid this by position items where they can't be reached from one another.

Wall mounted shelves filled with decorative items or photos can be tempting for cats as well. Make sure shelves are soundly attached to walls and don't provide a "ladder" where a cat can show off his climbing prowess.

Keep in mind that seasonal decorative items (like Christmas trees) can also pose a safety threat to animals from both falling and choking hazards.

Candles and Potpourri

Pets should never be left unattended where flames from a candle or potpourri holder are burning. Candles can be upended causing burns or a fire. Hot water from a potpourri pot can also cause burns when spilled by an exploring pet.

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(*"A Complete Guide to Pet-Proofing Your Home" cont.*)

Much safer alternatives include electric candles or a potpourri or scented wax heater that creates scents without an open flame. Keep cords for these heaters safely out of reach of pets, however. Cords may be chewed on causing an electrical shock hazard or be tugged upon, spilling the hot contents. Even these electric options should never be left on while pets are unattended.

Some dried potpourri, candles and other types of air fresheners may contain ingredients that also may be toxic to cats. Be sure to follow label directions.

Windows — Keeping Them Closed

Leaving a window open while you are away is almost never a good idea. An open window can cause a problem if it rains, may be an invitation to a burglar, and may serve as an escape route for pets. Apartments in a high-rise have the additional danger of a pet running or falling through a screen and falling multiple floors to injury or worse.

There are several options to an open window to give pets a view in your absence. Some choose to create a padded platform to be placed near the interior of the window. Cats may appreciate a carpeted cat tree near the window. If homeowners feel they must crack a window for ventilation, they should see if they can open it from the top down for several inches. This will prevent pets from breaking through an open lower window while limiting intrusion of any rain.

Even when pet owners are home, care should be taken to prevent animals from falling through a screened window. There are a variety of pet and child safety products available that can be installed in an open window in a home or apartment.

Safe Screens

An open window with a screen is sure to serve as a perch for cats to look out upon their kingdom. A passing bird or squirrel could cause excitement, however, and a pet may end up bursting or falling through a screened window. The older the home and window, the more likely this is to occur.

Owners can help pet-proof screens by replacing standard screens with those made of fiberglass, but it is important fiberglass screening material is put in properly. It may be a good idea to have them professionally installed.

Another option to weak screens is metal window guards. While strong, they can limit airflow and might not be aesthetically pleasing. They are still a safer alternative to screens and should also be professionally installed.

Blinds and Cord Safety

Pet owners with blinds and curtains on their windows should take extra precautions in making sure cords don't present a tangling or choking problem. These cords may attract the attention of pets as they dangle in a breeze or move as the pet brushes by. A cat or dog may find itself pawing at or chewing on the cords and tassels and can get itself in a tough position quickly, especially when no one is home.

Window covering products made prior to 2001 can be especially hazardous. If you have a pet and have these products in your home, seriously consider replacing them with more modern, safer options. These include cord-free and drape and blinds choices.

Furniture should be placed away from any corded window coverings. Any cords should be short and attached to the wall or window ↗

(*"A Complete Guide to Pet-Proofing Your Home" cont.*)

sill. Open blinds should be locked into position by securing them in place.

Most don't give window covering cords a second thought. Becoming aware of their existence and potential hazards to pets can go a long way in making your home more pet safe.

Indoor Plants — Safe Indoor Plants

Your choice in live houseplants can make a big difference in the health and safety of a pet. Those looking for safe plants that will thrive indoors may want to consider the following plants:

- Boston Fern — A Boston Fern can be attractive, easy to grow and maintain indoors and is safe for both cats and dogs. It also serves as a natural humidifier which can add moisture to dry winter air.

- Spider Plants — Spider plants grow easily and rapidly indoors and create "baby" plants that can be replanted. Spider plants are hanging plants and should be kept up and away from pets although they are not harmful if ingested.

- Bamboo — Those in search of a taller houseplant to place in a corner that is also safe for pets should consider Bamboo. They should be grown in large pots and are low maintenance. They have the added value of working as an air purifier.

- Tradescantia Zebrina — These attractive plants spread quickly into a beautiful natural display perfect for hanging near windows. This plant also has soft leaves that kittens and cats love.

- Wax Plants — For those in search of smaller houseplants that are safe for both dogs and cats may find wax plants an attractive option. This is a sturdy non-toxic plant perfect for counter tops and tables.

Cats, kittens and small puppies are particularly susceptible to chewing on plants. Making sure the indoor plants in your home are non-toxic is a fundamental step in having a safer home for your pet.

Toxic Indoor Plants

There are estimated to be over 700 plants that contain substances that can be toxic to dogs or cats or both. Here are some that should absolutely be avoided as they are toxic to *both* canines and felines:

- Amaryllis
- Asparagus Fern
- Dieffenbachia (Exotica/ Dumb Cane)
- Lilies
- Elephant Ear
- Cyclamen
- Jade Plant
- Aloe Plant
- Satin Pothos
- Heartleaf Philodendron (Panda Plant)

With so many houseplants having toxic qualities to pets, it behooves pet owners to check prior to adding any plants to their homes.

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("A Complete Guide to Pet-Proofing Your Home" cont.)

Home Improvements — Keeping Pets Safe During Renovations

Home renovations can be stressful and create unsafe conditions for pets. Renovations bring strange people into a home along with loud and dangerous power tools. Floors and walls may be opened, there will likely be dust and other dangerous materials and obstacles.

Pets are very routine oriented and any disturbance in that routine can cause stress. Their sensitive hearing can add to that stress. Unlike humans, pets do not always process what is going on as temporary and that can cause health problems.

Here are some suggestions to keep a pet safer during a remodel:

- Schedule a pre-remodeling visit to your vet — There are several good reasons to have a pet visit a vet prior to construction. A vet can screen for any potential problems that stress may aggravate. It may be a good time to have a chip installed in case your pet gets away during the remodeling. A vet may also be able to prescribe a calming medication for dogs with anxiety.

- Consider boarding or have someone else take in your pet temporarily. If a pet scares easily, owners may want to consider removing them from the home during remodeling, at least, while actual work is going on.

- Create a safe space — Create a secure area with familiar toys, blankets and bedding that your pet can use as an escape from the noise and confusion that occurs during construction.

The larger the remodeling project, the more hazards it will likely create for your pet. Plan ahead to keep them safe.

Creating Personal Spaces for Pets

Pets, like humans, often appreciate their own space to get away, relax and take naps. Pets may seek out these spaces on their own but if they get in your way in the laundry room or closet, you may want to help them by creating their own personal space. Here are some tips to keep in mind in creating personal space for your pet.

- Make sure it is safe — Your pet's private area shouldn't have trash cans or chemicals that are accessible. Choking hazards and electrical cords should be removed. They should be able to safely get into and out of their area.

- Find a nice space — If you don't have a spare bedroom or empty walk-in closet, designate an area and perhaps use a pet-gate to separate it. A blanket or curtain over an open closet door can create the privacy a pet may desire.

- Make it comfortable — The biggest draw for your pet will be how comfortable and cozy the space is. Nice, thick soft bedding in a quiet area can be very attractive.

- Include favorite toys — Your pet may or may not decide to play in their personal space but including their favorite toy or chewable can make the space feel more like home.

In addition, cats may enjoy stair-stepped climbing shelves or a climbing carpeted tower in their personal space.

Re-Fencing Tips

Re-fencing a yard can be far easier than initially fencing a yard in that the fence location has likely already been pre-determined. If re-fencing is considered a repair in your area, you may not even need a permit. ↗

("A Complete Guide to Pet-Proofing Your Home" cont.)

You may re-fence a yard because the current fence is either in disrepair or inadequate for your pet.

1. Check on necessary permits and validate property lines.
2. Decide on gate location(s).
3. Determine the style of fence best for your pet.
4. Decide on the height of fencing you will need to keep your pet safe. The larger and better jumper your pet is, the higher the fence you will need.
5. Make a decision on if, and how, you will prevent a pet from digging under the fence. (See our "Fencing" category in our "Yards" section.)
6. Acquire the materials, tools and assistance you'll need to finish your project.

Re-fencing provides pet owners the opportunity to use more updated materials and styles to their yards. It also gives pet owners the opportunity to choose the fencing most appropriate for the welfare of their pet.

Installing Dog Doors

A dog door can add a new sense of freedom to both pets and pet owners. Best of all, they can be pretty straight-forward and simple to install.

- Determine the size of your dog. The height, width, and weight of your dog will help determine the size and type of dog door you should purchase.
- Determine the material of which your present door is constructed. Most outside doors are made of wood, metal or fiberglass. This may also help you in deciding the type of dog door you need.
- Purchase your dog door based on the previous information.

- Remove your outside door from its frame. Once removed, place it across two sawhorses and measure and mark placement. The door should allow at least 2" clearance above the height of your dog and there should be at least three inches of the bottom door frame remaining.

- Following instructions to cut and install the dog door. Every dog door will have slightly different mounting instructions and may even include a cutting template. Once the dog door is installed it is ready to be re-hung.

Your pet may need some initial coaxing to learn how to use the dog door and some treats or strategic placement of food or water can encourage learning. Once your pet learns the "ins and outs," however, they will love their new sense of independence.

Installing Cameras and Security Measures

One of the newer conveniences pet owners have today that previous owners may not have had access to is video and security cameras. Cameras are easier to install and less expensive than ever. This provides many pet owners the ability to install their own, high-definition, full-color cameras that they can control and that even allows two-way communications with pets.

Pet cams allow pet owners a chance to check in on pets when at work or when gone for a long weekend. Owners can

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(*"A Complete Guide to Pet-Proofing Your Home" cont.*)

see what mischief pets may be getting into at home in their absence and just how much time they spend sleeping. All of this can be done from the convenience of a smartphone through an app.

Getting a camera system installation is relatively simple. Decide on how robust you want your system to be and if you want multiple cameras. Determine a budget for your system and if you are capable or have a desire to install the system yourself. If not, such systems are available from security companies who can take care of the installation.

A video system can help you better enjoy your pet and have a better understanding of how they spend their time when you are away. It can provide more security for both your pet and your home.

A "Catio" (cat patio) is a safe space for cats that allows them to enjoy the great outdoors. It keeps them from wandering off casing birds or other animals while providing a safe environment to walk a bit or just sit and relax.

Here are some consideration to keep in mind when deciding to build a "Catio" or a cat patio:

- What type of Catio will your cat enjoy most? Some cats are quite content with a window box type catio where they just have enough outdoor space to survey the yard and catch a nap. Others may enjoy a more expansive haven or oasis catio that provides more space to roam and explore.

- How will your cat access the outdoor space? Generally, catios are attached to a home through a window, wall or door. Access is provided through a cat door that your pet can decide to use as it pleases.

- How large and what materials will your catio be constructed of? Catios often use a combination of plexiglass, glass, wood, fencing, screening roofing and stone or concrete flooring.

- What amenities should your catio contain? Larger catios can include everything from climbing walls and walkways to plants and reading chairs for owners. Deciding on amenities may depend on how you spend quality time with your cat and if your cat is a playful kitten or a laid-back adult.

The biggest factor in constructing a catio is making sure it keeps a cat contained and safe. This includes some sort of roof and steps to prevent a cat from scratching their way out. Access into and out of the catio should be easy for the cat to accomplish on its own.

Catios can be fun for both owners and cats and even can be enjoyable to plan and construct.

Helpful Resources

To learn more about creating a pet-safe home, we invite you to use the following resources:

- ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center Phone Number: (888) 426-4435
- Find out about everything dog-related from the American Kennel Club (AKC)
- Information on Cat-Proofing a home from Animal Planet
- ASPCA list of toxic and non-toxic plants for pets
- Plants that may poison pets from the Human Society of the U.S.
- Keeping pets safe from hazards in the garage from the Pet Health Network
- 40 Best and Safest Pet Fences from Safety.com
- Making sure your pets are up to date on all their preventative medications at Allivet □



Puppies are Supposed to Misbehave So Don't Blame Them!

When you welcome a puppy into your home, your puppy will inherently misbehave. After all, everything is new to them and they can and should be expected to misbehave. Therefore, it is up to you to steer their behavior in the right direction. Each experience they encounter and how you react to it teaches them how to behave which is why it's important to start training your puppy from the start (and with kindness).

Make time each day to train your puppy or enroll him in a training class

It's important to establish a training groundwork for your puppy. NEVER punish your puppy for unwanted behavior, but train your puppy to perform the behavior you desire. Get the help of a class instructor, private trainer or behavior specialist to learn what behaviors your puppy needs to learn.

Make training fun and practice every day

Make training fun for your puppy and practice every day. Then when your puppy misbehaves, you can immediately switch into one of the trained behaviors and have the puppy doing the right thing instead of the wrong thing. With consistent practice and encouragement, your puppy will eventually develop the habit of doing the desired behavior instead of the undesired one. Have treats handy and/or always reward your puppy for doing the right thing.

Teach your puppy to give you things and don't run after your puppy

If you can teach your puppy to give you things, rather than go after him or her, it can minimize aggressive behavior. When a puppy takes something and runs off, don't chase after your puppy. The pup is playing and if you run after him or her, your puppy will become either fearful or aggressive in self-protection and might even bite you. If your puppy takes the wrong item, simply hand him a toy and praise him for choosing the right one and the other thing was a 'no no'.

Use your voice and body language to give directions to your puppy

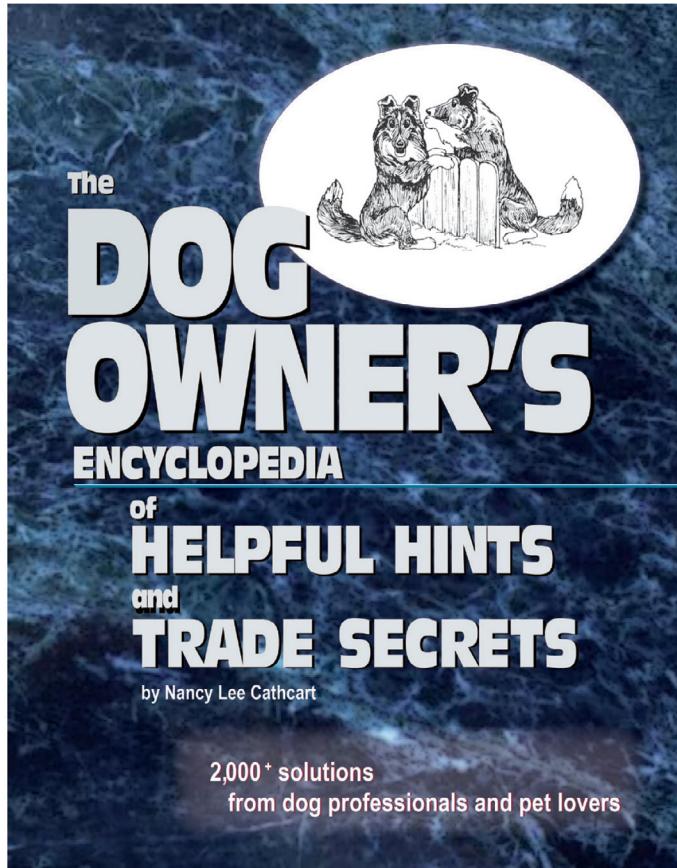
You want your puppy to trust the touch of humans and to relax when touched. This is not the instinctive response of a dog or even of a person and needs to be taught. A positive response to touch is learned. It takes a lot of good touches to develop this positive response and let your puppy know that you're encouraging and loving him. For some puppies, it's inherent while others need a little coaxing to know touching and petting is good!

Try not to excite your puppy by jumping or grabbing anything

Instead of grabbing, jerking and jumping around with your puppy, slow things down so your puppy can stop and think.

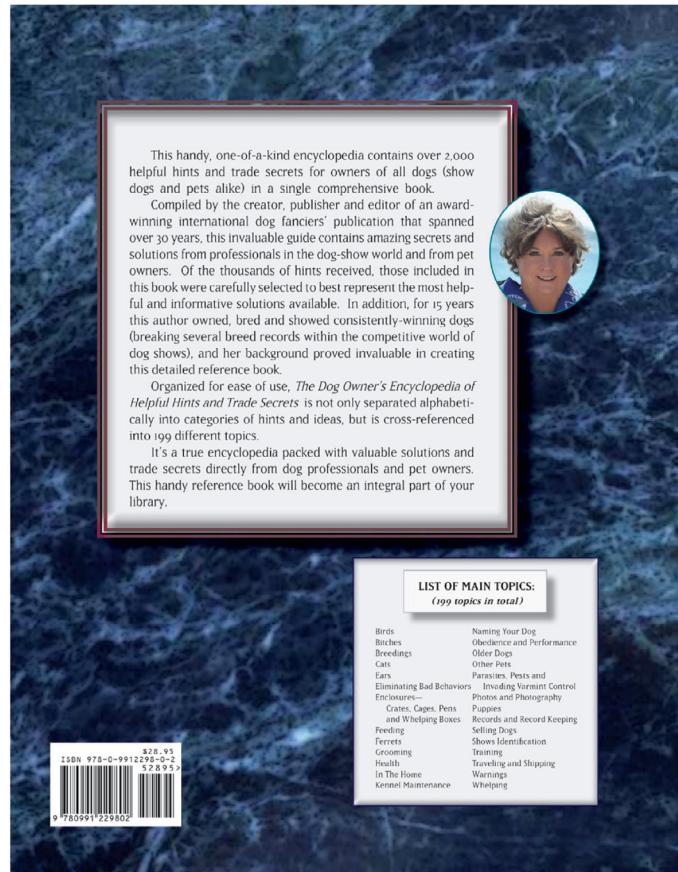
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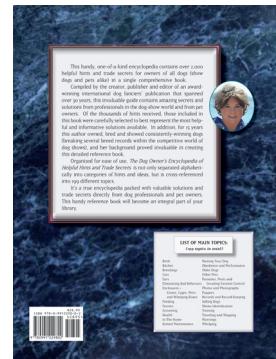
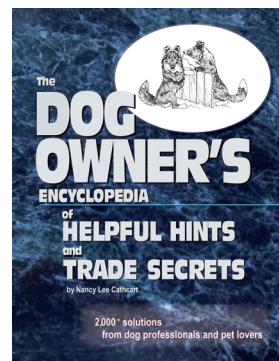
Don't ever encourage your puppy to put teeth on human skin (even if your puppy is teething). Similarly, don't let anyone pet your puppy when he or she is jumping up on them. Only pet your puppy after he or she has calmed down and reward him for the correct behavior.

**Don't ever overreact or yell at your puppy
for misbehaving**

If your puppy reacts inappropriately and tries to antagonize you, try not to overreact. Instead, stand your ground and give your puppy the time to realize those tactics just don't work with you. Don't fight with your dog, and don't back down. Simply be firm and try to show your puppy the correct behavior.

If you spend some time training your puppy and use positive reinforcement, it should help tame any misbehaving. You need to practice and be encouraging and try not to yell or get angry at them when he or she misbehaves. We all lose it from time-to-time, but your puppy will only react the right way with love, training and encouragement.

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