

## **Mischievous Pet**

When young pets are constantly getting into mischief around the house and can sometimes unfortunately result in injury if correct control isn't applied. Traditionally a rolled up newspaper or smack of the hand has been sufficient to control the mischievous house pet, but as a greater understanding of behaviour is achieved, then the way we approach and understand our pets should also change the way we control and manage different situations.

Historically, punishment has been used for generations on naughty children and animals alike, usually as a result of frustration or anger. Therefore this tends to be the only reason for the punishment rather than a plan to alter the behaviour. The application of punishment used as an intention to teach is futile, as the dog isn't given an opportunity to learn a more desirable behaviour.

Excessive punishment causes fear, which can obviously be detrimental to the pet and owner relationship. Rewarding the behaviour you desire increases the likelihood of the animal repeating what you actually want. For example lying quietly beside you or for keeping all four paws on the floor & not jumping when coming in through the door. Providing your pet with the correct toys to occupy themselves, sufficient exercise and mental stimulation will help with satisfying the pet's inquisitive and investigative nature.

For pets to learn correctly, they must receive consistent training and attention. Pets become confused very easily if several members of the house are teaching different things, in a different way and not being consistent. Imagine being taught at school by three teachers teaching the same subject in different ways, three times a day, you would become easily confused too! Learning is also about building a relationship based on trust and confidence. Establishing clear rules makes the boundaries for behaviour much more easily definable for your pet and the likelihood of them adopting the preferred behaviour that much quicker.

