

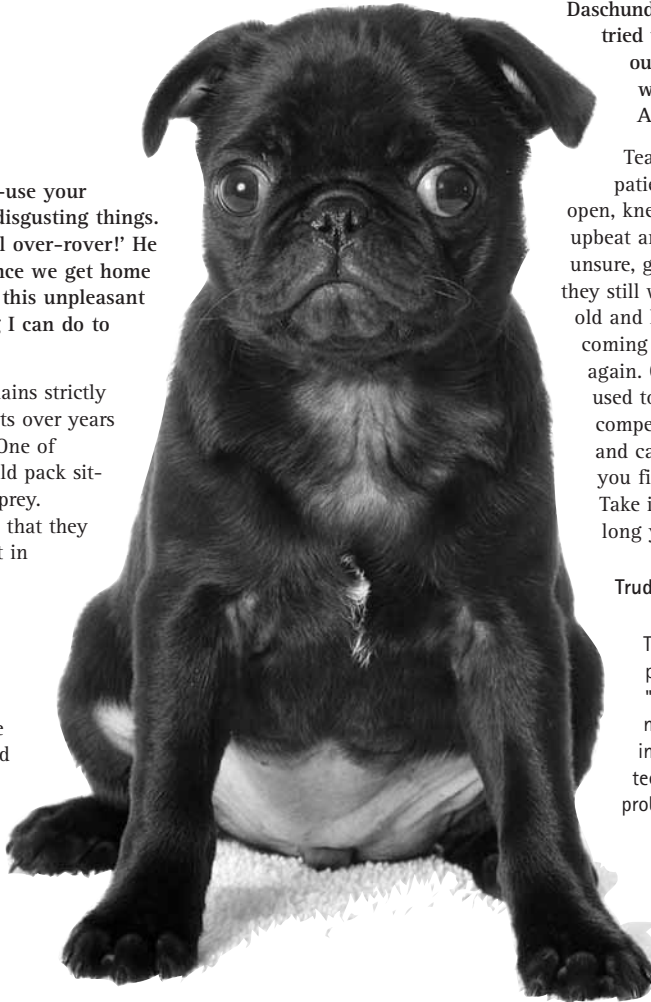
# Sit Happens

## Tips & Techniques for Training Your Urban Animal

Jeb, my Golden Retriever, loves to roll in all sorts of smelly things—use your imagination here. He has a nose that can find all sorts of dead or disgusting things. When I've caught him in the act I yell NO! But by that time it's 'all over-rover!' He goes headfirst and tries to get it around his neck and shoulders. Once we get home and he has the hose put on him he doesn't seem to figure out that this unpleasant hosing is the end result of his smelly scud-like activities. Anything I can do to get him out of this habit?

Ahhh yes, the 'why' to this particular unsavoury ritual seemingly remains strictly 'secret dogs business'. Various theories have evolved from behaviourists over years and years of doggedly pursuing the answer of this age-old question. One of which is the idea that the behaviour is instinctual, deriving from a wild pack situation whereupon it was used to mask the dogs scent from potential prey. Another is that 'self scenting' helps convey information to other dogs that they come in contact with of their valuable find, creating immense interest in odour signals thereby elevating their status.

As to just how to stop your dog from diving into a disgusting, dead decaying duck with reckless abandon comes down to prevention. Developing a sound recall is the first step to success, the second is identifying the signals your dog displays just before taking that dive (sniffing at the same spot for too long, circling etc). And probably the most important step is not to jump up and down, yelling in an excited manner once it's too late. Watch your dog at all times when out on freestyle walks, call him to you randomly, praise lavishly then release him. He'll soon learn that coming in for a mega-star pat is much more valuable than a roll in 'kennel No 5'.



We've just bought our first house and will be moving in the new year (yippee) and can finally have a dog door installed for our two dogs. They're both mature - Dashy is a 6-year Daschund X and Trevor is approximately 5 years and is a Shepherd/Kelpie X. We tried to teach them how to go through a dog door at a friend's house with hilarious but unsuccessful results. It was probably really distracting for them as it was a party and so I'm guessing this wasn't the best time to teach them. Any suggestions teaching a couple of old dogs a new domestic trick?

Teaching your dogs to enter and exit through a dog door is a matter of patience—on your part—and repetition. Start by securing the flap of the dog door open, kneel down on the other side of door and call your dogs. Keep your tone upbeat and happy. If they come through, praise them lavishly. If they are hesitant or unsure, grab a treat see if that assists in giving them some Dutch courage. If you find they still won't take the plunge, take it a little slower and place the treat on the threshold and keep doing that until they gain a little confidence. Once they are happily coming in and out, let the flap down, hold it open a little and call them through again. Once their heads are through, gently release the flap so that they become used to the feel of it on their bodies and praise enthusiastically. Once your dogs are competent at this stage, push the flap so there is just a small gap at the bottom and call your dogs. This will encourage them to start pushing their way through. If you find that they are hesitant, or won't take the next step, simply go back a step. Take it slowly, be consistent and never become frustrated with them and before long you'll find they'll be coming and going happily without a problem.

Trudi Thorpe - dogLOGIC

Trudi Thorpe runs a dog behaviour and training company dogLOGIC based in Sydney. As Trudi says "DOGS DOGS DOGS...A childhood obsession that I never grew out of." She devises and implements individual behavioural strategies and obedience techniques based on 17 years of studying dog problems and problem dogs.

Ask Trudi a question regarding behaviour by emailing [behaviour@urbananimal.net](mailto:behaviour@urbananimal.net)



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