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## Dog Piece

### When Dogs "Go" in the House

We've seen a rash of housesoiling dogs lately. While housesoiling is a somewhat common problem, we see far more aggression and separation anxiety cases, so we're not sure what is accounting for this latest rise in calls about this issue.

In two recent cases, both owners called complaining of a urine-marking problem. This is an assumption about motivation that we need to verify in the behavioral interview. Don't fall into the trap of thinking any urination in the house is due to marking, even if it involves a male dog lifting his leg. Males can lift their legs and urinate in the house for reasons other than urine-marking.

To conclude soiling is due to urine-marking we look for: a) stimuli that commonly trigger urine-marking, such as conflicts between dogs in the family, the addition of a new pet, visitors to the home, neighborhood dogs coming into or passing by the property, frequent bouts of fence running with other dogs, or any other stimulus that a dog could perceive as a territorial intrusion, b) small quantities of urine deposited usually against vertical surfaces (although small amounts of urine can also be indicative of a urinary tract problem) c) soiled areas that may be near doors, windows or on objects new to the house such as grocery bags, visitors' suitcases, new furniture or drapes.

There is no evidence that urine-marking is correlated with social dominance status. The claims that dogs urine-mark to show their "dominance" and that "dominant" dogs are more likely to urine-mark have no basis in fact and have no supporting scientific evidence.

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### Our Piece

#### When Is It Time To Acquire a New Pet?

As most of you know, we lost Mocha, our 13 year old Dalmatian about six weeks ago. We tried to thank all you individually who emailed or called with your sympathies, support and good wishes, but if we missed anyone, thank you again. They meant more to us than we can say.

While we still miss Mocha and the love he gave us, we have to admit that it is a relief to not be doing the daily clean-up his progressing incontinence required. Because we are so used to caring for either multiple dogs and cats, and/or aging ones, the care just one healthy dog and cat require seems like a piece of cake.

But you probably won't be surprised that we are looking at Irish setter puppies. Why are we looking for a puppy so soon after Mocha's death? After our first Dalmatian Katie died, we weren't ready to consider adding another canine family member for over 6 months.

A friend of ours, Scott, lost his dog Brie, 5 months or so before Mocha died. Scott's not yet ready for another dog. Brie's ashes still sit on his desk, and he talks to her everyday - a comment that brings tears to any pet parent's eyes.

Deciding when you're ready to acquire

Urine-marking is also unrelated to housetraining. A dog can be very well housetrained, if what we mean is he voids his bladder and bowels outside (or in another designated area) rather than inside, but still urine-mark. Marking and elimination are two different functions.

A pet peeve of ours is the use of the more traditional term of "housebreaking", which implies a dog has a bad habit that must be broken. Breaking habits in turn implies punishment or discipline, which has no place in basic housetraining.

Housetraining is the process of helping dogs establish desirable surface and location preferences for where and on what they want to relieve themselves. For help with housetraining, we recommend our video "**Housetraining: A Plan for Success**", available at your local PETSMART store.

Of course any time a dog begins urinating in the house, the first step is to see a veterinarian to rule out urinary or other medical problems. There are no magic bullets for a urine-marking problem. Changing the behavior requires trying to identify the triggers for the behavior, and then either 1) remove the triggers, 2) prevent the dog from being exposed to the triggers, and/or 3) change the dog's reaction to the triggers.

Sometimes it can be very difficult to identify the triggers, and also logistically difficult to implement any of the three techniques above. That leaves trying to manage the behavior by not allowing the dog access to the areas he likes to mark or talking with your veterinarian about medication.

Medications for urine-marking in dogs have not received much attention from veterinary behaviorists. Buspar has been shown to be effective in decreasing urine-marking in cats, but no clinical trials have ever been conducted with dogs. The drug is a bit expensive, which may be one reason why no one has taken an interest in investigating its effectiveness for dogs.

Another management approach is the diaper-type products, some of which resemble the pads used for female dogs in season, and others that look more like ace-bandages that wrap around the dog's belly. Some dogs inhibit their behavior when wearing these items, but other dogs just urinate in them, which means a cleaning project when you remove them. We've never known these items to result in a generalized change in behavior when the dog wasn't wearing them.

Of course odor-neutralizing is another important component in decreasing urine marking. Our favorite product is [Anti-Lcky-Poo](#), but we've also heard good things about Urine-Off, carried by Premier (800-933-5595). Both are a bit more expensive than products in the big box pet stores, but we think they are superior.

Urine-marking problems are among the more frustrating behaviors dog owners experience. Our male Dalmatian Mocha used to occasionally lift his leg on a small Dalmatian statue by the front door after a barking bout at a dog walking by, and on a shelf of my sweaters that rested on the floor in the bedroom. We never once saw him do it, or invested the time to try to

a new pet after the loss of another is a very personal and individual decision. When Suzanne worked with the pet loss support group at Colorado State University's Veterinary Teaching Hospital, she and her colleagues usually cautioned people about getting a new pet too soon. Rushing in to the decision might unconsciously be an attempt to avoid experiencing the pain of loss and could complicate the normal grieving process.

Trying to fill the emotional void by acquiring a new pet to "replace" the deceased one never works. Each pet is unique and one can never, ever replace another.

Such unrealistic expectations put an impossible burden on the new pet, who won't be appreciated for herself, but instead will be a disappointment because of the very fact she is different. We hear these sentiments expressed from time to time when people are having problems with a pet - "Well my other dog (or cat) never did this".

The following factors are just some of the reasons that make everyone's experience unique.

#### **1. How much support do you have?**

We've been extremely fortunate to have always been surrounded by people who are willing to take the time to be there for us. Without that support and the ability to talk about your feelings to people who don't get tired of listening, grief takes longer.

#### **2. Other grief work that you may need to do that has been triggered by the pet's death.**

Each person's grief process is unique, and everyone moves through it at their own pace. If the grief over a pet's death is complicated by other unresolved grief issues, your process will be longer and more involved. Don't be shy about asking for professional help. The American Veterinary Medical Association maintains a list of [pet loss support hotlines](#). Katie was the last of 3 dogs and 2 cats who had been with Suzanne through several major transitions in her life. Katie's death signaled the end of a life's era, so her death took longer for Suzanne to recover from.

change the behavior. But we were lucky - during his middle age, Mocha just stopped. If you have a urine-marking dog, we wish you the same positive outcome!!

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## Cat Piece

### Walking The Cat?

Keeping your cat indoors can present challenges to providing her with a stimulating and enriching environment. Few indoor areas are as interesting to cats as the great outdoors.

However, letting cats roam freely outside (something we do NOT recommend) can put them at risk for injury and disease, fighting with other cats, eliminating in other people's gardens, and cause problems for wildlife. So how can you safely allow your cat outdoors and not create problems? One idea is to take your cat for a walk.

Thanks to our friend, colleague, and cat socializer extraordinaire, Dr. Marsha Heinke, for pointing us to a great product - [the leash walking jacket](#). This looks to be superior to any cat harness we've seen.

You can acclimate your cat to wearing the walking jacket with some time and patience. Start by putting the jacket on your cat without fastening it. Just let it drape loosely around her body for a few minutes. Pair this experience with pleasant things like chasing a cat toy or eating a special tidbit.

Take the jacket off before your cat starts to struggle. Don't force her to wear it. After she gets used to the feel of the jacket and isn't bothered by it, buckle it loosely and repeat the positive associations. Gradually increase the time your cat wears the jacket. Check the fit to make sure she cannot get out of the jacket on her own.

Once your cat will wear the jacket, begin acclimating her to the leash and to walking with you. Start indoors by just allowing her to first drag the leash around, and then to walking with you. Entice her to move on the leash and jacket by getting her to chase a feather on the end of a string, or lay a trail of treats.

When your cat seems comfortable in the jacket and leash, take her outside. Most cats that haven't had a lot of experience outside will be fearful at first in the new environment. Start with very short trips, like around your back yard or front porch. If your cat gets frightened or tries to hide, just bring her back inside. You may need to start by just sitting with your cat until the outdoors doesn't seem overwhelming.

Gradually try to lengthen the walks. How far you go and how long you and your cat are outside will depend on your cat's preferences. Some cats may enjoy a long walk around the block, while others may be happy just lying in the yard and wandering around the bushes.

Don't expect your cat walks to be like dog walks. Your cat may

### 4. Do you have other pets you are close to, that remain a central part of your support network?

If you have other pets you can turn to who continue to provide companionship and emotional support, your feelings of loss may be somewhat cushioned as compared to someone who has lost their only animal companion. Ashley is still here to give us our needed "fix" of canine companionship.

### 5. How much experience do you have with the grief process?

If you've been through the loss of a pet before, you know what to expect. This doesn't mean it's any easier, but you may be a bit more self-aware and not thrown quite as much off-balance.

Suzanne wasn't freaked out for example, when she heard her first auditory hallucination after Mocha's death. From downstairs in her office, she was sure she heard Mocha whining upstairs. Having experienced this kind of thing before, she recognized it as a normal part of grief rather than thinking she was going off the deep end.

We aren't finished grieving Mocha's loss and we know the setter puppy won't replace Mocha, or the beloved, irreplaceable Blaze, Suzanne's first setter who died over 10 years ago.

But we find that we can now remember and talk about funny and poignant times with Mocha without always crying. And looking forward to a new arrival in no way lessens the love we have for Mocha, and the special place he'll always hold in our hearts.

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## What's New at ABA

### Big Changes Behind the Scenes

We've been busy this month with major changes that will support our efforts to expand and improve the high quality services we want to deliver to you online.

First, will be a change of hosting companies for our website. Some of you may have had difficulty getting onto our site the last month, and received any number of error messages. We discovered our hosting

not want to walk beside you for some distance - she may prefer a casual stroll with lots of side trips to investigate the grass, bushes and other objects.

Some cautions if you do walk your cat. Beware of loose dogs and cats that could attack you and your cat. Even dogs on leash might attack your cat or badly frighten her. Try to avoid contacts with other animals, at least until you know how the animals will react to each other. Consider taking a can of [Direct Stop](#) with you to repel any unfriendly advances.

Be careful picking your cat up or trying to pet her if something's frightened her. She may redirect her defensive reaction onto you, or inadvertently injure you trying to get away. Consider taking a soft-sided cat carrier along on the walk so that you can get her home safely if she does become fearful or aggressive.

If you can't get your cat to accept a harness and leash or if it is just too risky to have her walking on the leash and harness, consider taking her out in her cat carrier secured to a small wagon, or in a cat stroller such as the [KittyWalk Stroller](#), specially made for walking cats, puppies or small dogs. We think this is a great product and can't wait to get one for Buffett and the new puppy.

Cat walks are not for everyone, but with the high incidence of obesity in cats, we think they have great potential for some cats. You'll likely find these procedures are easier with 6 to 8 month old kittens as compared to adult cats.

Broadening your cat's range of experiences will result in a better socialized cat. If your cat is properly acclimated to the equipment and to the area, you will find that a cat walk can be an enriching experience for both you and your cat.

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company has had repeated technical problems so we decided its time for a change.

Both our webmaster and marketing coach are working with us to make the change to a hosting company in Colorado. We are confident this will make our site more reliably available to you.

Second, look for a new look in our ezine next month. We want to be able to deliver more resources to you through our ezine, and deliver added digital bonuses to you when you purchase something from us. Our new list management system will allow us to do that, and will also be more compatible with a membership site we have planned for the future.

Although our ezine will have a bit different look and layout next month, it will still be filled with useful information and articles for pet parents and pet professionals.

Make sure you have [ezine@AnimalBehaviorAssociates.com](mailto:ezine@AnimalBehaviorAssociates.com) in your address book, or 'safe list' so your ISP does not block it without your knowledge.

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## About Our Services

### What You Don't Know About Dogs Can Hurt You

Suzanne just returned from Nashville TN, where she spoke at the [Mid-South Electric Metering Association's 54th Annual Metering School](#) on [What You Don't Know About Dogs Can Hurt You](#). Dan had been a speaker there the two previous years.

Suzanne talked to attendees about how to avoid being bitten by understanding why a dog might bite, being able to predict the dog's intentions through reading his body language, knowing how to make yourself look non-threatening, how to lower a dog's arousal, and how to protect yourself if a dog does attack.

This presentation will result in [two new products](#), which will be available by June 1st - an audio CD of the lecture and a CD-ROM of the narrated, Power Point presentation. Save money if you

order by May 19th!

**New Book on Barking Dogs**

Our long awaited revision of our manual "A Behavioral Approach to Barking Dogs" is almost finished. It's at the designers now and the first print run should be back by June 15th. It has a new title [Help! I'm Barking and I Can't Be Quiet: Pet parenting solutions for the barking dog](#). If you place a pre-publication order by May 31st, we'll pay the (domestic) shipping costs!

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