

of fears that can cause behavior problems, such as aggression: "Such methods are often used as a quick fix by the inexperienced." It also points out potential malfunction can result in repeated shocks.

Dr. Dodman, director of the Behavior Clinic at the Cummings School, adds: "The ends in punishment-based training do not justify the means. If you threaten a dog with a painful stimulus, it will respond to avoid the pain. Two Nobel prize winners state that punishment teaches an animal nothing except how to avoid the punishment. I agree."

— The Editors

Accommodate Aging

In the Expert Advice column in the April 2006 issue ["Hardwood and Tile Floors Scare Him"], the owner described his 9-year-old Golden Retriever pausing before walking on hardwood and tile floors. Dr. Nicholas Dodman gave good advice but did not mention another possible cause. I owned, or was blessed, with a Golden for over 13 years and know a little about the breed.

Their life expectancy is 10 to 12 years. A 9-year-old Golden is in old age and could be experiencing arthritis and/or reduced muscle strength. He may be less stable and less able to deal with slippery surfaces. The dog may not be frightened but cautious.

The owner should make these surfaces easier to maneuver and also watch for other signs, such as difficulty with stairs and standing. Other household changes may be required to accommodate his aging dog. ♦

Brenda Haddock
Indianapolis, IN

To Contact Volunteers Treating Dogs in Bhutan

An article on Marianne Guillet and her partner, Hendrik Visser, who care for homeless dogs in Bhutan ["Dog Mother Cares for a Hundred at a Time," June 2006] included information on how to donate to their animal clinic but purposefully withheld its bank account number. If you want to contact the couple directly, the e-mail address is pilou@druknet.bt.



Your Dog
The Newsletter for
Caring Dog Owners

What's the Problem With Low-Dose Shock Collars?

I would like to reply to the Expert Advice answer regarding "Collars That Shock" [May 2006]. I think that Dr. Nicholas Dodman's response was not accurate at all. I have a 5-year-old German Shorthaired Pointer and a 3-year-old Weimaraner.

Both are very good dogs but will run if they see rabbits, which are in high numbers here. I recently investigated makers of shock collars and chose one I am very happy with and have had no bad results from my dogs.

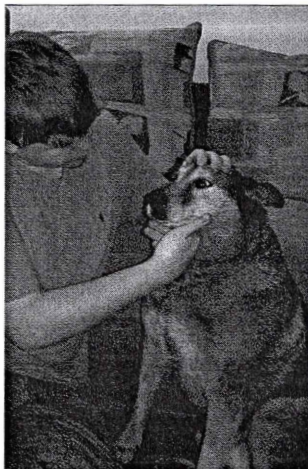
My unit allows me to give them a tone, a "nick" stimulation or an eight-second stimulation. My dogs are now used to hearing a tone and running back to me immediately without hesitation after only one

shock at the next-to-lowest stimulation, which I have done to myself.

I cannot believe someone would say it is cruel punishment. It certainly has changed both my dogs for the better, and they love me just as much as they always have. I say if they learn to respond by a tone after only a couple stimulations at low settings, what is the problem?

An Avid Reader
Rockville, Md.

Dr. Dodman's view that shock collars are inhumane is widely shared by those who advocate positive training. The Association of Pet Behaviour Counsellors in the U.K., for example, believes the shocks can set up a series



In the Next Issue

Behavior

The possible physical causes of aggression.

Health

When to seek veterinary care for a fever.

Medicine

We separate fact from fiction in spaying and neutering.

Timeless Tips

Look for these signs of health before buying or adopting.