

Meet the expert...



Nikki Brown, who is also known as the UK Dog Whisperer, is qualified in both human and dog psychology and has 12 years' experience of helping poorly pooches. Visit www.canineangel.co.uk for more information. Here she offers *Pick Me Up* readers some advice on canine calamities such as barking, eating too much and anxiety...

Wild woofer

My 3-year-old dog crossbreed Pomeranian Rio has a habit of barking at certain people. I have a baby due in December and I'm a worried Rio will just bark all the time!
Cassie, Manchester

Nikki says: Dogs are sensitive and can pick up on feelings of fear. Expectant mums tend to be full of natural anxieties. He may feel the need to protect you, and has probably learned that his barking will see off the potential threat of others approaching you. Showing Rio that you're in charge will help him to calm down. Visit my website www.canineangel.co.uk for tips on how to do this.



She's a scrounger

My 8-year-old golden retriever Poppy is such a lovely dog, however she's absolutely obsessed with food! I'm really worried because she's already had to go to the vets several times after getting ill from eating so much. No matter how strict we are - we don't give her any leftovers, and we feed her pet-recommended dog food - she still manages to get hold of food. I don't want a repeat of last Christmas where she got hold of a

big block of Cheddar and then got sick! What can we do?
Katherine, Ipswich

Nikki says: Poppy is scrounging for food because she's not receiving enough nutrition in her diet. Some dry and wet pet food can cause major health problems to the dog's digestive organs. Do some investigation into the type of food you're giving her. Once her nutrition is balanced she will stop stealing!



BARKING MAD!

All our readers really want for Christmas are their pets to be happy and healthy

He's not the same

My partner Dean and I have three dogs - all Staffordshire bull terriers - named Duchess, Winston and their baby Koda. We love them dearly, but one is causing us some bother. Winston used to be a joy to walk and never let anything bother him, but since being attacked by an English bull terrier, he attempts to attack other dogs - big or small - before they attack him. I have to keep him on the lead now, which I find hard because the other two are let off to play. Is there anything I can do to change his behaviour?

Kylie, Devon

Nikki says: It's upsetting when another dog attacks your dog and there's always the fear it might happen again. Winston has learnt that if he attacks first, then he controls the situation. It will take some time and consistent effort with the right training techniques to recondition his behaviour. This could be quite a long process and you probably need specialist advice from a dog expert, but the good news is he can be helped!



Anxious hound



Gizmo, my 7-year-old Pomeranian, suffers with severe separation anxiety and will bark and stress every time we even look like we're about to leave the house! We've bought him a cage to sleep in, and we try to make him feel safe. We also have a pheromone plug, but unfortunately it doesn't seem to have calmed him down.

Sarah, Liverpool

Nikki says: Separation anxiety often occurs when a dog believes they're in charge of the pack. Gizmo needs to

know that you're his 'pack leader' so you can come and go as you please without him feeling anxious. You need to communicate to Gizmo that you have everything under control and he needn't worry. But take one thing at a time. The most important thing is to be relaxed in his company. If he picks up on your worry, he'll only feel more anxious.

Come back!



Monty is an 18-month-old miniature male Labradoodle. When we go for walks, he runs off and disappears from view. He'll come back on recall (not always immediately), but I wonder how to train him to stay within sight? I use treats as rewards, but they don't seem to work. I worry about him running into roads. Please help!

Sarah, Hertfordshire

Nikki says: Recall training needs to be done over a long period of time and performed in a safe, enclosed area without distractions. Many owners make the mistake of calling their dog when they are running away from them. Train Monty to 'come' by using calm, assertive commands when he is naturally running towards you. That way he'll associate the command with coming to you. Reward Monty by calmly praising him.