

International Positive Dog Training Association Research Findings – Tools Spray Training Products

Tool: Spray Training Products

Rating: Unacceptable due to high risk of causing stress, anxiety and/or fear.



Operant Sequence

Positive Punishment

- Adding something unpleasant to decrease the likelihood that a behaviour will be repeated.

For example, spraying the dog to decrease the likelihood that it will bark.

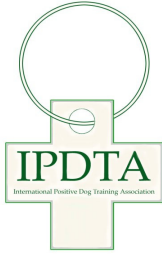
Negative Reinforcement

- Removing something unpleasant to increase the likelihood that a behaviour will be repeated (avoidance-conditioning).

For example, ending the spray when the dog stops barking to increase the likelihood that it will remain quiet.

Use of Tool: Aversive

Proper Application: This study is based on the “Multivet” line of products including Aboistop© Anti-Bark Spray Collar, Virtual Fence©, Spray Barrier™, Spray Commander© and Ssscat© Kits.



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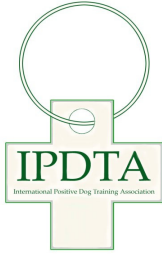
Spray Training Products

Aboistop© Anti-Bark Spray Collar R2

The Aboistop© Kit contains a collar, a “plastic casing that holds a reservoir of citronella” R3, a 6-volt alkaline battery and a refill of spray. The casing that holds a reservoir of citronella or scentless spray R3 “houses a micro-circuit and microphone.” R3 The reservoir is injected with citronella or scentless spray, a battery is inserted, the casing is then fixed onto the collar. The collar is secured around the dog's neck under the dog's chin, with the spray nozzle facing up, or facing the ground below the dog, depending on how the collar is positioned. The dog's bark is detected by the microphone, which releases a pressurized burst of spray under the dog's chin, in front of its snout, under its chin, or onto the ground below the dog, depending on the size and shape of the dog's head, as well as how the collar is positioned. The spray serves as an “interrupter” to the dog to stop it from barking. At this point the handler has the option of re-directing the dog and reinforcing a desired behaviour. If the handler gives a command such as “shush” at the same time the collar is activated, the spray reinforces the cue. Once the behaviour has been successfully modified, the dog can be weaned from the collar. If the behaviour returns (spontaneous recovery) showing the collar, or allowing the dog to see and/or sniff the collar is often sufficient to stop the re-occurring behaviour (barking).

Virtual Fence© R3

The Virtual Fence© Kit contains a transmitter, a spray receiver collar, an antenna, perimeter wire, batteries, flags and a citronella or scentless spray refill. The reservoir is injected with spray and a battery is inserted. The casing is then fixed onto the collar. The collar is secured around the dog's neck under the dog's chin, with the spray nozzle facing up, or facing the ground below the dog, depending on how the collar is positioned. The perimeter wire is buried under ground around the perimeter of the boundary. Flags are placed around the boundary on the ground above the buried wire, to give the dog a visual as to where the boundary is. The transmitter is plugged into a 120 volt outlet that “generates a low frequency radio signal. This signal is transmitted through the buried antenna.” R3 When the dog approaches the buried wire, the collar picks up the signal and emits a beeping tone as a warning and that it has come too close to the boundary. If the dog continues to approach the boundary, the collar releases a pressurized burst of spray under the dog's chin, in front of its snout, under its chin, or onto the ground below the dog, depending on the size and shape of the dog's



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head, as well as how the collar is positioned. If the dog retreats from the boundary when it hears the “beep” it will avoid the correction.

Spray Barrier™ R3

The Spray Barrier™ Kit contains a spray receiver collar, adjustable strap, AC adaptor, emitter dish, spray barrier box, battery and citronella or scentless spray refill. The reservoir is injected with citronella or scentless spray, a battery is inserted, the casing is then fixed onto the collar. The collar is secured around the dog's neck under the dog's chin, with the spray nozzle facing up, or facing the ground below the dog, depending on how the collar is positioned. The dish is plugged into a 120 volt outlet and generates a low frequency radio signal that transmits in all directions. As the dog approaches the dish, the signal is picked up by the collar - emitting a warning beep. If the dog continues to approach the dish, the collar releases a pressurized burst of spray under the dog's chin, in front of its snout, under its chin, or onto the ground below the dog, depending on the size and shape of the dog's head, as well as how the collar is positioned. If the dog retreats from the warning, it will avoid the correction.

Spray Commander© R3

The Spray Commander© Kit contains a spray collar, remote control, two batteries and citronella or scentless spray refill. The reservoir is injected with citronella or scentless spray, a battery is inserted, the casing is then fixed onto the collar. The collar is secured around the dog's neck under the dog's chin, with the spray nozzle facing up, or facing the ground below the dog, depending on how the collar is positioned. The collar is controlled by the handler with a remote control. There are two uses for this collar:

1. The Spray Commander© is used to interrupt an unwanted behaviour. When the dog performs an unwanted behaviour, pressing button number two will release a small burst of pressurized spray as a warning, in front of its snout, under its chin, or onto the ground below the dog, depending on the size and shape of the dog's head, as well as how the collar is positioned. If the behaviour continues, pressing button number three will release a longer burst of spray. The remote control also contains button number one – a button that produces a “beep” that can be used as either a reward marker, or the first warning – before the small spray.



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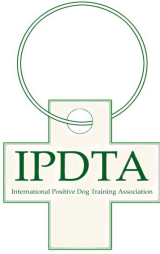
2. The Spray Commander© can be used to reinforce an interruption cue. When the dog performs the unwanted behaviour, the handler can give a command or interruption cue. If the dog responds to the cue, the behaviour can be rewarded. If the dog does not respond to the cue, the warning button can be pressed. If the behaviour continues, the correction button can be pressed. The “beep” button can be used as a reward marker for the correct response, or as the first warning – before the small spray.

Ssscat© Automated Cat Repellent R3

The Ssscat© Kit contains a motion detector and refills. The movement of the dog triggers the motion detector. When this occurs a “beeping tone” is heard, one second later citronella spray is released. Proper application indicates this setting is to be used for “the first few days” R3 after which only the tone is to be triggered. The angle between the “detection of motion and direction of spray” are adjustable.

Parameters

- Any citronella collar must be snug enough to ensure the spray goes only where intended.
- Citronella collars or motion detected repellents should not be used until you have analyzed the cause of the unwanted behaviour, and the cause has been properly addressed.
- Citronella collars or motion detected repellents should not be recommended for clients until positive reinforcement and negative punishment alternatives have been tried, and have failed.
- Citronella collars or motion detected repellents should only be used on dogs with a stable temperament. R8
- Citronella collars or motion detected repellents should not be used during sessions for the purpose of teaching cues and/or signals.

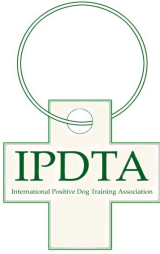


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- Citronella collars or motion detected repellents should not be used until the dog has been taught the desired response.
- Collars or motion detected repellents set in the “off” position can be used outside of behaviour modification sessions for the purpose of “habituation to the collar/canister” and “for dissociation of the collar/canister with the spray” when making the transition to maintaining the desired behaviour – without the collar or canister. R5
- The spray must be timed perfectly with the unwanted behaviour for the dog to be able to predict which behaviour will cause the correction.
- The timing of the warning must be exact for the dog to realize how to avoid the following correction.
- Citronella collars or motion detected repellents should only be used at times when suppressing the unwanted behaviour is required.
- Citronella collars or motion detected repellents should be removed when it is not necessary to suppress the unwanted behaviour.
- Citronella collars should not be used for barking caused by fear or anxiety because the dog may release its stress in other undesirable ways - including but not limited to; destruction, self-mutilation, “shutting down” and/or attempts to escape.
- Citronella collars or motion detected repellents should not be used on dogs with anxiety disorders. R8
- Citronella collars or motion detected repellents should only be used by or under the direction of a qualified dog trainer.



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- Supervision is required during the initial use of any spray product. The handler/trainer must be able to identify any sign of stress or fear – including but not limited to; whining, shaking, urinating, hiding, “whisker quiver, agnostic-pucker” R5 or aggression. If any of these signs should occur the program must be immediately adjusted or discontinued to eliminate the stress or fear.
- Citronella products should not be used in small, confined areas as the spray can permeate the area and continually annoy the dog. R5
- The Aboistop© collar should not be used in the presence of another dog that has a stress or fear reaction to the spray.
- Precautions must be taken to prevent the collar from being accidentally triggered by “television stations, radio transmitters, other equipment or external noises or vibrations such as other dogs barking, ID tags jangling”, “wind or weather conditions” etc. R5
- The sensitivity of some collars or motion detected repellents can be adjusted. There are also differences in sensitivity from one unit to another. It is important that the collar or motion detected repellent has a level of sensitivity that is fair to the temperament of the dog. R8
- Aboistop©, Virtual Fence©, Spray Barrier™ , Ssscat© Kits should be used for no more than short-term absences and only after the collar or kit is known to be effective and working correctly for that dog. R5
- Spray corrector products should be immediately discontinued if it does not interrupt the unwanted behaviour with minimal attempts. R5
- The Spray Commander units become abusive if the handler is incapable of accurate timing.
- Spray corrector products become abusive if the dog is sprayed in the eyes.
- Spray corrector products become abusive if the dog is stressed or fearful or suffers from anxiety.



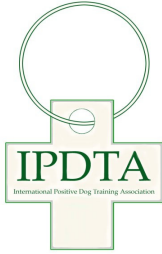
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- Spray corrector products become abusive when used in a small confined area.
- Spray corrector products become abusive when the spray causes stress or fear in another dog in the vicinity.
- Spray corrector products become abusive when they continually malfunction and spray at inappropriate times.

Benefits

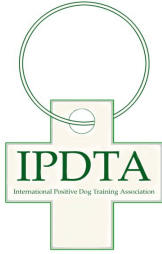
Multivet Products

- Used properly on the right temperament of dog, Multivet products are believed by many to be “neither dangerous nor traumatic for the animal, and may save an animal from being destroyed or abandoned.” R2
- Multivet products are easy to use.
- They are considered by many to be a “*conditionally recommended*” humane solution to many behavioural problems. R5
- Spray corrector products allow the handler to make a correction without making an association between the correction and the handler. Multivet products are “independent of any direct human intervention.” R2
- Spray corrector products are not painful and are physically harmless with the rare exception of when an allergy to citronella exists. R4 R5
- Studies have shown that the use of spray is more effective than shock for interrupting unwanted behaviour. All owners in a study by Roger Segelken, where dogs were tested with both spray and shock collars “found the citronella collar to be effective in reducing or stopping nuisance barking and most preferred the fragrance spray.” Half of the owners said their dogs continued to bark with the shock collar on but not with the citronella collar. R6



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- Spray corrector products are less likely to cause fear or aggression than shock equipment. R4
- The “hissing” sound of the pressurized spray helps to suppress the unwanted behaviour. R4
- The scent of the citronella helps to suppress the unwanted behaviour.
- Unscented refills containing a 100% safe 34a, an “odorless, harmless and stainless” R2 spray is available for those that prefer to not use citronella. This spray “has no active chemical agent, only an innocuous propellant” R2, “is ozone friendly and has no side effects.” R2
- Spray corrector products are temporary training tools, because once the dog's behavior has been successfully modified, the dog can be “weaned” from the collar or canister.
- If the behaviour returns, showing the collar or canister to the dog or allowing the dog to see and/or sniff the collar or canister is often sufficient to stop the re-occurring behaviour.
- The dog learns that its behaviour is what causes the spray as a result the dog learns to think and make a decision to behave in a different manner.
- Because no association is made with people, the dog's behaviour is more reliable when people are not around.
- Spray collars can be positioned on the dog's neck to aim at the ground instead of up at the neck or “snout” in order to avoid having any of the spray touch the dog's head.
- Multi-vet has been very good about repairing and replacing faulty or malfunctioning equipment.



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Aboistop© Kits

- “Clinical research by Major American and European Universities” show that Aboistop© will eliminate “nuisance-barking” by up to 88%. R2

Virtual Fence© Kits

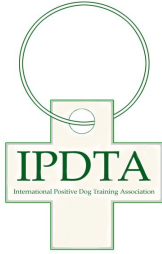
- The Virtual Fence© allows the dog the freedom to roam within the designated boundary without the need of fences, chains or kennels. R2
- The Virtual© Fence Kit is less expensive than invisible shock fencing systems.

Spray Barrier™ Kits

- With this Kit, no installation or training is required.
- The Spray Barrier™ Kit includes an adjustable range of up to 20 feet.
- The spray only has to be used until the dog has been conditioned to avoid the beep.

Spray Commander© Kits

- With the Spray Commander© Kit, the remote control allows the handler the ability to correct the dog at a distance.
- The remote control gives the handler the ability to time the correction to the exact moment of the unwanted behaviour, to ensure the dog makes the association between the behaviour and the correction.
- It can be used up to 300 feet away from the dog.
- It gives the handler the ability to interrupt a variety of behaviours.
- It gives the handler the ability to mark an unwanted behaviour.



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- It gives the handler the ability to reinforce an interruption cue.

Ssscat© Kits

- The Ssscat© Kit can be used to repel dogs away from “off-limit” areas or items such as furniture, breakables, garbage cans, tables, counters, rooms, food, plants, Christmas trees, etc.
- With this Kit, the spray canister is only to be used until the dog has been conditioned to avoid the beep.

Aboistop© and Spray Commander© Kits

- Because these Kits interrupt the barking immediately, they serve to prevent barking from escalating and as result, help to keep the dog “slightly calmer.” R8

Virtual© Fence and Spray Barrier™ Kits

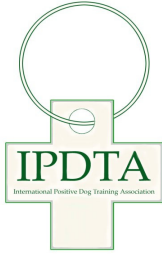
- With these Kits, multiple collars can be used within one fencing system, with only one collar on a dog at any given time.

Spray Barrier™ and Ssscat© Kits

- The spray in these Kits contain “34a” that is “odorless, harmless and stainless” and 100% safe for people and animals. This spray “has no active chemical agent, only an innocuous propellant,” “is ozone friendly and has no side effects.” R2
- With these Kits, the spray can be aimed in a different direction than the motion detector to avoid having any of the spray touch the dog. The nozzle can be aimed both up and down in order to direct the spray.

Aboistop©, Virtual Fence©, Spray Barrier™, Ssscat© Kits

- These Kits can be used “in your short term absence once the collar or canister is known to be effective and working correctly for that dog.” R3



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Spray Barrier™, Spray Commander© and Ssscat© Kits

- These Kits can be used to repel a dog away from “off-limit” areas or items such as furniture, breakables, garbage cans, tables, counters, rooms, food, plants Christmas trees, etc.
- These Kits can quickly interrupt, reduce and/or eliminate numerous unwanted behaviours such as jumping up, barking, scratching carpets or furniture, chewing or digging, and can be used to prevent the dog from eliminating in inappropriate places.
- The dog does not associate this correction with a person in the environment instead it associates it with the object or area. The dog learns that particular objects or areas are to be avoided.
- If the handler gives a command, for example, “shush” at the same time the collar is activated, the spray reinforces the command.

Drawbacks, Risks and Warnings

Physical

- “In rare cases, a dog or person may be allergic to citronella.” R4
- In rare cases, citronella may cause irritation if sprayed into the eyes.
- Since the Aboistop© Anti-Bark Spray Collar Brochure states it “can be used safely on all healthy dogs” R3 it leaves the question of what constitutes a “healthy dog” and what may occur if the dog is not “healthy”?

Behavioural/Psychological/Emotional

- If used on sensitive, timid, fearful, anxious or overly assertive dogs, pressurized spray products can cause stress, anxiety, fear, submission, aggression, depression, avoidance behaviours and/or could cause the dog to “shut down.”



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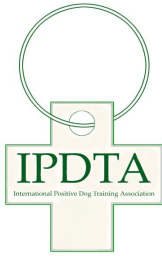
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- If used on sensitive, timid, fearful or anxious dogs, it could inhibit their ability to learn.
- If on sensitive, timid, fearful or anxious dogs for the purpose of stopping unwanted barking, behaviour such as destruction, self-mutilation, attempts to escape, etc, could result as the dog continues to behave in a fearful manner and/or release its stress.
- Unwanted associations may be created if the dog pairs up the unpleasant experience with someone or something in the environment at the moment it is sprayed. For example, if a sensitive or fearful dog is focused on a child when sprayed, it may create an unpleasant association with that child, children that are similar or children in general. This association can cause fear of children which could lead to fear aggression. The unpleasant experience can cause fear or distrust of anyone or anything in the environment that the dog is focused on when the unpleasant experience occurs.
- With a Virtual Fence© system, a dog may be frightened or traumatized by animals or people crossing the boundary and entering the dog's territory.

Mechanical

- If the collar is not fitted snugly the spray may hit the nose or eyes.
- The citronella oil could stain upholstery. R6
- Multi-vet products have been known to have a limited life span and often need repair.
- With the Virtual Fence© system, if the dog crosses the boundary it is unlikely to re-enter the territory for fear of being sprayed, hence the dog is trapped outside of the boundary.



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- When using the Virtual Fence© system, since there is no physical barrier to keep the dog within the boundaries, the danger exists for the dog to be lured outside of the parameter. This can result in any of the dangers associated with running at large up to, and including, injury and death.
- When using the Virtual Fence© system, since there is no physical barrier to keep other people and/or animals out, the danger exists for outsiders to come inside the parameter. This can result in any of the dangers associated with the dog being approached or cornered by unwanted people or animals.
- Aboistop© collars can be triggered by “television stations, radio transmitters, other equipment, external noises or vibrations such as, other dogs barking, ID tags jangling”, “wind or weather conditions” etc. R3

Limitations

- Multivet systems may not be effective with resilient and overly assertive dogs.
- They may be too severe for sensitive, fearful, stressed, or anxious dogs.
- Some dogs will learn how to empty the reservoir in order to continue barking.
- The ability to accurately read and interpret body language is crucial to deciding whether or not spray corrector products are acceptable for a particular dog. R5

Note: The severity of any positive punishment or negative reinforcement technique must be suitable for the sensitivity level of the dog, and only used on dogs with confident and resilient temperaments. It is the united opinion of the IPDTA that anything that causes fear or pain is not acceptable. Any IPDTA-accepted tool or technique immediately becomes unacceptable the moment the dog shows any sign of fear or pain.



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References:

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- R2 – Aboistop© Anti-Bark Spray Collar Brochure – Multi-Vet Ltd. (US Patent No 4,627,385)
- R3 – Website – <http://www.multivet-inter.com>
- R4 – Professional Standards for Dog Trainers, Delta Society Pg 26, 27, 28 - 2001
- R5 – Guide to Humane Dog Training, American Humane Association Pg 41, 42, 45, 46 - 1998-2001
- R6 – Journal of the American Animal Hospital Association – Study: 'Nuisance-barking' dogs respond best to citronella spray collars, Roger Segelken, May-June 1996
- R7 – Study: Effectiveness and comparison of citronella and scentless spray bark collars for the control of barking in a veterinary hospital setting - Mesa Veterinary Hospital, Mesa, Arizona USA, Moffat KS, Landsberg GM, Beaudet R.
- R8 – Email notes - Gillian Ridgeway of Who's Walking Who, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, May 2006