

DOG WHISPERER' ROW AS TRAINER ACCUSED OVER ELECTRIC SHOCK COLLARS TOURS BRITAIN

By [FIONA MACRAE](#) 6th March 2010

A dog trainer to Hollywood stars begins a UK tour tonight amid warnings from animal welfare groups that his techniques can cause unnecessary pain and suffering. Cesar Millan, also known as the Dog Whisperer, is credited with turning tens of thousands of disobedient and aggressive animals into perfect pets.

He has a string of bestselling books and a successful TV show to his name and satisfied clients include Oprah Winfrey, Nicolas Cage and Scarlett Johansson.

His philosophy is that the owner, not the pampered pooch, is 'leader of the pack'. But the RSPCA claims he has advocated using electric shock collars and restricting dogs' air supply with nooses and leads, as well as pinning them down to the floor. Mr Millan, who denies the electric shock claims, teaches that dogs should be treated as dogs, not substitute children. He believes that if the owner shows he is a strong, calm leader, the dog will become passive, loyal and obedient.

Be the pack leader. As the human pack leader, you must set rules, boundaries, and limitations and always project calm-assertive energy in order to maintain a balanced, harmonious pack.

Master the walk. Set aside at least 30 to 45 minutes every morning for a walk – you should be the first one out the door and the first one in and your dog should be beside or behind you during your walk, which allows you to be seen as the pack leader.

In order to achieve balance with your dog you need exercise, discipline and affection and the one activity that will achieve all three is to master the walk. Methods likely to be demonstrated on his 12-date tour, which begins at London's O2 Arena, include repeatedly jabbing the animals in the ribs or face at the first sign of trouble, to teach them who is the boss.

Owners whose dogs can't help but jump up on guests will be told to establish dominance by avoiding showering their pet with affection on returning home from work.

Begging for food should be ignored, says Mr Millan, 40, who lives in Los Angeles, where his Dog Psychology Centre and business empire are based.

But animal welfare organisations say some of his more extreme techniques – which are claimed to include using electric shock collars to tame wayward dogs – leave the animals in pain or fear.

Twenty-six charities, including the RSPCA and the Dogs Trust, have signed an open letter ahead of the Dog Whisperer Tour, condemning 'aversive dog training techniques'.

The letter states: 'This kind of training technique can include the use of prong collars, electric shock collars and restricting dogs' air supply using nooses/leads or pinning them to the ground, which can cause pain and distress.'

Mr Millan said he did not endorse the use of electric collars but did believe they were useful in 'very extreme cases' where the dog was in danger of being put down if its behaviour did not improve.

He added: 'However, the live show is not about these kinds of emergency situations. It's really about training people to reconnect to their dog.'