



AskTheDogGuy.com

THE SKUNK SMELL REMEDY

THANKS TO:

Paul Krebaum from dog owners everywhere as he is the mind behind the magic and has provided all this nose saving information free of charge. Learn more about Paul by visiting his web site:

<http://home.earthlink.net/~skunkremedy/home/sk00004.htm>



In A Plastic Bucket, Mix Well The Following Ingredients



- For very large pets one quart of tepid tap water may be added to enable complete coverage.
- Wash pet promptly and thoroughly, work the solution deep into the fur. Let your nose guide you, leave the solution on about 5 minutes or until the odor is gone. Some heavily oiled areas may require a "rinse and repeat" washing.
- Skunks usually aim for the face, but try to keep the solution out of the eyes - it stings. If you have any cuts on your hands you might want to wear latex gloves for the same reason.
- After treatment, thoroughly rinse your pet with tepid tap water.
- Pour the spent solution down the drain with running water.
- NEVER, ever, store mixed solution in a closed bottle, sprayer, etc. Pressure will build up until the container bursts. This can cause severe injury.

Notes

- Clean plastic mixing containers and utensils are preferred. Metals encourage auto-decomposition of the peroxide.
- Hydrogen Peroxide 3% solution is usually sold in pint (500ml) bottles, so you'll need two. The 3% grade is often marked "U.S.P.", meaning that it meets the standards for medical use and purity as set forth in the United States Pharmacopoeia.
- The use of other strengths/grades is not recommended unless you're a chemist, and even then a trip to the 24-hour drugstore is much better than a trip to the emergency room.
- Use baking soda, not baking powder. "Arm and Hammer" is one popular brand. Baking soda is also called: Sodium Bicarbonate, Sodium Bicarbonate, U.S.P., Bicarbonate of Soda, and Sodium Hydrogen Carbonate. Do not confuse any of the above with Washing Soda, which is Sodium Carbonate. Washing Soda is about 100 times more alkaline than Baking Soda and can cause skin burns to both you and your pet.
- Two preferred brands are "Softsoap" and "Ivory Liquid". As far as auto-decomposition of the peroxide is concerned, the surfactant package in these two is fairly inert. Heavy-duty grease-cutting brands such as "Dawn" are less inert, and hair shampoo is probably the worst.
- Once mixed, the peroxide slowly breaks down into water and oxygen gas. Thus it gets weaker with time and so it should be used promptly. The exact rate depends on temperature, pH, and catalysts such as trace amounts of metals (iron, etc.) in the soap and/or tap water.
- How much pressure will the complete decomposition of 3% hydrogen peroxide produce in a closed container ??? It depends on how full the container is. Assuming negligible solubility of Oxygen in water, a bottle half-full of peroxide will develop about 140 psi. A bottle 3/4 full would develop 420 psi. This can do a lot of damage.
- Highly pure hydrogen peroxide decomposes very slowly if kept cool and in a dark place, a few percent a year. The more dilute solutions usually decompose faster (due to impurities in the dilution water) and have a trace of stabilizer added. So why aren't the bottles in the store bloated or bursting ? Look carefully inside the cap... you'll see some very tiny holes in the cap liner to let the oxygen gas escape. A good reason to always store bottles upright.
- Look for an expiration date on your peroxide. If you're using stuff which has been sitting around in your medicine cabinet for years, buy fresh peroxide.
- Tepid: lukewarm.
- All brand names mentioned in this website are trademarks of their various owners.

FAQ's

Q1) Will this bleach my pet ?

A) 4 out of 5 e-mails say that their pet was not bleached.

Q2) What about that fifth e-mail ?

A) If bleaching was observed it was slight. Your black terrier won't become a platinum blonde. I have heard (1 instance) of a black Lab turning chocolate brown, but have no further info. Perhaps prior use of tomato juice helped (black + red = brown).

Some other speculations on bleaching: 1) If not thoroughly rinsed the baking soda can leave a whitish residue. 2) The thorough washing removes oils from the fur, so for a few days the coat may lack shine and appear lighter. When our dog gets a bath at the groomer she always looks lighter afterwards. 3) Due to genetic variations, the fur of 1 out of X number of pets may be more susceptible to bleaching than the rest.

My pragmatic opinion on the whole issue is that any amount of bleaching is better than having a stinky pink pet, which is what you get with tomato juice.

Q3) It's 3:00 AM and Rover just came home, skunked as a drunk. Should I wash him now or keep him in the doghouse until day ?

A) The quicker you treat your pet the less work you'll have to do later. The peroxide mixture must come in contact with the skunk spray in order to neutralize it. As time passes the skunk spray soaks deeper into the hair shaft and skin, making the washing a lengthier process.

Q4) I've washed Spot twice, gotten everything (even washed the doghouse), and there's still a bit of smell.

A) Nothing works perfectly, and smells are one of the joys of pet ownership.... Try some "Febreze" brand odor absorbing spray on Spot, his bedding, etc. Or try some of your favorite cologne...

Q5) Can I treat my lawn, bushes, other plants ?

A) Unfortunately I have seen absolutely nothing on this topic. If anyone has tried this please let me know and I'll post the results.

Q6) What about treating inanimate objects which have gotten Skunked ? (cars, decks, siding, under porches, clothing, etc.)

A) Ordinary bleach (sodium hypochlorite, "Clorox") works, but I prefer non-chlorine type bleaches for a lot of good reasons. One popular chlorine-free product is "OxiClean" and is available in most grocery, drug, and hardware stores for about \$5/lb. Follow the label directions for solution make-up. And, as always, "test in an inconspicuous area first". If the paint peels off your Jaguar don't come crying to me... Add some liquid soap to help cut the skunk oil, and rinse well when the odor's gone. Don't use OxiClean (or other laundry bleaches) on living things...they're too harsh.

For large areas, put your solution in a hose-end type of sprayer. Do NOT put it in a tank-type sprayer. Tank sprayers are closed systems and pressure build up (due to auto-decomposition of peroxide) will ensue, leading to possibly very nasty consequences. Hose-end sprayers hold around a quart of concentrate and go on the end of your garden hose. These have an air vent in the cap and won't build pressure. The "Ortho Spray-ette" is a popular garden hose sprayer and usually costs less than \$10 in most hardware stores. It also has a low mix ratio (i.e. it sprays a more concentrated solution), which makes it ideal for this application. One fill of the siphon bottle sprays at least 6 gallons, which covers a lot more area than you would expect.

One can sometimes buy 6% peroxide in the drugstore, in the women's hair-coloring section. You can also use the more alkaline sodium carbonate (washing soda) since the hose sprayer is going to dilute the mix up with large quantities of water. Strain out any undissolved material (esp. w/OxiClean) to avoid clogging the metering orifice in the sprayer. Rinse any rags or towels used to clean up oxidizer solution with large amounts of water, concentrated oxidizers left to dry on such articles have caused fires. Do not use these more concentrated solutions on living things !!!

If you have an air compressor of suitable capacity, the easiest and safest way to spray a large area is to make up a gallon or two of 1/2 strength "original recipe" {the "larger pet" formula} and use either the engine cleaner spray accessory or the sandblaster accessory. (sandblasters are cool tools, they'll even spray driveway sealer....) Rinse tools out after use to avoid corroding any of the aluminum components.

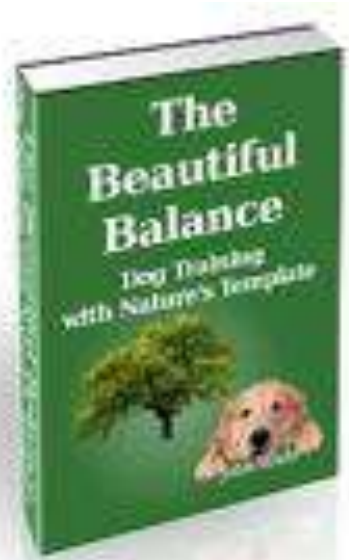
Q7) How does peroxide, baking soda, and soap get rid of skunk smell ?

A) The soap's just there to help wet the fur and get the oily skunk spray into solution where it can react with the baking soda and peroxide. The baking soda is there to raise the pH of the brew, that is, to make it more alkaline. I should say "just alkaline enough". Baking soda is a very mild alkali and won't eat holes in your skin like a strong alkali (e.g. lye) would. Raising the pH does three things: 1) It rapidly splits skunk spray (thioacetates into thiols and acetate.) 2) It accelerates the reaction between thiol and peroxide. 3) It neutralizes the sulfonic acid produced by 2), above.

Peroxide reacts with thiols in a number of steps, gradually going through the multiple oxidation states of sulfur chemistry until the end product, a sulfonic acid, is produced. This is neutralized to the sodium salt by baking soda.

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