



HOW TO

GET RID OF PESTS

While vacuuming the other day, I found mice droppings behind the couch. Gross! Our pest problem began when we rescued our dog, Leo, from the RSPCA a year ago, but I didn't make the connection until I noticed all the wildlife frequenting the leftovers in his food bowl. Needless to say, we now have to be extra vigilant about pest-proofing our house.

A NATURAL APPROACH

Pests are a nuisance that may pose a health risk, but many household pesticides are biocides designed to extinguish life, so they can also cause health problems. Some of the chemicals persist in our bodies indefinitely, such as DDT, which has been found in most of the general population, while others have been linked to the growing incidence of learning and behavioural disorders in children. This is why I adopt a non-chemical approach at home, but the key is to not give pests what they want, which is food, shelter and water.

PREVENTION TIPS

- **Good housekeeping is vital:** Empty the kitchen bin at least twice a week. Don't leave food (including pet food) lying around. Pay attention to areas where food may gather, such as under the fridge, stove and toaster.
- **Find their entry points:** Inspect under and around the house and repair pest entry points. Barriers such as steel wool in gaps are ideal, as are flyscreens on windows and doors.
- **Keep things dry:** Water attracts termites, mice and cockroaches. Ensure drainage, wet area waterproofing and gutters are in good condition and there are no dripping taps.
- **Get rid of clutter:** It's an ideal pest hideout.
- **Keep bins at a distance:** Locate compost and garbage bins away from your home.

TRAPPING TIPS

- **Cockroaches:** Rub an empty margarine tub with vegetable oil and add 1 tbs of honey. They'll get in, but won't be able to climb out.
- **For ants:** Place 10 drops of citrus essential oil, 1 tsp of cayenne pepper and 1 cup of water in a spray bottle. Shake and spray onto their trails (out of reach of children and pets).
- **For mice and rats:** This is preferred to baiting, which uses toxic chemicals. Rodents can be suspicious of new things so don't set a trap initially. Use peanut butter as bait and let them explore the trap a few times before setting it. Place traps against walls where you find droppings or evidence of their presence. If it's a plague, call a licensed pest controller.



TIP: Store all food (including pet food) in sealed containers.

PHOTOGRAPHY: GETTY IMAGES



LEARN A LIFE SKILL

Clean your yoga mat

"With regular use, your yoga mat gets covered in dirt, oil and sweat," YP Active yoga instructor Cherida Forde says. "But most people tend to just roll them up after class, until the next time."

Instead, start wiping down your mat, especially after hot yoga.

"Make a solution of a few drops of tea tree oil with water in a spray bottle," Forde says. "For tougher spots, use lemon juice and baking soda diluted in water."

For a thorough clean, Forde suggests cleaning it in the bath using gentle soap or body wash. Hang it out to dry but not in direct sunlight as this may dry it out.

WORDS: TIFFANY DUNK

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