



FIT FOR LIFE

Puppy power

Carol Westmorland reflects on how Mitzi, a ball of black curly mischievousness, has changed her parents' lives

I want you to picture this scene. Me, upper body drenched through, perched on the edge of a seat with father pointing a hair dryer in my direction. At first the airflow so gentle I feared the process could take a week. With encouragement we revved up to a more agreeable heat and a goodly few minutes later the job was done. The three of us happy.

It isn't easy during these winter months to stay mud-free. In fact I would go so far as to say it is impossible. Made worse should your undercarriage be a mere nine inches from the ground. This, coupled with immense curiosity, means an inevitable bath on return from a country walk. Is there any other type?

Being the filling between the sandwich of father and I is Mitzi, a ball of black curly mischievousness, sister of Crumble who resembles Madame Cholet minus the glasses.

Eight months ago, pre-Mitzi, my parents were different. Truly Scrumptious (my Cavachon) learnt to her cost that you do not jump on their sofa. Or worse purloin a cushion. No, instead you kept to the kitchen. Where things could be kept clean.

Fast-forward eight months and you will struggle to take more than a couple of steps before you stand on something that squeaks and it is not always the puppy. Cushions are now for everyone.

My parent's house is now a home. It was always welcoming but their home now has a heart and that little heart belongs to Mitzi. You would think that it can't get any better but it does.



'THEIR HOME NOW HAS A HEART AND THAT LITTLE HEART BELONGS TO MITZI'

Mum, a Pilates devotee and keen walker, has, without any conscious effort, dipped to 8 stone. At 70 she looks amazing. Dad is no sloth. Posting a 21:29 '10' mile time trial back in August. Can Mitzi keep up?

Mitzi brings a love of which there was never a short supply but this is different - it has a greater tolerance.

My parents are new parents and I for one am thrilled. It's a big fat 10 from me. Woof.



Carol Westmorland lives in the Eden Valley. She is a Cycling Time Trials national champion, clocking up 445 miles in 24 hours. She also teaches pilates. www.pilates-cumbria.uk