

Dog Training & Behavior



Naperville Area Humane Society

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Contacts

As an adopter from NAHS, you are officially part of our family! You are always welcome to call or email with any questions.

(630) 420 - 8989

adopt@naperhumane.org

ASPCA Poison Control

24/7 Emergency Line

(888) 426 - 4435

Resources

Here are some of our favorite sources of information on everything dog! From **behavior** to **nutrition** to picking out the best **toys**, these sources have it all! Plus, it's all science-backed, verified information to ensure you're getting facts, not fiction.

Fear Free Happy Homes

www.fearfreehappyhomes.com



Take a look at the Adopter Resources page on our website!

We have lots of downloadable info sheets and websites to visit for helpful tips, quick references, and more in-depth learning!

4 Quadrants of Operant Conditioning

Positive Reinforcement

stimulus added
behavior increases

Negative Reinforcement

stimulus removed
behavior increases

Positive Punishment

stimulus added
behavior decreases

Negative Punishment

stimulus removed
behavior decreases

Operant Conditioning, the most common framework used to view dog learning with, operates with the assumption that every behavior change is caused by the addition or removal of a stimulus. In this case, “positive” and “negative” don’t mean “good” or “bad”. **Positive** means **adding** a stimulus, and **negative** means **taking away** a stimulus. Reinforcement and punishment are more self-explanatory. **Reinforcement** is the motivation to **continue** doing a behavior, and **punishment** is the motivation to **stop** doing a behavior.

We often see trainers fall into two categories in regards to which quadrants they rely on for their methods. Trainers who utilize “alpha theory,” “dominance theory,” and call themselves “balanced trainers” tend to use negative reinforcement and positive punishment. These are trainers to *avoid*, as the use of these quadrants is firmly advised against by all major animal behavior and training organizations. “R+” or “positive reinforcement trainers” utilize the other two quadrants, which are the industry and scientific gold standard for training.

THE DANGERS OF "TRAINING" COLLARS

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**Punishment-Based Collars
Can Cause More Problems
Than They Solve**

"Training" collars, like prong collars, electronic collars, and choke chains, offer the allure of a quick fix. These types of aversive collars are designed to reduce undesired behavior by producing an unpleasant sensation, such as a pinch on the neck or a shock, when the animal exhibits the undesired behavior (such as pulling on leash). The idea is that the animal works to avoid the unpleasant sensation and stops exhibiting the unwanted behavior. The trouble is, while you may have temporarily solved the problem (which will likely resume as soon as the collar is taken off), you risk creating other problems, often much worse.

How they work

These types of aversive collars are designed to reduce undesired behavior by producing an unpleasant sensation, such as a pinch on the neck or a shock, when the animal exhibits the undesired behavior (such as pulling on leash). The idea is that the animal works to avoid the unpleasant sensation and stops exhibiting the unwanted behavior.

Potential Problems

Emotional pain

One problem with aversive tools like these is the emotional fallout they can cause. Aversives can lead to mistrust, misunderstanding, and even aggression. A dog trying to interact with other dogs in a friendly manner (often pulling on their leash) will instead be met with pain from the prong collar. They could easily associate the pain with the sight or interaction with another dog, possibly creating aggression towards that dog or even all dogs.

Physical pain

Aversive collars can cause physical pain. Choke collars put dogs at risk for damage to the esophagus or trachea. Prong collars can scratch or puncture the skin around dogs' necks. Electronic collars can cause damage ranging from redness and irritation to infection and tissue death, depending on the tightness of the collar and duration of wearing. Dogs are resilient animals and can build up resistance to the shock or the pain of a pinch/choke collar, making them ineffective.

Doesn't teach the dog what to do

Aversive collars focus on stopping behavior, rather than on teaching the animal what to do instead. The dog learns "Ouch, that hurts when I pull! But I don't know what you want me to DO. Should I stop moving altogether and just sit here instead?"

An enjoyable walk can quickly become an anxiety-ridden outing as the more the dog receives a painful sensation, the more he starts to distrust his surroundings. "What caused that pain? Was it moving? Was it walking? Was it that dog that I saw while I was pulling? Was it my owner?"

Stress

While the dog may outwardly appear to be "doing better" (e.g., pulling less), watch for more subtle signs that he is stressed, such as yawning, lip licking, dilated pupils, blinking, sneezing, turning away, panting rapidly, tucking his tail, laying his ears back, scratching his neck or shoulders, and "drying off" when he is not wet. These are all signs of a stressed dog.

RED AND GREEN LIGHT TRAINING



Consider the following trainer methods and skill sets that separate the best from the rest, including the red light qualities to avoid and the green light qualities to seek out in your efforts to find an emotionally protective, humane dog trainer.



Red Light Training Methods

Avoid the following harsh methods that motivate the animal to behave using aversive stimuli:

- Leash/collar jerks, pops, or over-tightening
- Physically forcing the animal into place
- Scary noises
- Spraying the dog
- Physical punishment, including slapping, hitting, pinching, shaking, biting, or throwing items at the dog
- Using intimidation or confrontation to gain compliance or dominance/"alpha" status, such as yelling, staring the animal down, or doing alpha rolls or alpha downs (physically pinning the dog down on their back or side)
- Advocating methods that are too dangerous or high risk for guardians to safely use on their own
- Using "mixed" or "balanced" training methods that blend punishment and rewards. This can increase confusion/uncertainty and escalate conflict and anxiety.

Note: Just stating that the training uses rewards isn't enough information. Ensure that all training tactics used with the dog are free of fear and force-based methods, rather than a blend or mix of methods.





Green Light Training Methods

Emotionally protective methods employed by humane trainers may include use of the following:

- Teaching and rewarding desired behavior using positive reinforcement and rewards the animal wants to work for, including treats, food, toys, play, attention, petting, praise, or access to a desired activity or space *(such as going out for a walk or an opportunity to “say hi” to a friend)*
- Managing the situation to make unwanted behavior less likely to occur, using non-invasive and non-confrontational strategies, including management tools like leashes, baby gates, and avoidance of the problem situation
- Advocating rewarding the behaviors you like and want to see more of while ignoring and/or not rewarding unwanted behavior that occurs
- Proactively replacing or redirecting unwanted behavior by guiding the animal to a different reward-worthy behavior or enjoyable activity
- Basing their approach upon a strong, science-based understanding of animal behavior and learning theory
- Setting the animal up for success by adjusting the training scenario/environment as needed for the animal to remain successful
- Implementing training at a pace the animal is comfortable with by building better behavior one success at a time
- Teaching clients to safeguard canine emotional wellbeing and training success by continually attending to and responding appropriately towards dog body language cues. In doing so, clients learn to adjust their approach and the dog’s environment to keep their canine calm and content and avoid needlessly exposing their dog to emotionally upsetting or high-stress situations
- Effectively partnering with veterinary professionals to help pets suffering from behavioral issues, such as implementing aspects of a behavior modification plan that’s guided by the pet’s veterinarian or veterinary behaviorist
- Helping clients meet their dog’s individual and species-specific needs in ways that allow the dog freedom to still “be a dog”, while doing so in a way that fits realistically into life the dog shares with their human family



Nearby R+ Training

Looking for a trainer? We can help! Check out our website to see what training classes we have available.

www.naperhumane.org/training-classes

You are also free to call us at

(630) 420 - 8989, extension 1009

...or email our trainers at

aolson@naperhumane.org

bcerrillos@naperhumane.org

If we don't have the training classes or services you are looking for, we know who does! Ask us for a reference list of recommended trainers in the area!

We *only* advocate for the use of positive reinforcement-based training methods and facilities. As per statements from the ASPCA, AVMA, AAHA, and other behavior organizations, the use of punishment in training animals is highly discouraged, not backed by science, and often dangerous and counter-productive. Please inquire for more information!

Does My Dog Know the Difference Between Right and Wrong?

There are many myths about dogs but I think one of the most common is that dogs know when they have done something “wrong” and show guilt when they are confronted about a misdeed that happened in the past.



By Kelley Bollen

Believe it or not, dogs don't learn the concept of “right and wrong.” Humans can absolutely learn and understand when they have done something wrong because humans have a moral code of conduct. Our morals dictate how we behave in certain situations. Our morals are what prevent us from stealing from stores or punching someone in the face during an argument. We know these things are wrong based on our learned moral code.

Dogs, however, do not have morals so they really can't understand or learn that a behavior is wrong. What dogs learn is a bit simpler – they learn whether their behavior is “safe” to perform or “unsafe.” A dog can learn that it is safe to get on the couch when no one is home, but unsafe when someone is there and yells at him to get off. A dog can learn it is safe to rummage in the garbage when alone but unsafe when you are home to get upset at her for doing so.

You also want to keep in mind that dogs repeat behaviors that are rewarding. When a dog gets on the couch, the reward is a soft comfy resting place. When a dog gets into the trash, the reward is the yummy food bits that she finds to eat. If a behavior is rewarding to the dog, the dog will do that behavior again.

Punishing a dog after the fact doesn't work. If you don't punish your dog while she is doing the unacceptable or undesirable behavior, she will not connect that punishment with the behavior. In order to teach your dog that the behavior is “unsafe,” you must catch her in the act. If you come home from work and discover that your dog has done something naughty (gotten into the trash, tore up a pillow, etc.) punishing her then, hours after she actually did it, will teach her only that you are unpredictably unpleasant – sometimes when you come home you are nice and sometimes you yell.

The other element that confuses us about dog behavior is the concept of guilt. Simply put – dogs are incapable of feeling the emotion of guilt. Guilt is an emotion that humans experience that is tied to our morals. We feel guilty when we know we have done something wrong. People think that their dog is showing guilt when they see her lower her head or body, pull her ears back, tuck her tail and look away with squinty eyes while you are punishing her. But actually these are postures that dogs exhibit when they are anxious or scared. Essentially your dog is unsure of why you are yelling and a bit frightened by your behavior.

It is sometimes hard for humans to understand dog behavior because we often interpret things in human terms. But dogs behave, learn and respond like dogs, not like people. Dogs are wonderful companions who love us unconditionally and the more we learn about and understand their behavior, the richer that relationship will be.

Kelley Bollen, MS, CABC is a Certified Animal Behavior Consultant with a master's degree in Animal Behavior who has worked in the field of companion animal behavior for 20 years. As a shelter behavior specialist, Kelley consults with animal shelters in the design and implementation of comprehensive behavior programs to address the behavioral health of the shelter animals.



FEAR FREE SHELTER PROGRAM

The Power of Cookies

General tips

- ✓ Food is by far the best and easiest reward we can use for most dogs and cats!
- ✓ Always have a variety of treats available because animals have different preferences.
- ✓ Experiment to figure out which treats hold a particular animal's interest. Those that they really LOVE will be your high-value treats for that animal.
- ✓ For animals experiencing a high level of FAS, extra special treats are often needed in order to overcome their negative emotions.
- ✓ Keep a pouch to carry treats in while you are working: a fanny pack, carpenter's apron, or a treat bag (available at pet stores and online). Pants or a scrub top with large pockets can work, too.

Treat suggestions for dogs

- Slices of hot dog or string cheese (high value!)
- Cheese balls, popcorn, or Cheerios cereal (great for tossing)
- Pup-Peroni treats (easy to break into small pieces and do not crumble)
- Tiny dog biscuits such as Milk Bone Minis or other hard treats
- Freeze-dried liver

Treat suggestions for cats

- Canned tuna or chicken (high value!)
- Canned cat food such as Fancy Feast or Meow Mix
- Pounce, Temptations, Friskies or similar treats
- Freeze-dried liver

Treat size and texture

- Choose soft treats that are easy to chew and swallow rapidly.
- Treats that break into small pieces without crumbling are ideal. Crumbs may cause the pet may focus on finding crumbs instead of YOU.
- Treats should be very small – the size of a pea or smaller for most dogs and cats. Pets view a larger treat as one treat. But, the same treat broken into 2 pieces will be perceived as 2 treats!

TRAINING SESSION LENGTH

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Many people new to training believe the longer you work with the pet, the better. But actually, it's just the opposite! Working in many short sessions is far more beneficial. Your pet will learn much faster, have more fun, and look forward to the next training session.

🐾 **Training is hard work!**

Even though positive training is fun, it is hard work for your pet. It's mentally stimulating and enriching (which is one reason why it's a great activity to do with him or her). But it is most effective when done in short chunks of time. If you train for too long, you risk frustrating and exhausting your dog. Just as many of us would prefer to listen to several short lectures (think TED talks) than one long one, it is much easier and more fun for pets to train in short sessions.

🐾 **How long is best?**

As a general guideline, three minutes is plenty long for most dogs. Dogs new to training should be given even shorter sessions. Puppies might only be able to train for 1 minute at a time. (Yes, really.) Although their little brains are quite capable of learning quickly, they have very short attention spans, so they need frequent breaks. Many dogs (especially experienced dogs) are capable of training for longer, but three minutes is a good guideline. It is always best to end with your dog wanting more, rather than working them to the point of fatigue or frustration.

🐾 **How do I keep track of time?**

There are a couple of options here. One is to set a timer for 2 to 3 minutes. When the timer goes off (perhaps put your phone on vibrate), your training session is over. Another option is to pre-count a set number of treats (say 10 to 20). Once the treats are gone, it's time to end your training session.

🐾 **End training sessions thoughtfully.**

Ending a fun training session abruptly (for example, simply because you've run out of treats or your timer went off) can feel very unfair to the pet. Always keep that in mind, and either toss him a few treats for free, offer a chew toy, play a quick game of fetch or tug, give him a belly rub if he enjoys that, invite him outside for a walk, or do something else he enjoys.

🐾 **When in doubt, shorter is better!**

While it's easy to ruin a good training session by training too long, it's almost impossible to have a training session that's too short. Some training sessions are just one repetition long. For example, if you're working on having the puppy not jump up on people who come through the door, a "training session" might consist of a friend coming to the door, greeting the puppy by scattering a handful of treats on the ground (therefore providing an alternative for the jumping up), and loving on the puppy a bit.

🐾 **What about cats?**

Generally speaking, most cats do better with shorter training sessions than dogs. As a general guide, cut training time in half for a cat. Especially if the cat is just starting out, it is not unusual for them to be "done" after 4 or 5 treats worth. They might even walk away from the training session to let you know they are done. Try to end before this happens. Also, be prepared for cats to perform behaviors more slowly and eat their treats more slowly than dogs, sometimes pausing in between repetitions.

A FULFILLED DOG (NOT A TIRED DOG) IS A HAPPY DOG:

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The well known saying, 'a tired dog is a happy dog,' falls short when it comes to explaining the needs of dogs. A dog's needs extend beyond lying on the couch or wandering in the backyard.

Instead, a more accurate statement, is 'a fulfilled dog, is a happy dog'. Fulfillment is largely about meeting key physical, social and exploratory needs, which enhances overall wellbeing and contributes to a happier, healthier canine. Fulfilling activity isn't measured in miles, speed, hours, or how tired the dog is at the end. Instead, it's about providing activities that engage the dog's mind and body in ways that they value.

Keep in mind that every dog's needs will be different, according to their unique personality and individual needs. Much like planning a weekly workout schedule, fulfilling activities can be planned out and fit into your dog's everyday routine. Consider integrating the following happy dog activities into their ongoing routine:

🐾 **Two to three exploration walks per day. These can be kept to a length of 5-25 minutes each, or what is safe and sustainable for the fitness level of your dog.**

- Take time and let your dog stop and smell the roses (or fire hydrant or bush). Dogs investigate the world through their nose.

🐾 **For dogs that love to be on the go, plan fun outings once or twice per week. This may include:**

- A 'fun' or 'happy' visit to your pet's Fear Free vet where their visit can be rewarded with treats for showing off their favorite tricks or simply for being cute!
- Venture to a park to allow for fun sniff and explore adventure at the end of a long leash.

🐾 **For dog-friendly canines who love to play with other pooches, satisfy their social needs by setting up doggy playdates with equally sociable canine friends. Or, sign your pup up for playtime at a carefully supervised doggy daycare or dog park.**

🐾 **Engaging games that get your dog moving:**

- Chase after a flirt pole toy. These toys mimic the movement of small animals, encouraging dogs to chase.
- Liven up a game of fetch by adding variety and zest to the game:
 - Use an irregularly shaped ball to keep your dog guessing where the ball will bounce
 - Try a different type of fetch toys such as rings or frisbees. Or, integrate larger toys, such as the Kong Kick toy to spice things up

• Dogs naturally love to tug and it can be a great form of interactive play as long as it's structured to keep the game calm and controlled:

- Teach your dog to 'drop it' and release the toy on request for a treat reward when asked. Try doing this during your tug game as well to encourage the behavior.
- No teeth on skin or clothing or the game immediately ends while you walk away
- Only play tug with designated items, like a specific tug, rope or stuffed toy

🐾 **Invest in reward-based training to build better behavior and stimulate your dog's brain:**

- Teach your dog new tricks and brush up on their manners by fitting regular training sessions into your week. Sessions should be kept short at 2-10 minutes each.
- Dog new to training? Simply reinforce reward-worthy behaviors your dog already knows, such as sit, down, or going to their bed. Reward their success with treats or other things your dog enjoys, like a toss of a favorite toy.

🐾 **Ditch the food bowl and encourage dogs to 'work for' their meals and treats by using food puzzles. Puzzle toys offer a healthy mental and physical challenge as they work out ways to get at the contents.**

- Try out a variety of toys, from those the dog works out with their tongue and teeth to those they bop with their nose and paws.
- Or, offer a sniff and explore mealtime by hiding food in dog snuffle or activity mats that encourage your dog to sniff out treasures hidden within.
- Don't keep all toys out at once. Regularly rotate a dog's play toys and food puzzle toys to keep items interesting and stimulating.

For more training tips, please visit
www.fearfreehappyhomes.com

Training as Enrichment: Basic Skills

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Reward-based training improves the lives of dogs and their human families. You can “home school” your dog and improve their behavior by fitting the following training exercises into your everyday interactions with your dog.

1. THE NAME GAME

Dogs don't automatically turn all attention to their human at the sound of their name unless they've been taught their name is positively significant and worth attending to. This is especially true if the dog's name has been overused or associated with scary circumstances previously (such as “Fluffy, get over here now!” or “Rover, stop that!”) The name game teaches dogs to happily move their focus to their humans at the sound of their name by pairing their name with plentiful positives.

- To play the name game, simply say the dog's name once, following up immediately with a tasty treat. Some dogs might instead prefer their favorite toy or getting out the leash to signal it's walk time.
- Play the name game at random throughout the day and especially right before high-value activities such as walks or immediately prior to mealtime.
- If the dog doesn't immediately engage, use attention getters like a high-pitched happy voice, inviting body language, crinkle of a treat bag, opening of the treat bin, etc., then try again.

2. RED ROVER CANINE EDITION

Turn this childhood favorite into a ready recall in your real-life Rover. You can encourage a more reliable “come when called” through the use of happy excitement and high-value rewards.

- The game can be played with two or more players, each person armed with a stocked treat pouch or a handful of high-value treats.
- Play outdoors within a fenced yard or with the dog secured on a longline. Or play in larger open areas of the home where the dog has greater freedom to roam, such as a larger living room space or hallway.
- Start off with one person calling the dog to them, using the dog's name and a come when called cue such as “Otis, come!”, saying it only once to ensure it's significant to the dog. Follow up with inviting body language, like lowered body or turning slightly to the side, slightly patting the legs or the floor, and the accompaniment of verbal coaxes, like high-pitched calls and kissy sounds.
- If space allows, you can further the fun and build the dog's speedy response by adding in movement of the caller away from the dog once they're called. The person who calls can move away from the dog at a walking, jogging, or running pace. Once the dog catches up they can stop in place, rewarding Fido for the fast response.
- One person at a time can take turns calling the dog to them after the dog has successfully come to the prior caller and received their reward.
- Reinforce the dog's response of coming when they're called by rewarding with praise and immediate delivery of a high-value reward that's especially tasty, such as a tiny cubed piece of chicken breast or lean ham, before they're called back to the next person.
- Initially start with all participants close to the pooch as they're called. Gradually spread out to increase the distance the dog moves between people as they're called. You can increase the challenge as the dog demonstrates readiness to return to each person once called.
- Everyone but the current caller should largely ignore the dog and stand like a statue to minimize the distraction and increase the dog's interest in moving toward their caller.

Training as Enrichment: Walking & Moving

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Reward-based training can be used to teach new tricks, hone polite manners, provide brain challenges that leave the dog more satiated and settled by the activity's end, and boost the human-animal bond through enhanced communication and deepened trust.

1. TRAINING-CENTERED WALKS

Rather than being pulled relentlessly down the street, encourage closer connection with your canine by positively promoting your dog's moments of attention and loose leash walking.

- If the dog is straining at the end of the leash or pulling mightily to get to where they want to go, think of the tight leash as a red light and STOP. Wait firmly in place as long as the leash stays tight and the dog is focused on where they want to go, rather than on you.
- Wait for a brief moment of connection when the dog slightly orients his body or gaze in your direction and the leash goes slightly slack. That's the green light to move forward!
- When the dog keeps his leash loose (no pulling), sometimes use a cue such as "OK" or "Go Play!" just before giving the dog freedom to walk forward briskly or investigate an area of interest.

2. FOLLOW THE LEADER

To create a more in-sync walk, first teach your dog to willingly want to walk beside you, starting off leash and in a safe, low-distraction area, like inside your home.

- Encourage the dog to keep close as you walk by rewarding your dog with a treat for remaining on either your right or your left side.
- To initially get your dog into proper position at your side, with their body turned in the direction you're moving, you can either wait for your dog to naturally move toward you, or use a treat lure in your hand to gain the dog's initial interest and movement to you.
- If your dog is oriented on your opposite side, you can also do a 180-degree spin by pivoting in place, turning towards your dog, to eventually face the opposite way with your dog now aligned on your desired side. Then, using a treat lure, you can turn your dog to face the same way, if needed. Or, simply move out and forward, encouraging your dog to follow.
- To assist your dog in moving on the proper side, practice in a hallway or other narrow walkway. For instance, you can walk with the right side of your body close to the wall to encourage your dog to walk towards your left side.

Reward your dog any time he looks in your direction, orients his body next to you, or walks in step beside you with his shoulder aligned with your leg.

Keep your movements interesting by adding in frequent stops and turns that keep your dog's attention on where you might move next. Sometimes have the dog follow you while you walk backward – you can then pivot to his side.

Problem Behaviors

Please consult with a certified trainer before attempting behavior modification.

Some behaviors that dogs display may detriment their ability to live with humans or other dogs. While there are avenues to “fix” these behaviors, we need to keep in mind that these are all natural dog reactions to strong emotions. Dogs never exhibit behaviors to be spiteful or purposefully difficult. Your dog is “giving you a hard time” because *they are having a hard time*. It is up to us to help them cope with emotions and limitations that their living situations put on their behaviors. Behaviors that we call “problem” behaviors are an indicator that your dog is feeling unwell (physically or emotionally) or their needs are not being consistently met.

The 3 M's for Problem Behavior

(Motivation, management, and modification)

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1

Identify the motivation for the behavior

Goal: understand how the animal feels and why the behavior is occurring.

Interpret animal signaling in context – What is the animal feeling? What is the animal's underlying emotional state? Why is the behavior present? What is motivating it? What/how is the animal learning?

Assess physical & behavioral needs

- Physical needs – nourishment, shelter, exercise, rest, physical health... – Consider a medical exam to rule out physical health problems or pain that could be underlying behavior problems.
- Behavioral (social and emotional) needs – sense of control (behavioral options), social companionship, mental stimulation, physical activity, ability to cope with/escape stress, behavioral health...
- Are these being met? How can they be better met?
- Provide additional enrichment and daily activities including out of kennel time, social contact, physical exercise, play
- Ensure a structured consistent predictable environment

2

Manage the behavior

Goal: avoid allowing the animal to 'practice the behavior' because practice makes perfect.

Can the behavior be managed – how can the environment be manipulated to facilitate management?

- ID triggers and avoid them
- Housing change (examples: quieter location, larger enclosure, compatible roommate, foster care)
- Use tools (examples: bedding, toys, hiding boxes, treat buckets, visual barriers)
- Use medication (examples: trazodone, gabapentin, fluoxetine)

3

Modify the behavior

Goal: change the behavior. Can the behavior be modified – how?

Can positive emotional associations and positive responses be created and substituted for the negative/undesirable ones?

- Positive training
- Behavior modification

KEEP CALM AND MUZZLE ON:

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Why Muzzle Training?

- Calmly and cooperatively wearing a muzzle is an important life skill for dogs.
- Training dogs to wear a muzzle is important so they become accustomed to it and will accept it readily when needed or advised for a specific purpose.
- A basket muzzle is an important safety tool that reduces the risk of an injurious bite during veterinary and home care.

Muzzle Type Matters:

- Basket muzzles, typically made from hard or semi-flexible material, have multiple openings on the front and side that allow dogs to eat, drink, and pant.
- Flatter faced dogs such as Pugs and Bulldogs require specially designed muzzles. Air muzzles or Elizabethan collars are alternatives.

Step 1: Start by Creating a Happy Response to the Muzzle

- Present the muzzle at a distance that sparks curious interest, without startling the dog (2 to 8 feet away).
- Hold the muzzle stationary in the hand rather than moving it toward the dog.
- Create a happy expectation that when the muzzle is out, good things happen! Pair the muzzle's presence with plentiful treats and other enjoyable consequences such as play.
- During training, take short, 30- to 60-second breaks to pause and move the muzzle out of sight (behind your back, for instance) to teach your dog that the muzzle itself predicts positive outcomes. When the muzzle goes away, treats stop or play ends.
- Place the muzzle out of sight after training.

Step 2: Encourage Muzzle Approach

- Spread a soft treat on the outside of the muzzle edge, where the dog's nose and mouth will rest. Loose treats can also be threaded through the muzzle or kept cupped in the hand supporting the underside of the muzzle.
- Hold the muzzle stationary in your hand or place it between your knees to encourage your dog to approach the muzzle on her own terms (don't move the muzzle toward the dog).
- For dogs wary of a muzzle held in the hand, start with it placed on the ground. Clip a leash to the muzzle and keep it in hand to allow for easy retrieval and replenishing of treats. Treats can be placed in Hansel-and-Gretel-like fashion to encourage approach and investigation. Once the dog is comfortable, move to holding the muzzle.

Step 3: Teach the Dog to Place Her Nose Inside

- Build the dog's desire to willingly place and keep her nose inside the muzzle by delivering treats through muzzle openings intermittently as her nose remains inside. The muzzle will not be attached until the next step.
- Deliver treats fast and frequently in the beginning. Gradually space out treat delivery as the dog becomes comfortable. Space treats at 1- to 2-second intervals, then increase the time between intervals. Reward randomly as you build up duration.
- If the dog pulls the nose out of the muzzle, the flow of treats stops, restarting only when the nose again moves toward the muzzle opening.
- Once you master this procedure, have your dog walk parallel alongside you as you give treats through the muzzle.

Step 5: Muzzle Wearing

- As before, pair your dog's favorite activities or treats with wearing of the muzzle and build duration by rewarding quickly at the beginning. Gradually increase intervals between treats.
- Keep muzzle sessions short in the beginning, working up to longer periods over time.
- Avoid using the muzzle only during high stress events. Keep the muzzle positive by regularly pairing it with activities your dog enjoys.



Step 4: Muzzle Placement

- Once your dog is comfortable placing the nose inside the muzzle, accustom her to strap placement and to short periods of wearing the muzzle.
- Ensure that the dog is accustomed to and comfortable with the sounds of clips or buckles before fastening the muzzle. Practice by opening and closing them with the muzzle away from your dog's face, pairing the sounds with plentiful treats.
- Consider having a helper on hand. One person can hold the muzzle and deliver treats while the other focuses on strap placement and adjustment.
- As an alternative, have the straps pre-hooked, but loose, so the muzzle slips easily over the dog's head as the muzzle is held up and then adjusted behind the head with a free hand as the dog moves the nose into the muzzle.
- Initially, keep muzzle straps loose if the muzzle's weight is supported in the hand. Before letting go of the muzzle or moving to longer periods with straps placed, ensure that the muzzle is first properly fitted to the dog's face.
- Reward intermittently as needed while straps are placed or adjusted.

Notes:

- Emotional wellbeing and comfort are paramount during muzzle training and wearing. You must NEVER ignore stress signals and push through a situation with your dog if they are uncomfortable.
- If your dog appears fearful, avoidant or displays any signs of aggression, seek professional help, with your veterinary team, qualified veterinary or animal behaviorist, or Fear Free Animal Trainer.

For additional muzzle training resources, visit FearFreeHappyHomes.com and muzzleupproject.com

Leash Pulling and Reactivity

Dog-walking problems can range from simply pulling on leash to displaying wild exuberance when they see a person or another dog, to barking, growling or lunging at others. Dogs may be frustrated, fearful, anxious, or any combination of those. But, with a little training, management and some “quick fix” strategies, you can be on your way to helping your dog’s walks go more smoothly in no time!

Proactive Management



Limit exposure to overly exciting situations (such as festivals or crowded streets) that are beyond the dog’s ability to handle calmly. By doing so, you will keep your dog calm enough to learn new ways of behaving.



Distance is your friend when you see an approaching person or pup. Keep enough distance that your dog is able to remain calm, respond to cues, and eat treats.

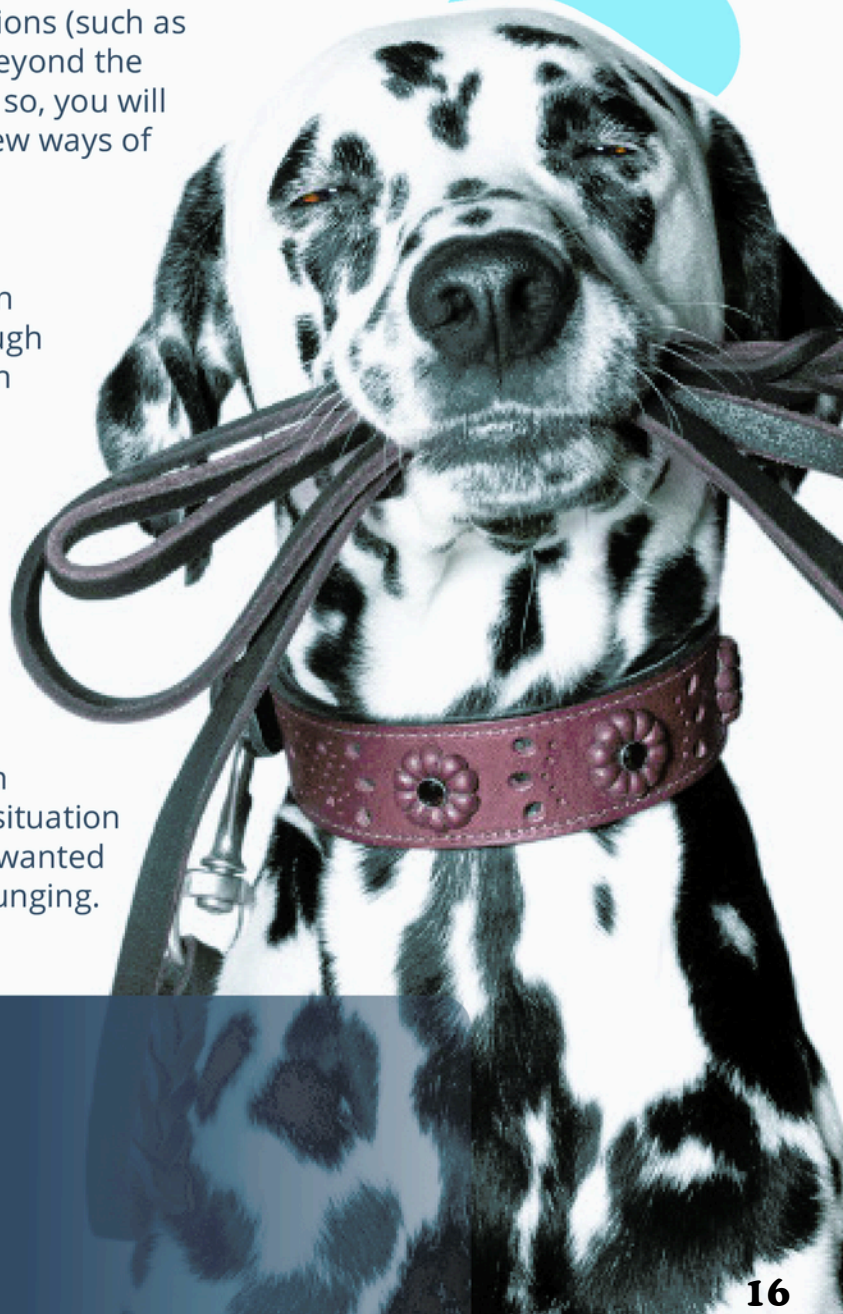


Walk during lower traffic times of day, in less-populated areas, or in areas with multiple route options so that you can quickly change direction.



Remove your dog from situations when needed, or reduce the intensity of the situation to prevent the dog from rehearsing unwanted behaviors such as barking, pulling, or lunging.

Set your dog up for success by carefully monitoring and managing the situations to which he is exposed.





Training Strategies

Help your dog by using humane, reward-based training strategies that are supported by the world's leading veterinary, behavior and training experts. Using punishment-based techniques can often make problems like aggression worse, and/or create new problem behaviors.

Directing the dog's attention to a training task and rewarding their participation is particularly useful because it creates calmer on-leash responses that can later take the place of undesirable ones and become the dog's default response.

Carry pea-sized, highly palatable treats in a treat pouch or pocket when out on walks to provide a valuable, convenient way to teach and build more desirable responses out on walks.

Quick fixes in a pinch

- Cross the street.
- Do a U-turn and move back in the opposite direction.
- Turn and move away in an alternative direction and route.
- Move off the main pathway until the human or dog distraction has passed by.
- Redirect: If your dog looks as if they are about to react, use an interrupter such as a treat, a cue for a known behavior, or something like a hand clap or a light tap/tickle on the back that doesn't scare the dog but simply breaks their focus.
- Use visual barriers (e.g. a building, a parked vehicle, a tree or bush) to reduce the intensity of the situation by blocking the dog's view of the passing person or dog. Then keep the dog busy by rewarding some cued behaviors or simply feeding a couple of treats.
- If your dog ever reacts, turn and move your dog far enough away they can calm down. Then, reassess and see if the situation was too close or see if specific triggers can be lessened the next time. Avoid harsh punishment, like leash jerks, as they only negatively affect the dog's emotions around other dogs.

How Do I Get My Dog to Stop Jumping on People?

Our dogs do not come to us knowing which behaviors we humans find acceptable and which we don't. In fact, sometimes we confuse dogs by rewarding a behavior that at other times we don't like. And there are even times when we inadvertently reward a behavior that we are trying to get rid of. Both things happen when it comes to jumping.



By Kelley Bollen

If you acquired your dog as a puppy, you probably reinforced jumping for a few weeks or months. When they are small and cute, we love when they jump up on us and we reward the behavior with our attention. But when the puppy starts to grow into a larger adolescent, we no longer like this jumping behavior, so we punish it. This is confusing for our dogs – something that has always worked to get our attention now makes us mad.

Another challenge is when other people reinforce a behavior that you are hoping to change in your dog. You could be working to teach your dog that jumping is unacceptable and then your brother visits and allows your dog to jump all over him because he loves it. Dogs just don't understand this kind of inconsistency. If a behavior is being reinforced, even randomly, it stays alive.

Another common challenge is that people inadvertently or unintentionally reinforce jumping even while they are trying to get rid of it. For example: when your dog jumps up on you and you push him off and say "NO!" you have actually reinforced the behavior with your attention. Sometimes even negative attention is rewarding to an animal seeking attention.

So, considering all those things that can be keeping jumping behavior alive, let's talk about how to get rid of the behavior once and for all. The first step is to realize that your dog is not jumping on you to be disobedient (and by no means to be dominant which is what some people will tell you). Dogs jump as a greeting and, if the behavior has ever been reinforced, they will continue to do it.

So, the solution is that you need to make jumping chase you away. When your dog jumps up on you, simply turn around and walk away. Don't touch, speak to or even look at your dog – just turn around and remove yourself from the area (going behind a closed door is very powerful in this situation).

Because your dog is hoping that the jumping behavior gets some attention from you, if it actually does the opposite and chases you away, she will soon realize that the behavior doesn't work to get her what she wants. This is because the consequence of a behavior dictates whether the dog will do it again. If a behavior is reinforced in any way, the dog will repeat it. But if the behavior makes the thing that the dog is seeking consistently disappear, then the behavior is not working. Simply put – dogs do what works for them.

If your dog jumps on visitors, you need to instruct your visitors to walk into the house and if the dog jumps on them, right around and leave, closing the door behind them. Then after a few

seconds, they can try to enter again. It might take your dog several entries to realize that his jumping behavior is chasing the person away, but most dogs will soon realize that this behavior is not working and on the third or fourth entry they will try something else – like sitting or just not jumping. *Then* the person is to greet the dog, rewarding the non-jumping behavior.

If you have a visitor that either won't or can't do the above exercise, you can tether your dog to a piece of furniture or a door knob with his leash when you are expecting this visitor so that he can't run to the door to jump on the person. Management of behavior is sometimes just as important as training because the point is to not allow the dog to perform the behavior that she could potentially receive reinforcement for performing. If you are on a walk and someone wants to say hi to your dog and you don't want to ask this stranger to help you train your dog, simply step on her leash so that she is unable to jump up when the person comes over.

Stopping jumping behavior can be very simple but the key is that you must be consistent, and the same response must come from everyone the dog encounters. Only then will the behavior no longer work for the dog.

Kelley Bollen, MS, CABC is a Certified Animal Behavior Consultant with a master's degree in Animal Behavior who has worked in the field of companion animal behavior for 20 years. As a shelter behavior specialist, Kelley consults with animal shelters in the design and implementation of comprehensive behavior programs to address the behavioral health of the shelter animals.



Preventing Separation Anxiety

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A dog with separation anxiety shows distress when separated from family members. We don't know exactly what causes separation anxiety; some dogs may be genetically predisposed, or it may be a learned behavior or a combination of both.

Tips to help prevent separation anxiety

- Meet your dog's physical, social, and exploratory needs each day through routine, scheduled activities such as play, positive reinforcement training, leashed walks, & environmental enrichment.
 - See our DIY Dog Enrichment videos on fearfreehappyhomes.com for some ideas.
- Teach your dog independence and to be comfortable being left alone or separated from you by a baby gate or door.
- If you are home with your dog for most of the day, make sure you ignore him sometimes and do not make a constant fuss over him. Constant attention when you are home makes it harder for him when you leave.
- Schedule alone time for your dog each day while you go for a walk, pick up groceries, take a short drive, or take a shower.
- Offer your dog a food puzzle toy when you leave to give him something fun to do. Use caution in multiple pet households as some dogs will fight over a food toy.
- Use calming dog pheromones (such as Adaptil) sprayed onto bedding or in a plug-in diffuser and play calming music such as classical or species-specific music at times throughout the day and when you leave the home.
- Catch your dog being calm and when the dog is ignoring you, reward him with calm and pleasant attention.
- Make your arrivals and departures calm and no big deal. Do not make a big fuss over your dog or be overly emotional when you leave the house or when you first arrive home.

If you suspect your dog already has separation anxiety

- Clinical signs often fall into one or all of three categories: excessive vocalization, destructive chewing/scratching, or inappropriate elimination.
- Have your dog evaluated by your veterinarian ASAP. Your veterinarian will ask about the history of the behavior and may perform diagnostic tests before making a behavioral diagnosis.
- Video your dog as you prepare to depart from the home and when left home alone or separated from you. This can help your veterinarian.
- For more on how to identify and alleviate separation anxiety, watch our video series on Canine Separation Anxiety on fearfreehappyhomes.com.

Written by Kenneth Martin DVM, DACVB
and
Debbie Martin, LVT, VTS (Behavior)



My dog cannot be left home alone!



Separation anxiety (SA) is one of the most common behavioral problems reported in dogs. It can even happen when the owner is home, but the dog is unable to easily reach him or her.

With patience, the following steps can make it easier to soothe an anxious pup.

Dogs with SA experience distress when home alone or when “virtually” separated (i.e. you are still home, but your dog can’t reach you). Common signs include household destruction, escape attempts, drooling, shaking/trembling, vocalization (whining, howling, or barking), house soiling or vomiting.

Who is affected by it? Any dog can show signs of separation anxiety but most at risk are those like shelter dogs, that may be left abruptly without a chance to acclimate. Separation anxiety is just as common in multi-dog households as in single dog homes.

How do you know if your dog has separation anxiety? Consult your veterinarian about signs you are noticing. Use a webcam to watch for signs of stress while you are away (panting, whining, scratching, inability to rest). You can then share the video to aid in the diagnosis. Your veterinarian will want to rule out any medical causes for the behaviors before a diagnosis of separation anxiety is made. Your veterinarian may also recommend some lab work if medications are needed.

How is separation anxiety treated? Anxiety interferes with learning, so treatment usually includes both medication and behavior modification. *There is no place for punishing a dog with separation anxiety.* Punishment-based training creates more anxiety and fear in anxious dogs and often exacerbate separation-related behaviors.

There are a variety of medications that are available to help manage separation anxiety and the selection will depend on the severity of the problem in addition to any other anxiety or behavioral issues your dog may have.

Behavior modification can teach your dog to feel secure in your absence. The process introduces very short

departures that are gradually lengthened at a pace dependent on the dog’s success. Putting the dog in a crate often exacerbates the problem, and many dogs do better when they are not so closely confined. Providing a food toy such as a stuffed Kong in all practice sessions can prepare the dog to relax when alone.

Dogs are social creatures who need physical exercise. When these needs are met, there is trust, and if separation is introduced gradually enough, most dogs can be left alone without anxiety.

Signs of distress can begin to occur earlier, in response to cues that suggest you are leaving such as putting on your coat or shoes, or grabbing your keys.

Dogs that have separation anxiety are more likely to experience additional behavioral disorders, such as noise or thunderstorm phobias, so it is important to identify all behavior problems. If multiple behavioral disorders are present, or your dog’s separation anxiety is severe, your veterinarian may recommend a visit to a veterinary behavior specialist, who can create a detailed treatment plan specifically suited to your dog.

Don’t wait! Seek help early so your dog does not suffer. For help with an anxious dog, talk to your veterinarian or **FIND A VETERINARY BEHAVIORIST** [here](https://dacvb.org).

Dealing with Resource Guarding in the Moment

What It Is

Resource guarding refers to a pet perceiving a threat to a resource they value and displaying behaviors designed to keep others, such as another pet or a person, away from that resource. Some of these behaviors might include the animal stiffening or hovering over the resource as another approaches, moving their body or head in between the resource and the perceived threat, freezing, suddenly slowing or stopping eating, or eating more vigorously. More overt warning signs can include a hard, direct stare, a lip curl, growl, bark, air snap, or a lunge. A dog might progress to a nip or bite if the perceived threat comes too close to the resource.

This handout is intended as a way to resolve a resource-guarding situation “in the moment” and minimize risks and potential injuries to people and pets. It is in no way comprehensive and should not be viewed as a “treatment” for resource guarding. If you observe resource guarding, advise the client to seek help from a qualified professional, such as a veterinary behaviorist or the pet’s vet working in combination with a reward-based trainer.

Multiple animals

- For multiple animals, it’s important to reduce mealtime competition by feeding the animals in visually and physically separated areas; keeping animals separated in their own spaces (or directly and carefully supervised for those animals who are not comfortable with being left alone) for the duration of the meal. It’s best to wait to reintegrate the animals until after all food and food-dispensing items are empty and picked up.
- For a dog that becomes upset when a housemate dog receives a valued resource like treats or attention, add structure and predictability to the interactions. For example, ask each dog to do simple behaviors such as a sit and offer eye contact with the handler. This helps provide a sense of ‘fairness’ and help ease any sense of competition and threat.
- After feeding the animals, consider preventing the dogs from rushing up into the space where the other dog was previously eating, as this could appear threatening and cause the other dog to react defensively. One way to do this is by doing an activity immediately after mealtime that happily redirects the animals (such as a potty break, short walk, or moving to the living room area to relax together).
- Ideally dogs can share a living space with plentiful toys among them. However, especially valuable toys may need to be picked up and either kept away unless the dog is in their own safe space and separate from the other animals.
- If a housemate dog is approaching a dog known to guard food/objects who is chewing on something of high value, interrupt and redirect the approaching dog. For instance, say the dog’s name, using a quiet clap or kissing noise that can then be followed up with other actions that move the animal to a different area.

Managing Resource Guarding

- Identify ahead of time any potential issues that may provoke stress or aggressive behavior, including mealtime, treasured toys, or chews. This helps pet sitters be all the more prepared by keeping potential items of value under close supervision.
- For a dog who is known to guard food, bones, or chews, always give him plenty of space to eat or chew. Never go near, touch, or pick up his food bowl or chew while he is consuming it. Wait until he has either finished it or abandoned it and moved completely out of the area.
- For a dog who resource guards areas such as the bed, it's best to give the dog an alternative sleeping area, such as their safe space and to avoid co-sleeping. Never force the dog off the bed, couch, or other area they are guarding. Instead, if it is necessary to move them, entice them off with a high-value treat by tossing it away from the bed or couch or if that is not a safe option, use another distraction to prompt the pet to move (see distraction tips in Quick Stop Tips).
- If you do need to take something from a resource-guarding animal (for example, something that is dangerous for them), it's important to replace it with something the animal finds even more valuable. This reduces the animal's perception of there being a threat to their resource. If the animal is chewing on something dangerous, a handful of high-value meaty food treats might be required to direct his attention away from the dangerous item. Do this by tossing the treats, keeping your hands well away from the animal's mouth, in the hopes that he lets go of the dangerous item to retrieve the tossed treats.
- Do not do this in a multiple-pet household if the food might be a resource that could be guarded or cause a fight.
- For serious guarders, it is better to get them out of the area completely before attempting to approach the item. Place them in another room or safe confinement area. If they see you pick up the item while they are eating the treats, they might lunge toward you.
- Generally speaking, to help a dog who is resource guarding, you should never just take the resource away from him. Instead, add positive outcomes to instill a happy, joyful response, rather than a sense of scarcity or threat. This helps to change the animal's underlying emotion about people or other animals approaching while they eat or enjoy a valued possession, place, or person.

Quick-stop tips

- Use a distraction to get a dog to release, move away from, or lose interest in the item they have. This may include ringing the doorbell, opening the fridge, opening a door to go outside to a fenced yard, going to the garage, grabbing the keys like it's time to get in the car, getting the leash, putting on your shoes, or pretending there's someone at the door you're suddenly talking to. This can signal the start of another activity and allow enough of a distraction to lessen the dog's focus on the item they're guarding and allow for easier removal of the item as the dog is distracted.
- Toss a high-value treat or handful of treats away from the valued item to get the dog away from the item. Place the dog in another room or safe confinement area to allow you to remove it while the dog is away and not able to see you.

Offer referrals

- As with all behavior issues, seek help from a professional, such as a veterinary behaviorist or the pet's vet working in combination with a reward-based trainer.





The Canine Escape Artist

Escaping is a serious problem for both you and your dog—it can have tragic consequences. If your dog is running loose, he is in danger of being hit by a car, being injured in a fight with another dog, or being hurt in a number of other ways. Additionally, you are liable for any damage or injury your dog may cause and you may be required to pay a fine if he is picked up by an animal control agency. In order to resolve an escaping problem, you must determine not only how your dog is getting out, but also why he is escaping.

Why Dogs Escape

Social Isolation/Boredom

Your dog may be escaping because he is bored or lonely if:

- He is left alone for long periods of time without opportunities to interact with you.
- His environment is relatively barren, without playmates or toys.
- He is a puppy or adolescent (under three years old) and does not have other outlets for his energy.
- He is a particularly active type of dog (a herding or sporting breeds) who needs a “job” to be happy.
- The place he goes to when he escapes provides him with interaction and fun things to do. For example, he goes to play with a neighbor’s dog or to the local schoolyard to play with kids.

Recommendations

We recommend expanding your dog’s world and increasing his time with you in the following ways:

- Walk your dog daily.
- Teach your dog to fetch a ball or Frisbee and practice with him as often as possible.
- Teach your dog a few new tricks. Practice these tricks every day for five to ten minutes.
- Take a training class with your dog and practice daily what you have learned.
- Provide interesting toys to keep your dog busy when you are not home. You can also rotate the toys to keep them interesting.
- Keep your dog inside when you are unable to supervise him.
- If you work very long days, take your dog to a reputable doggie day care or ask a friend or neighbor to walk your dog.
- Include additional enrichment into your dog’s day, especially at mealtimes. This may include feeding out of a puzzle toy or slow feeder and/or other homemade enrichment items.

Roaming

Dogs become sexually mature at around six months of age. An intact dog is motivated by a strong, natural drive to seek out a mate. It can be very difficult to prevent an intact dog from escaping because their motivation to do so is very high.

Recommendations

- Have your male dog neutered. Studies show that neutering will decrease sexual roaming in about 90 percent of the cases. If, however, an intact male has established a pattern of escaping, he may continue to do so even after he's neutered, so it is important to have him neutered as soon as possible.
- Have your female dog spayed. If your intact female dog escapes your yard while she is in heat, there's a good chance she will get pregnant.

Fears and Phobias

Your dog may be escaping in response to something he is afraid of if he escapes when he is exposed to loud noises such as thunderstorms, firecrackers, or construction sounds.

Recommendations

- Identify what is frightening your dog and work on desensitizing him to it. Check with your veterinarian about giving your dog an anti-anxiety medication while you work on behavior modification if needed.
- Leave your dog indoors when he is likely to encounter the fear stimulus.
- Provide a safe place for your dog. Observe where he likes to go when he feels anxious, then allow access to that space, or create a similar space for him to use when the fear stimulus is present.

Separation Anxiety

Your dog may be escaping due to separation anxiety if:

- He escapes as soon as, or shortly after, you leave.
- He displays other behaviors that reflect a strong attachment to you, such as following you around, frantic greetings, or reacting anxiously to your preparations to leave.
- He remains near your home after he has escaped.
- He is damaging property or himself when escaping or attempting to escape.

Factors that may cause a separation anxiety problem:

- There has been a change in your family's schedule that has resulted in your dog being left alone more often.
- Your family has moved to a new house.
- There's been a death or loss of a family member or another family pet.
- Your dog has recently spent time at an animal shelter or boarding kennel.

Recommendations:

Separation anxiety can be resolved using counter-conditioning and desensitization techniques (see our handout "Separation Anxiety").

How Dogs Escape

Some dogs jump fences, but most actually climb them, using some part of the fence to push off from. A dog may also dig under the fence, chew through the fence, learn to open a gate, or use any combination of these methods to get out of the yard. Knowing how your dog gets out will help you to modify your yard. However, until you know why your dog wants to escape, and you can decrease his motivation for doing so, you will not be able to successfully resolve the problem.

Recommendations for Preventing Escape:

- For climbing/jumping dogs: Add an extension to your fence that tilts in toward the yard. The extension does not necessarily need to make the fence much higher, as long as it tilts inward at about a 45-degree angle.
- For digging dogs: Bury chicken wire at the base of your fence (with the sharp edges rolled inward), place large rocks at the base, or lay chain-link fencing on the ground.

What Not To Do

- Never punish your dog after he is already out of the yard. Punishing your dog after the fact will not eliminate the escaping behavior, but will only make him afraid to come to you.
- Never punish your dog if the escaping is a fear-related problem or is due to separation anxiety. Punishing fear-motivated behaviors will only make your dog more afraid, and thus make the problem worse.
- Chaining your dog should only be used as a last resort, and then only as a temporary measure until a more permanent solution can be found. Chaining your dog does not give him sufficient opportunity for exercise and can be dangerous if done improperly.