

Tips on Caring for Your New Dog



**Adopting a Shelter Pet is a
Noble and Responsible Gesture!**

**Please read these tips to learn how to keep your new pet
happy, healthy and well-behaved.**



Ventura County Animal Services
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"Changing the Face of Municipal Shelters"

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A Letter from Your Dog

Dear Mom and Dad,

Sometimes it is hard for me to be good. I really try, but you humans can be really confusing. I made a list of what I need to be a good dog. Please read it and don't get mad at me. I'm not perfect, but I love you.

A Dog's Needs

I need consistent rules. I really don't mind rules, in fact, knowing the rules and that you will be consistent and fair makes I feel more secure.

I need to know what you want me to do. I get so discouraged when all I hear is "NO!" from you. Please train me so I know what to do to stay out of trouble.

I need lots of exercise. You might think I am exercising when you put me out in the yard, but sometimes I just lay there and get bored. Please take me for a walk or throw my ball for me. Sometimes I need to run and play with other dogs. I like to use my nose to find things too.

I need to be with you. Please let me be in the house with you. I get so lonely that I dig or bark or jump the fence when I am outside alone too long.

My ancestors had a job to do to keep them busy. Maybe it was herding, or bringing back ducks, or killing rats. What is my job now? Everyone says they want a smart dog, but we smart dogs get bored! When I find things to amuse me and keep me busy, sometimes it makes you mad. Please find something for me to do.

If I growl, please take the time to figure out why. I might be hurting somewhere, or maybe the kids are playing too rough with me and I have to warn them.

I need a quiet place that is mine. Sometimes I just want to rest.

I need a way to release tensions and amuse myself. Chewing is one of my favorite activities, even after I'm grown up. Please give me safe chew toys so I don't make a mistake and make you mad. Please take me places with you and let me meet different people. If I stay at home all the time, the world seems like a scary place. And when I'm scared I might have to growl to make people go away.

I need to know where I stand. I really want you to be the boss, so I don't have to make all the decisions. I am happy to follow your rules, but please don't yell at me. Just be consistent so I can learn what to do.

Pay attention to me when I am being good, and praise me. If you ignore me too much, I will find ways to get your attention, even if it means you get upset!

Love (and muddy paw prints)

Rover



(As dictated to Pat Scott)

<http://www.k9webs.com/patscott/letter.htm>

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OPEN PAW'S GUIDE TO THE FIRST TWO WEEKS WITH YOUR NEW DOG*

Congratulations on the new addition to your family!

With a little work, some planning, and forethought, your new dog will be an effortless, well-behaved companion for years to come. It is important to recognize that first impressions are lasting ones and habits begin to develop from day one. Be sure to instill good manners and habits from the first day you bring your new puppy or dog home. Remember, good habits are as hard to break as bad ones.

If you follow these simple guidelines, your dog's transition into your home will be a piece of cake for both you and your new best friend.

1. Teach your new dog the rules of your house from the beginning. In the words of Dr. Ian Dunbar, "If you want your dog to follow the rules of the house, by all means do not keep them a secret." When your dog first gets home, he or she may be a little confused and unsure of the new living situation. Even though your home is undoubtedly comfortable, it is different than where your dog came from, and different can be stressful. It is important to remember dogs do not speak or comprehend language and will best understand your expectations through training and management. Training and management should begin the very moment your new dog arrives in your home.

Your instinct may be to give your new friend a few days to unwind and adjust before imposing rules and restrictions. While you may mean well, this delaying of training has the potential to be both frustrating and damaging. Right from the very first day, it is crucial to convey your expectations to the dog and to establish an errorless training system. If you do this, your dog will succeed in learning house rules right from the beginning. If you change the house rules a few days after your dog has arrived, he will not understand why things have changed. Your dog may have already formed new habits and will have a difficult time adjusting to yet another set of expectations. It is much more efficient to teach your dog everything you would like him or her to know from the outset.

2. Try not to overwhelm your new dog with too much activity during this initial adjustment period (individual dog's adjustment period will vary). It is very exciting to have a new dog. Of course you want to introduce her to all of your friends and family and of course you want to take your new pal everywhere! All this excitement however could be exceptionally stressful for your dog. Please keep in mind that even in the best of situations your dog's world was probably limited to a handful of environments and activities. It is best for your dog to spend the first couple of weeks quietly settling in and getting to know you with brief but very frequent outings to continue the socialization process. In the beginning, limit introductions to just a few visitors at a time. If your dog has time to become familiar with you and your home surroundings, she will be more confident when setting out on adventures beyond your immediate neighborhood. This does not mean to delay socializing your pup, please do! However try not to overwhelm your dog, especially if you have adopted a dog over five months of age.

3. Keep your new dog either safely confined with appropriate chew toys, or supervised at all times. This is the best way to keep your new friend (and house!) out of trouble when you are unable to monitor his actions. Your dog requires a dog-proof, safe place: a "doggie den"-the equivalent of a toddler's playpen- where he can rest and chew appropriate items in your absence. There are many options for your "doggie den," but a dog travel crate or small room in your house is ideal. However, you may also choose an outside kennel run. Initially when your dog is loose in the house or even in the yard you must be around to gently redirect your dog when he chooses an inappropriate activity. If you are vigilant about supervising our dog and showing him what you expect, your dog will learn to settle down quietly, to chew only appropriate chew toys and eventually to become trustworthy in your absence.

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FOLLOW THESE GUIDELINES FOR AT LEAST THE FIRST 2 WEEKS WITH YOUR NEW DOG. PLEASE REMEMBER MOST PUPPIES AND SOME ADULT DOGS WILL TAKE LONGER TO ADJUST SO BE PATIENT.

DO immediately show your dog to his/her appropriate toilet area.

DO take your dog to the designated toilet area once an hour, every hour, on leash (except overnight). Allow supervised free time only after he relieves himself in the appropriate area. If your dog does not go to the bathroom on one of these trips, confine him to his "doggie den" OR keep him on leash and supervised, until the next scheduled potty break.

DO confine your dog to a "doggie den" whenever you are physically (or mentally!) absent. Such as when you are at work, paying bills, making dinner, sleeping, etc.

DO throw away your dog food bowl! Instead, feed your dog out of a hollow Kong or other chew toy stuffed with kibble and snacks throughout the day, especially when she in her "doggie den" or when you are busy. Also use part of your dog's daily ration while on walks, during training or when meeting new people.

DO provide plenty of appropriate chew toys to keep your dog busy and prevent chewing "casualties" in your home and yard. Redirect any chewing "mistakes" by directing your dog to an acceptable alternative. This will also help establish an appropriate chewing habit for the lifetime of your dog.

DO introduce your dog to new people and other pets gradually so as not to overwhelm him. Use kibble and treats to help form a positive association to new people. Be sure he has access to his "den" in case he needs a break from all the activity.

DO enroll in a basic obedience class right away! This will help you to understand how to better communicate with your dog in a way she will understand.

DON'T allow your dog free run of the entire house right away, or else your new friend may learn all sorts of bad habits. First take the time to teach him good habits.

DON'T take your dog off-leash in public until you have successfully completed an obedience class and have built a strong positive relationship with him. Note that most areas have strict leash laws – please check your local ordinances.

For more information regarding training your dog please read Dr. Ian Dunbar's book "AFTER You Get Your Puppy".

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"Changing the Face of Municipal Shelters"

Introducing Your New Dog to Your Resident Dog

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Animals that live in groups, like dogs, establish a social structure within the group. Dogs also establish territories, which they may defend against intruders or rivals. This social and territorial nature affects their behavior when a new dog is introduced to their household.

Introduction Techniques

Choose a Neutral Location: Introduce the dogs in a neutral location so that your resident dog is less likely to view the newcomer as a territorial intruder. Each dog should be handled by a separate person. With both dogs on a leash, take them to an area with which neither is familiar, such as a park or a neighbor's yard. If you frequently walk your resident dog in a park near your house, she may view that park as her territory, so choose another site that's unfamiliar to her. You may bring your resident dog with you to the shelter and introducing the dogs before adopting the new dog.

Use Positive Reinforcement:

From the first meeting, you want both dogs to expect "good things" to happen when they're in each other's presence. Let them sniff each other, which is normal canine greeting behavior. Take the dogs for a walk and let them sniff and investigate each other at intervals.

Be Aware of Body Postures:

One body posture that indicates things are going well is a "play-bow." One dog will crouch with her front legs on the ground and her hind end in the air. This is an invitation to play that usually elicits friendly behavior from the other dog. Watch carefully for body postures; including hair standing up on the other dog's back, teeth-baring, deep growls, a stiff legged gait or a prolonged stare. If you see such postures, interrupt the interaction immediately by calmly and positively getting each dog interested in something else. For example, both handlers can call their dogs to them, have them sit or lie down and reward each with a treat. The dogs will become interested in the treats which will prevent the situation from escalating into aggression. Try letting the dogs interact again, but this time for a shorter time period and/or at a greater distance from each other.

Taking the Dogs Home:

When the dogs seem to be tolerating each other's presence without fearful or aggressive responses, and the investigative greeting behaviors have tapered off, you can take them home. Take them in different vehicles. If you have more than one resident dog in your household, it may be best to introduce the resident dogs to the new dog one at a time. Two or more resident dogs may have a tendency to "gang up" on the newcomer.

Introducing Puppies to Adult Dogs

Puppies usually pester adult dogs unmercifully. Before the age of four months, puppies may not recognize subtle body postures from adult dogs signaling that they've had enough. Well socialized adult dogs with good temperaments may set limits with puppies with a growl or snarl. These behaviors are normal and should be allowed. Adult dogs that aren't well socialized, or that have a history of fighting with other dogs, may attempt to set limits with more aggressive behaviors, such as biting, which could

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harm the puppy. For this reason, a puppy shouldn't be left alone with an adult dog until you're confident the puppy isn't in any danger. Be sure to give the adult dog some quiet time away from the puppy, and perhaps, some individual attention as described above.

***When to Get Help**

If the introduction of a new dog to a household doesn't go smoothly, immediately contact a professional animal behaviorist or knowledgeable dog trainer qualified to deal with behavior issues. Dogs can be severely injured in fights and people can be bitten accidentally in the midst of a dogfight. The longer the problem continues, the harder it can be to resolve. Conflicts between dogs in the same family can often be resolved with professional help. Punishment won't work and could make things worse. Above all, keep the dogs separated and everyone safe until professional help arrives.

****(See Pages 26 and 27 of this packet for behavior/training resources.)***

New Dog to Resident Dog Integration

by Boxer Rescue L.A.

You have decided to add another dog to your family. One very basic question is "Does your resident dog want another dog in the home?" If they are social and get along with others, then two dogs can be endless fun and they keep each other company when you are not home.

The first step is selecting the right dog as a new companion dog. The Adoption Counselors will assist you in making your selection. With any new dog you bring into your home with an existing dog, there are rules to follow for success.

1. **Prepare your home in advance** for the arrival of a new dog by removing any trigger items such as toys, food bowls, food items and bones.
2. When you arrive home take the dogs on a short walk to calm them from the car ride and to reinforce their bond. Walking is a very good way to create a positive bond.
3. After the short walk, take the dogs into the back yard and with **leashes on but dropped**, let them roam free together. Do not hover or try to get them excited. Just let them sniff around the area and each other. Should there be a problem the leashes make it easy to separate them.
4. When it's time to go into the house, the new dog should be on a leash for two reasons. First to prevent any accidents until you are certain they are housebroken. More importantly, the new dog needs to learn the house rules and should not be allowed to start have free reign from day one.
5. Having the new dog observe from a crate or on a leash is the best way for them to safely get used to the sights and sounds of their new home. You never want to give a new dog too much too soon. They are much happier and more relaxed if from the start they realize that you are in control of much of the decision-making.
6. Walk the dogs together as often as possible. In the outside world they begin to look to each other as trusted and respected family members.
7. **Feed the dogs separately.** You do not want food to create a situation that is a negative impact on the two dogs bonding. Feed one inside and the other outside or in crates or separate rooms, whatever works best for your situation. This may not be forever, but you must remove food triggers until you know the two dogs very well.
8. Do not instigate or excite with toys at first as possessions may trigger aggression. Again, this may not be forever, but a level playing field is important in the beginning.
9. Do not shower either dog with affection as affection may be a trigger of possession. You can slowly integrate affection back into the picture with both dogs. Be aware of body language to avoid a negative encounter between the dogs.
10. Learn to be a benevolent and consistent leader to your dog. Dogs that do not feel the need to control are most often happy, relaxed and well-adjusted dogs.
11. **Above all, give it time.** Having another dog in the house is new for everyone. Sometimes it's as if the new dog has been there forever, and other times it take some time and some (again, benevolent) leadership skills to settle them into a friendship. Be sure to call for behavior advice if you need help.

**(See Pages 26 and 27 of this packet for behavior/training resources.)*



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Introducing Your New Dog to Your Resident Cat

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It's important to have realistic expectations when introducing a new pet to a resident pet. Some pets are more social than others. For example, an eight-year-old dog that has never been around other animals may never learn to share his/her territory (or his/her people) with other pets in the household. However, an eight-week-old puppy separated from his/her mom and littermates for the first time, might prefer to have a cat or dog companion. If you are introducing your new dog to a resident cat, it is important to know that cats are territorial and need to be introduced to other animals very slowly in order to give them time to get used to each other before there is a face-to-face confrontation. Slow introductions help prevent fearful and aggressive problems from developing. PLEASE NOTE: When you introduce pets to each other, one of them may send "play" signals which can be misinterpreted by the other pet. If those signals are interpreted as aggression by one animal, then you should handle the situation as "aggressive."

Confinement

If you are introducing your new dog to a resident cat, confine your cat to one medium-sized room with her litter box, food, water and a bed. Feed your resident pets and the newcomer on each side of the door to this room. This will help all of them to associate something enjoyable (eating!) with each other's smells. Don't put the food so close to the door that the animals are too upset by each other's presence to eat. Gradually move the dishes closer to the door until your pets can eat calmly, directly on either side of the door. Next, use two doorstops to prop open the door just enough to allow the animals to see each other, and repeat the whole process.

Swap Scents

Switch sleeping blankets or beds between your new dog and your resident animals so they have a chance to become accustomed to each other's scent. Rub a towel on one animal and put it underneath the food dish of another animal. You should do this with each animal in the house.

Switch Living Areas

Give your new dog free time in the cat's room(s) while confining your other animals. This switch provides another way for the animals to experience each other's scents without a face-to-face meeting. It also allows the newcomer to become familiar with his/her new surroundings without being frightened by the other animals.

Avoid Fearful and Aggressive Meetings

Avoid any interactions between your pets that result in either fearful or aggressive behavior. If these responses are allowed to become a habit, they can be difficult to change. It's better to introduce your pets to each other so gradually that neither animal becomes afraid or aggressive. You can expect mild forms of these behaviors, but don't give them the opportunity to intensify. If either animal becomes

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fearful or aggressive, separate them, and start over with the introduction process in a series of very small, gradual steps, as outlined above.

Precautions

If one of your pets has a medical problem or is injured, this could stall the introduction process. Check with your veterinarian to be sure that all of your pets are healthy. You'll also want to have at least one litter box per cat, and you'll probably need to clean all of the litter boxes more frequently. Make sure that none of the cats are being "ambushed" by another while trying to use the litter box. Try to keep your resident pets' schedule as close as possible to what it was before the newcomer's appearance. Cats can make lots of noise, pull each other's hair, and roll around quite dramatically without either cat being injured. If small spats do occur between your cats, you shouldn't attempt to intervene directly to separate the cats. Instead, make a loud noise, throw a pillow, or use a squirt bottle with water and vinegar to separate the cats. Give them a chance to calm down before re-introducing them to each other. Be sure each cat has a safe hiding place.

More on Dog-to-Cat Introductions

Dogs can kill a cat very easily, even if they're only playing. All it takes is one shake and the cat's neck can break. Some dogs have such a high prey drive they should never be left alone with a cat. Dogs usually want to chase and play with cats, and cats usually become afraid and defensive. Use the techniques aforementioned to begin introducing your new cat to your resident dog. In addition:

Practice Obedience

If your dog doesn't already know the commands "sit," "down," "come" and "stay," you should begin working on them. Small pieces of food will increase your dog's motivation to perform, which will be necessary in the presence of such a strong distraction as a new cat. Even if your dog already knows these commands, work with obeying commands in return for a tidbit.

Controlled Meeting

After your new dog and resident cat have become comfortable eating on opposite sides of the door, and have been exposed to each other's scents as described above, you can attempt a face-to-face introduction in a controlled manner. Put your dog's leash on, and using treats, have him either sit or lie down and stay. Have another family member or friend enter the room and quietly sit down next to your cat, but don't have them physically restrain her. Have this person offer your cat some special pieces of food or catnip. At first, the cat and the dog should be on opposite sides of the room. Lots of short visits are better than a few long visits. Don't drag out the visit so long that the dog becomes uncontrollable. Repeat this step several times until both the cat and dog are tolerating each other's presence without fear, aggression or other undesirable behavior.

Let Your Cat Go

Next, allow your cat freedom to explore your dog at her own pace, with the dog still on-leash and in a "down-stay." Meanwhile, keep giving your dog treats and praise for his calm behavior. If your dog gets up from his "stay" position, he should be repositioned with a treat lure, and praised and rewarded for obeying the "stay" command. If your cat runs away or becomes aggressive, you're progressing too fast. Go back to the previous introduction steps. If you cannot get a handle on your dog's behavior, a good quality training class can put you back in control of your dog so that your cat can enjoy her home too! Do not allow your dog to chase ANY small animals. That will only undermine training your dog to leave your cat alone.

Positive Reinforcement

Although your dog must be taught that chasing or being rough with your cat is unacceptable behavior, he must also be taught how to behave appropriately, and be rewarded for doing so, such as sitting, coming when called, or lying down in return for a treat. If your dog is always punished when your cat is around, and never has "good things" happen in the cat's presence, your dog may redirect aggression toward the cat. Allow your cat to approach your dog. By all means, allow your cat to walk up and investigate your dog but watch carefully so that your dog does not attempt to chase your cat. By allowing this to happen, your cat will gain trust in you and your dog that nothing bad is going to

happen to her. Your cat will begin to realize that sharing a house with a dog (who is not allowed to approach her) isn't so bad at all! Give your dog an outlet for his chase behavior. Teach him to chase a ball, Frisbee, tether ball or squeaky toy rather than your cat. Regular exercise can help your dog remain calm around your cat. *Continued...*

Directly Supervise All Interactions between Your Dog and Cat

You may want to keep your dog on-leash and with you whenever your cat is free in the house during the introduction process. Be sure that your cat has an escape route and a place to hide. Keep your dog and cat separated when you aren't home until you're certain your cat will be safe.

Precautions

Dogs like to eat cat food. Eating cat food can cause kidney and liver problems in dogs because the protein and fat content in cat food is too high for dogs to digest appropriately. You should keep the cat food out of your dog's reach (in a closet or on a high shelf). Eating cat feces is also a relatively common behavior in dogs. Although there are no health hazards to your dog, it's probably distasteful to you. It's also upsetting to your cat to have such an important object "invaded." Unfortunately, attempts to keep your dog out of the litter box by "booby trapping" it will also keep your cat away as well. Punishment after the fact will not change your dog's behavior. The best solution is to place the litter box where your dog can't access it, for example: behind a baby gate; in a closet with the door anchored open from both sides and just wide enough for your cat; or inside a tall, topless cardboard box with easy access for your cat.

A Word about Kittens and Puppies

Because they're so much smaller, kittens are in more danger of being injured, of being killed by a young energetic dog, or by a predatory dog. A kitten will need to be kept separate from an especially energetic dog until she is fully-grown, and even then she should never be left alone with the dog. Usually, a well-socialized cat will be able to keep a puppy in its place, but some cats don't have enough confidence to do this. If you have an especially shy cat, you might need to keep her separated from your puppy until he matures enough to have more self-control.

Introducing Kids and Dogs

By Massachusetts SPCA

You envision your new dog romping in the back yard with the kids, playing fetch with your son, sleeping at the foot of your daughter's bed. How can you successfully introduce a new dog into your household when you have children?

Just as children need to be taught how to be well-behaved around other people, they need to be taught to be well-behaved and respectful around animals. They need to learn what kinds of games are appropriate, how to touch the dog properly, how to interpret the dog's body language and when the dog is not to be disturbed. When they're old enough to understand, kids should also be involved in the dog training process.

Introductions - Step by Step

Careful handling of introductions will set the scene for future interactions and help your dog settle into family life.

Even if used to children in the past, a new dog will not be used to yours and will need time to get to know them. Start with the dog on a leash and be observant of how the dog is reacting. Help prevent the dog from feeling overwhelmed by insisting the dog approach the children rather than the other way round. Children should be standing still or sitting when the dog is first introduced. They can encourage the dog to come to them by sitting down and offering a treat. Have the child toss small treats on the ground as the dog approaches. Ask them not to stare as this can be threatening. Rather they should try and look at the dog's feet.

Tell the child to not look directly into the dog's eyes or reach toward, lean over, or hug the dog. Dogs do not always appreciate being hugged or cuddled by new or familiar people. It is a great temptation for children to do this, especially if they have been used to doing it to a previous dog.

When the dog looks comfortable picking up the treats from the ground at the child's feet, have the child hold her hand at her side with a treat in her fist (knuckles up). She should not move her hand toward the dog. When the dog sniffs her hand, she can slowly open her fist and allow the dog to take the treat from her open palm. Repeat this over and over.

If the dog is fearful, DO NOT tighten up on the leash or require him to sit-stay. This may increase his fear because he cannot back away. Do not force scary interactions on the dog. You will need to go more slowly with your introductions. Continue to have the child offer treats from a sitting position and contact an experienced, positive-based trainer for dog behavior assistance. Following is the "What to Look for in a Dog Trainer" link:

www.msa2.saccounty.net/acr/Documents/WhatToLookForInDogTrainer.pdf

If the dog is showing aggressive behavior, separate the children and dog and contact an experienced, positive-based dog trainer/behavior expert for dog behavior assistance as well as the person or group from which you adopted the dog to discuss the matter.

If the dog is not fearful, but is boisterous and jumping up instead, require him to sit for a treat. A Gentle Leader head halter can help with boisterous dogs. Do not use physical punishment at any time. If the dog is jumping, have the child walk away and only return when he is sitting calmly. If you haven't already done so, or if you need a refresher course, please contact a positive based trainer:

When the dog is comfortable taking the treat from the child, she can gently scratch him under the chin as he does so. Never reach over his head. The child can then ask the dog to "sit" for a treat reward. Gradually introduce more interaction, like petting and stroking, if dog is doing well.

Continued...

Be a good parent to your children and your dog

Do not leave the dog and child unsupervised! Children should never, ever be left alone with any dog, no matter how reliable the dog has been before. A responsible adult needs to be on the scene **watching** the interactions between them to prevent any aggressive behavior by the dog and to keep the child from putting him or herself in danger. Telling the toddler to stay away from the dog isn't enough. Remember that young children don't recognize when they may be in trouble. It's up to the adult to keep them safe from the dog and to keep the dog safe from the children. If you can't be right there to handle whatever might come up, the dog should be put away out of reach of the kids. Crates and baby gates are excellent for children and for dogs when cannot supervise them appropriately.

Teach your child appropriate behavior around dogs. You need to teach your children that they cannot be impolite to the dog. They may not sit on the dog, pull on his ears, or bother him when he's eating or in his crate. You will need to teach your children to "Leave the dog alone" at times. You need to be the one who is always paying attention and be ready to step in and separate if necessary. Be sure to remove your child, gently but firmly, from the dog long before the dog has become irritated to the point of growling. If you are always there to manage your child's behavior around the dog, and vice versa, you will help build positive interactions and prevent negative ones.

Some dogs, such as Collies and German Shepherds, have a strong herding instinct and may nip at children's ankles, causing them to squeal and run away. This excites the dog, encouraging more of the same, so this type of behavior must be stopped at once or it can become a habit. Kids should stand perfectly still when the dog attempts to "herd" them and the dog will usually stop immediately.

Never tie a dog out in the yard. Children tend to tease tethered dogs without even realizing it, which can lead to aggressive behavior.

Be especially careful with older dogs and children. A dog with impaired vision or hearing can be startled by sudden approaches. An older dog who is in pain due to arthritis may not want to be touched on a particular part of the body. Explain the difficulties the dog is having to the children so they learn to approach more gently.

Successful relationships between kids and dogs require a large investment of time by the parent, but the rewards are great. Remember it's important to start off right with controlled and safe introductions. For the safety of both dog and child, appropriate supervision is always imperative.

If you have further questions, please don't hesitate to contact a positive-based canine behavior expert.

****(See Pages 26 and 27 of this packet for behavior/training resources.)***

*** This article was originally written and produced by the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and was reproduced with expressed written consent.*

http://mspca.convio.net/site/DocServer/introducing_kids_and_dogs-07_final.pdf?docID=1963



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Children and Dogs – Important Information for Parents

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Living with a pet can be beneficial to children. Pets can enhance a child's self-esteem, teach them responsibility and help them to learn empathy. However, children and dogs are not always going to automatically start off with a wonderful relationship. Parents must be willing to teach the dog and the child acceptable limits of behavior in order to make their interactions pleasant and safe.

Selecting a Dog

What age is best? Many people have a "warm fuzzy" image of a puppy and a child growing up together. If you have a young child and are thinking of adopting a puppy (less than one year old) there are a few things you need to consider.

- ❖ Time and energy: Puppies require a lot of time, patience, training and supervision. They also require socialization in order to become well-adjusted adult dogs. This means they need to be taken places and exposed to new things and new people. If you have a young child who already requires a lot of time, will you have enough time to care for a puppy?
- ❖ Safety: Puppies, because they're babies, are somewhat fragile creatures. A puppy may become frightened, or even injured, by a well-meaning, curious child who wants to constantly pick him up, hug him or explore his body by pulling on his tail or ears.
- ❖ Rough play: Puppies have sharp teeth and claws with which they may inadvertently injure a small child. Puppies also tend to jump up on small children and knock them down. All interactions between your child and puppy will need to be closely supervised in order to minimize the chances of either being injured.
- ❖ Advantages of getting an adult dog: Adult dogs require less time and attention once they've adjusted to your family and household routine, although you'll still need to spend time helping your new dog with the transition to his new home. You can better gauge how hardy and tolerant an adult dog will be of childish enthusiasm and you can work with your local animal shelter to adopt a dog with a history of getting along well with children. As a general rule, if your child is under six years old, it's best to adopt a dog that's over two years old.

Who Will Care For The Dog?

It's unrealistic to expect a child, regardless of age, to have sole responsibility for caring for a dog. Not only do dogs need basic things like food, water and shelter, they also need to be played with, exercised and trained on a consistent basis. Teaching a dog the rules of the house and helping him become a good companion is too overwhelming a task for a young child. While responsible teenagers may be up to the task, they may not be willing to spend an adequate amount of time with the dog, as their desire to be with their friends usually takes over at this age. If you're adopting a dog "for the kids," you must be prepared and willing to be the dog's primary caretaker.

Starting Off Right

Following are some guidelines to help you start off on the right foot. Remember, small children should never be left alone with a dog or puppy without adult supervision.

Holding:

- ❖ It's safest for both your child and puppy if your child is sitting down whenever he wants to hold the puppy. Puppies are squirmy and wiggly and may easily fall out of a young child's arms and be

Continued...

injured. If held insecurely, a puppy may become frightened and snap or scratch in response. After your child is sitting, you can place the puppy in his arms.

- ❖ Have your child offer the puppy a chew toy while he pets the puppy. When puppies are teething, they tend to chew on everything, including hands and arms, so having a chew toy handy will divert the puppy's teeth away from your child. An added benefit is that the puppy will come to associate pleasant consequences (getting a treat) with being held by your child.
- ❖ For larger dogs, have your child sit in your lap and let the dog approach both of you. This way you can control your child and not allow him to get "carried away" with pats that are too rough. You are also there to teach your new dog to treat your child gently.

Petting and giving affection: Children often want to hug dogs around the neck. Your dog may view this as a threatening gesture, rather than an affectionate one, and may react with a growl, snap or bite. You should teach your child to pet your dog from underneath the dog's chin, rather than hugging him or reaching over his head. You should also teach your child to avoid staring at, or looking directly into, your dog's eyes.

Giving Treats: Children tend to become somewhat fearful and anxious when a dog tries to take a treat from their hand. This causes them to jerk their hand away at the last second. The dog may then jump up or lunge to get the treat which may result in the child being knocked down. Have your child place the treat in an open palm, rather than holding it in his fingers. You may want to place a hand underneath your child's hand to help guide him.

Supervising Play: Children move with quick, jerky movements, have high-pitched voices and often run, rather than walk. All of these behaviors somewhat resemble the behavior of prey animals. Almost all of a dog's play behaviors are based on predatory behavior. Consequently, your dog may respond to your child's behavior by chasing him, nipping at his heels, jumping up at him or even trying to knock him down.

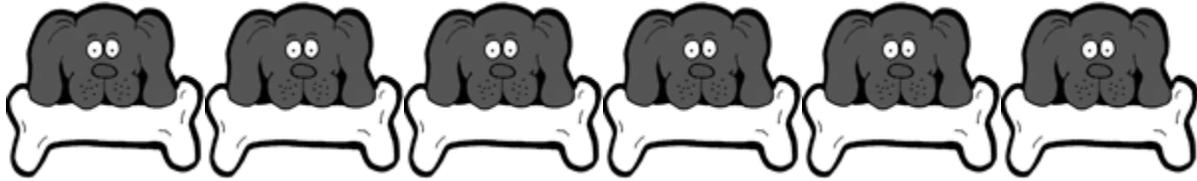
At first, your child may need to play quietly around your new dog until he becomes more comfortable and calm and your child has gained more control over the dog. Your dog must also learn that certain behaviors on his part are unacceptable, but he must also be taught what behaviors are the right ones. Our handout: "[Dealing with Normal Puppy Behavior: Nipping and Rough Play](#)" outlines procedures for discouraging rough play and encouraging appropriate play. However, most children under the age of ten are not capable of carrying out these procedures, so it's helpful to teach your dog a "leave it" command that you can use when play gets too rough. Taking an obedience class together is a good way to teach your dog to respond to commands.

An approach that is not helpful is to punish your dog for his behavior. If he learns that being around children always results in "bad things" happening to him, he may become defensive in their presence.

Possessions: Your dog won't know the difference between his toys and your child's toys until you teach him.

- ❖ Your child must take responsibility for keeping his playthings out of your dog's reach.
- ❖ If, and only if, you catch your dog chewing on something he shouldn't, interrupt the behavior with a loud noise, then give him an acceptable chew toy and praise him lavishly when he takes the toy in his mouth.
- ❖ Don't give your dog objects to play with such as old socks, old shoes or old children's toys that closely resemble items that are off-limits. They can't tell the difference!
- ❖ Dogs can be possessive about their food, toys and space. Although it's normal for a dog to growl or snap to protect these items, it's not acceptable. At the same time, children need to learn to respect their dog as a living creature who is not to be teased or purposefully hurt and who needs time to himself.

If your dog is growling or snapping at your child for any reason, the situation needs IMMEDIATE attention. Punishing your dog is likely to make matters worse. You may call Animal Services or contact a positive reinforcement trainer for more information. Also refer to pages 26 and 27 of this packet for behavior/training resources.



Pet Safety Tips for Kids

Created by Patty Letawsky

Get permission from the owner before you pet Rover.

Many dogs are very friendly, but some dogs are not. Make sure to ask the owners if their dog is friendly and if it is okay for you to pet the dog, and make sure to also ask your own parent or guardian before you pet the dog. And be sure to follow all of the safety tips!

To pet a puppy or a kitten, you must ask an adult for permission.

It is also important to ask an adult before petting puppies or kittens, especially when the mama dog or cat is present. Mothers of almost any animal are naturally protective of their babies.

Petting under the chin is where you begin.

After you receive permission to pet a dog, you should pet the dog under the chin area or on its chest so the dog can see where your hand is and what you are doing. Many dogs do not like to be petted on the top of the head or hugged by strangers. They might think you are trying to hurt them.

A dog may sniff your hand in order to understand.

The sense of smell of a dog is much, much greater than our own. Dogs use this sense of smell when greeting and getting to know newcomers. If a dog wants to smell you to get to know you, hold your hand still and let him sniff the back of your hand while keeping your fingers tucked in. This will keep your fingers out of the way as well as not threaten the dog.

If a dog has a bone, leave him alone. If a dog has a snack, keep back.

If a dog is eating or is chewing on a bone or other item, he/she might think you are going to take it away, which could cause the dog to protect what it has by growling, snapping or biting.

Respecting their space can save your face.

It is common sense to keep a respectable distance between a child's face and the teeth of a dog or a cat, even if it is the family pet.

If you run and shout, it can freak a dog out.

The way you behave can influence the way a dog behaves. If you scream, shout, run or swing your arms or feet around dogs, they are more likely to chase you, jump on you or attack you.

A shy dog will think you are the bomb if your behavior is calm.

Your behavior can influence the way any dog behaves, but shy or nervous dogs can be even more affected by rambunctious children. Being calm around a shy dog can make them feel less nervous and more secure.

Whether you are a girl or a boy, never tease or annoy.

If you are teasing or annoying a dog or a cat, they cannot tell you in words that they want you to stop; but they can tell you to stop by growling, snapping, biting or scratching.

Quiet and slow is the only way to go.

If you are scared of a dog, do not run or scream. It is safer to walk away slowly and quietly. As you calmly walk away, try not to stare into the eyes of the dog, or the dog might think you want to fight.



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"Changing the Face of Municipal Shelters"

Inside or Out? Making Your Dog Part of the Family

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Some dog owners believe that dogs, especially large ones, should be "outdoor only" pets. Most animal welfare organizations believe that dogs of all sizes are happier, healthier and safer when they can be indoors with their people the majority of the time. Dogs have a need to be social just like we do.

Exercise

Some people believe that dogs need to be outside so they can get plenty of exercise. The truth is that most dogs don't exercise when they're in a yard by themselves; they spend most of their time lying by the back door, waiting for "their people" to either let them in or come out and play with them. However, dogs do need exercise every day, so we recommend walking your dog or engaging him in a regular game of fetch!

Socialization

Dogs need to spend time with "their people" in order to learn their rules and how to get along with them. Dogs that spend most of their time alone or only in the company of other dogs may demonstrate fearful, aggressive or overactive behavior toward family members or strangers because they've never learned how to act around people.

Safety

Dogs that spend most of their time outdoors are at risk for a variety of reasons. They could escape from the yard and become lost; a disgruntled neighbor could throw poison over the fence or spray the dog with mace or pepper spray; or the dog could be stolen and possibly sold to a research facility or dog-fighting ring.

Behavior Problems

Dogs left alone in the yard for long periods of time often get bored, lonely and frustrated. As a result, they may dig or bark excessively. Most cities have noise ordinances that penalize owners of barking dogs. If a dog escapes the yard in search of interesting things to do, not only is he at risk of being injured by a car, but his owner is liable for any damage or harm that he might do.

Protection

Dogs that spend time with their owners and feel attached to them are more likely to be protective of "their family." Dogs that spend most of their time outdoors may be friendly to any stranger who pets or feeds them. Alternatively, some yard dogs may become overly territorial and feel the need to protect their territory even from family and friends. If a dog is hardly ever allowed to come indoors, it will be difficult for him to distinguish between family, friends and uninvited "guests."

Puppies

People who are away from home for eight to ten hours a day may be inclined to leave their new puppy in the yard because he can't control his bowels and bladder for that length of time. Although it's true that puppies need to eliminate more frequently than adult dogs, it's also very important for puppies to

Continued...

receive adequate people time at this formative stage of their lives. If dogs aren't adequately socialized when they're young, they're likely to become fearful or aggressive toward people, and possibly other animals. Puppies are also more vulnerable to extreme weather conditions than adult dogs. If you must be away from home for more than four or five hours at a time every day, this may not be the right time for you to adopt a puppy.

The Garage

While dogs may be safer in the garage than in the yard, unless people spend time with them in the garage, they'll still suffer from isolation and, as a result, may develop any of the behavior problems previously mentioned. Most garages are very hot during the summer months and cold during the winter. Garages are often storage places for tools and chemicals that could cause injury to a curious dog. If the garage has an automatic door opener, the dog could run out into the street when the door is opened.

Changing Times

Some of us may have fond childhood memories of a family dog that lived outside, but times have changed. More mothers used to stay at home and children used to spend more time outdoors. The outdoor dog had company while mom hung laundry or gardened and the children played outside. With the advent of two-income families, television and computer games, the outdoor dog is more likely to spend most of his time alone.

No Alternative

- If you **must** leave your dog outdoors, unsupervised for extended periods of time, please provide him with the following:
- An insulated shelter with a wind-proof opening. Some very short-coated breeds like greyhounds, pit bulls, beagles and labs, may not be able to tolerate extreme cold, even with a shelter.
- Shade in the summertime. All dogs need shade, but remember that heavy-coated dogs, such as huskies and chows, are more susceptible to the heat.
- Fresh food and water every day. In winter, you'll need a heated water bowl to keep the water from freezing. In summer, you'll need a tip-proof bowl so your dog won't tip the bowl over in an effort to get cool.
- Interactive play time daily.
- A daily walk.
- An escape-proof fence with a locked gate.
- "Busy" toys (see "Dog Toys and How to Use them").

Most dogs do enjoy spending some time outdoors, but the time dogs spend alone outdoors must be balanced with quality time with "their people." With a little time and training, dogs can learn to be well-behaved around people and can come to respect the house rules. They can then be left inside alone without cause for worry and be trusted companions and members of the family.

What You Should Know About Pet I.D. Tags, Licensing and Collars

A Visible Identification Tag is a Must . . .

Microchipping is a great form of permanent identification should your pet's collar and tags get removed. Most Vets and shelters will be able to track an owner through a microchip, but a microchip is not a replacement for a tag that can be immediately seen and read by all. Many people will stop to help a pet wearing a tag because they know the animal has a family that they can contact right away while many of those same people will not stop for a pet without visible I.D. because there is not a known owner. If your pet does end up at the shelter, having identification in any form gives it 10 days for the owner to locate them before being placed for adoption.

"If We'd Been Wearing I.D. Tags, We'd be Home Right Now"



Benefits of Pet Licensing in Ventura County . . .

- A license is your lost pet's ticket home. An animal control officer will try to contact you from your pet's license information in an effort to avoid taking your pet to the shelter.
- If the officer is successful at bringing your pet home without it having to go to the shelter, you will be spared the \$30 shelter impound fee and subsequent daily boarding fees.
- Your pet will be held at the shelter for 10 days instead of 4 days if wearing a license tag.
- \$20 is the total cost for an altered license, and that includes the visible license tag your pet wears affixed to his/her collar.
- At the sad time your (licensed) pet dies or is in need of final arrangements, the shelter can assist you with free or low cost services.
- Your license fees go toward the direct support of the shelter, which takes in approximately 11,000 animals each year, most of which are strays, conducts abuse and neglect investigations, offers low cost spay/neuter programs as well as adoption, foster and rescue programs, etc.

Dog Collars . . .

For strength, dependability and durability, we like to use rolled leather (buckle) collars found at most pet supply stores. We have found that, in general, traditional buckle collars of any kind are much less likely to break or come off than the collars with the plastic quick-release attachments.

The Dangers of Choke Chain Collars . . .

Choke chain (aka slip) collars have resulted in the deaths of a great many dogs. Many dog behavior experts feel there are training tools that are more humane, effective and safer options than choke chains, but the far worse consequence is the large number of dogs that have choked to death when their choke chain collar caught on a fence, a nail or other obstacle, even on another dog while playing. While we do not recommend choke chains in general, their use should absolutely be prohibited if your dog is not in the presence and direct supervision of an adult. Note: We also do not recommend the use of prong (aka pinch) collars.

What Every Dog Needs

By Deborah Grodecka, CDBC, CPDT
www.EveryDogCan.com © 2008 Every Dog Can, Inc.

Benevolent Leadership and Constructive Guidance *(excerpt)*

All social groups need leadership to avoid dissolving into chaos. A true leader is not a dictator, but an understanding, fair and benevolent guide. Traditional, old-school thinking about the need to “dominate” dogs or be the “alpha of the pack” is based on faulty conclusions drawn from outdated and inaccurate studies of wolf behavior—studies that have been refuted by newer research.

Attempts to physically force, dominate, or intimidate a dog will backfire and result in a failed relationship. Using force and dominance is also potentially very dangerous to humans, especially when a large and uncooperative dog is involved. Such methods inevitably destroy trust and any possibility of mutual respect or a loving bond, and are totally unnecessary.

Dogs respond more quickly, willingly, and happily to benevolent leadership rather than physical dominance. Just like we do!

The qualities needed to provide effective, benevolent leadership for a dog are the same we desire to see in any good and fair leader of humans. Benevolent leaders build trust by dwelling on the positive, not the negative. They ensure that the individual performing a task is given the knowledge, understanding, structure and resources necessary to carry out that task successfully.

Effective leaders don't dwell on mistakes; instead, they redirect energy to produce a positive outcome. They encourage good performance by expressing trust and respect all along the way. And great leaders reward a job well done with something meaningful and desirable.

Your dog needs an understanding, fair, and consistent teacher and guide, not a dictator. Once you start to provide this type of benevolent leadership for your dog, you will be well on your way to a successful and harmonious relationship.

LEADERSHIP

By Pat Scott

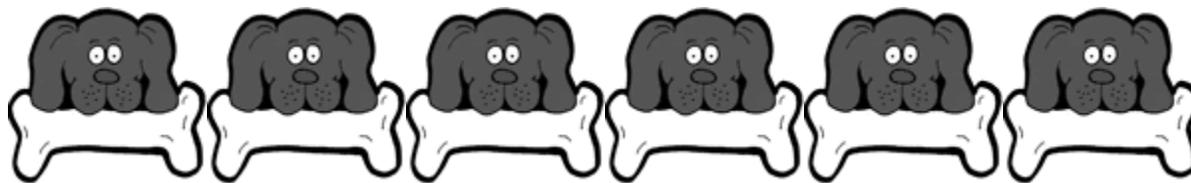
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Leadership - How To Attain It

First of all, let me tell you how NOT to attain leadership. Physical confrontational methods can be dangerous. The "old fashioned" way was to dominate the animal by doing scruff shakes and alpha rolls. This might work for one member of the family but not for 'weaker' members of the pack. The dog might learn not to challenge one person but might retaliate against other family members. Physical methods can result in fear-based problems and damage to your relationship with your dog.

On the other hand, non-confrontational methods can actually enhance your relationship with your dog. To become a good leader, you need to gain your dog's trust. In order to do this, your dog will need to know what to expect from you every time it behaves a certain way. Dogs who live in families never knowing what to expect can become basket cases.

- Leaders control the resources - including attention. This does not mean that you cannot give your dog lots of attention and other good stuff - it just means that you will do it on your terms and ask the dog to do something for you first.
- Leaders control the food. Free choice feeding, when the bowl is left down all the time, is not a good idea if your dog is a type A personality. Your dog is more likely to respect and listen to someone who controls the food. Asking for a sit before you put the bowl down will help establish leadership. Later on, when your dog knows a sit-stay, use that. You give permission to eat - a very powerful thing.
- Leaders are in control when walking on leash, and decide which way to go. Obedience class will help with this.
- Leaders control space. Space is an important resource to dogs. Teach your dog to wait at the door instead of barging through. Also teach your dog to move out of your way as you walk about the house and yard.
- Leaders control resting places. This means that if that if your dog sleeps with you, at least make sure you give permission for your dog to get on the bed, and that your dog will get off the bed if you say so. If your dog is not willing to do these things, it is better to have him or her sleep in a crate. To move your dog off the bed without a fight, use a 'house leash'.
- Leaders can handle the dog's body anywhere, whether for grooming or petting. If your dog objects to being handled, ask your obedience instructor to help you by using positive means. It is not necessary to use force.
- Leaders control greetings. If you have a very pushy dog, this may mean you need to ignore your dog for a few minutes when coming home, until the dog calms down. Think of it this way: the dog is demanding attention and saying "Yo human! Pet me NOW!" Wait until the dog calms enough to respond to a sit cue, then pet only while the dog is sitting.
- Leaders are consistent and fair. Have some rules and stick to them. Everyone in the family must agree and abide by the rules. Don't be wishy-washy.
- Leaders control the games. If your dog is the pushy demanding type, put toys away and bring them out when you decide to play. You decide when to stop playing. Make sure you gain control of the toy, even if you need to trade a treat for the toy. Many dogs love to play roughly - but rough games involving hands are not a good idea.
- Leaders communicate without words. Your dog is constantly reading your body posture and motions. So stand tall, and move in a confident manner. It helps to think positively too!



Ventura County Animal Services

WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN A DOG TRAINER

- Avoid people whose primary methods focus on punishment. Instead, look for a trainer who uses positive-based training methods. If a trainer's recommendations involve choking, hitting or slapping your pet, confinement or isolation, this indicates little or no understanding of animal behavior. Also question the use of prong, choke and shock collars and/or any other pain-induced training methods.

Some of the above methods may appear to be working initially, but often have negative long-term effects. Ask yourself whether you want your dog to respond to you out of a respectful and loving relationship or out of fear.

- Ask to observe a potential trainer's obedience class. A good dog obedience trainer will exhibit good dog-handling skills and will welcome your observation. If the trainer you're observing doesn't exhibit these skills or refuses to permit you to observe, continue your search. Also beware of dog trainers who misrepresent themselves and call themselves behaviorists even though they are not academically trained in animal behavior.
- Avoid people who guarantee their work. Qualified behavior experts and trainers will always do their best for you but cannot guarantee outcomes. Animals are individuals who have their own minds, their own personalities and their own histories.
- Avoid people who want to train your pet in your absence. Most behavior problems are a result of interactions between the animal, the owner and the environment. It may be helpful in some circumstances for the trainer to demonstrate for you while handling your dog, BUT giving your pet to someone else to "fix" in an outside environment rarely results in success once your dog has returned to its original environment. Owners need to work with the animal in and out of the home environment.
- Don't hesitate to ask your potential trainer about his/her training methods and continuing education experience. Many training methods which were considered acceptable in the field 20 years ago have been found to be counterproductive methods.
- Remember that there is no required curriculum nor is there an entity which regulates dog trainers; and, basically, anyone can call themselves a dog trainer. It is, therefore, up to you to do your homework when choosing a trainer.
- If you are committed to working with your pet and find qualified people to help you, there is a good chance that you will successfully resolve your pet's problem behaviors.

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Housetraining Your Puppy

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Housetraining a puppy requires time, vigilance, patience and commitment. Following the procedures outlined below, you can minimize house soiling incidents, but virtually every puppy will have an accident in the house (more likely several). Expect this – its part of raising a puppy. The more consistent you are in following the basic housetraining procedures, the faster your puppy will learn acceptable behavior. It may take several weeks to housetrain your puppy, and with some of the smaller breeds, it might take longer.

Establish a Routine

- Like babies, puppies do best on a regular schedule. Take your puppy outside frequently, at least every two hours, and immediately after he wakes up from a nap, after playing and after eating.
- Praise your puppy lavishly every time he eliminates outdoors. You can even give him a treat. You must praise him and give him a treat immediately after he's finished eliminating, not after he comes back inside the house. This step is vital, because rewarding your dog for eliminating outdoors is the only way he'll know that's what you want him to do.
- Choose a location not too far from the door to be the bathroom spot. Always take your puppy, on a leash, directly to the bathroom spot. Take him for a walk or play with him only after he has eliminated. If you clean up an accident in the house, take the soiled rags or paper towels and leave them in the bathroom spot. The smell will help your puppy recognize the area as the place he is supposed to eliminate. While your puppy is eliminating, use a word or phrase, like "go potty," that you can eventually use before he eliminates to remind him of what he's supposed to be doing.
- If possible, put your puppy on a regular feeding schedule. Depending on their age, puppies usually need to be fed three or four times a day. Feeding your puppy at the same times each day will make it more likely that he'll eliminate at consistent times as well. This makes housetraining easier for both of you.

Supervise, Supervise, Supervise

Don't give your puppy an opportunity to soil in the house. He should be watched at all times when he is indoors. You can tether him to you with a six-foot leash, or use baby gates, to keep him in the room where you are. Watch for signs that he needs to eliminate, like sniffing around or circling. When you see these signs, immediately take him outside, on a leash, to his bathroom spot. If he eliminates, praise him lavishly and reward him with a treat.

Confinement

When you're unable to watch your puppy at all times, he should be confined to an area small enough that he won't want to eliminate there. It should be just big enough for him to comfortably stand, lie down and turn around in. This area could be a portion of a bathroom or laundry room, blocked off with boxes or baby gates. Or you may want to crate train your puppy and use the crate to confine him (see our handout: "Crate Training Your Dog"). If your puppy has spent several hours in confinement, when you let him out, take him directly to his bathroom spot and praise him when he eliminates.

Oops!

Expect your puppy to have a few accidents in the house – it's a normal part of housetraining a puppy.

- When you catch him in the act of eliminating in the house, do something to interrupt him, like make a startling noise (be careful not to scare him). Immediately take him to his bathroom spot, praise him and give him a treat if he finishes eliminating there. *Continued...*
- Don't punish your puppy for eliminating in the house. If you find a soiled area, it's too late to administer a correction. Do nothing but clean it up. Rubbing your puppy's nose in it, taking him to the spot and scolding him, or any other punishment or discipline, will only make him afraid of you or afraid to eliminate in your presence. Animals don't understand punishment after the fact, even if it's only seconds later. Punishment will do more harm than good.
- Cleaning the soiled area is very important because puppies are highly motivated to continue soiling in areas that smell like urine or feces.

It's extremely important that you use the supervision and confinement procedures outlined above to minimize the number of accidents. If you allow your puppy to eliminate frequently in the house, he'll get confused about where he's supposed to eliminate which will prolong the housetraining process.

Paper Training

A puppy under six months of age cannot be expected to control his bladder for more than a few hours at a time. If you have to be away from home for more than four or five hours a day, this may not be the best time for you to get a puppy. If you're already committed to having a puppy and have to be away from home for long periods of time, you'll need to train your puppy to eliminate in a specific place indoors. Be aware, however, that doing so can prolong the process of teaching him to eliminate outdoors. Teaching your puppy to eliminate on newspaper may create a life-long surface preference, meaning that he may, even in adulthood, eliminate on any newspaper he finds lying around the house.

When your puppy must be left alone for long periods of time, confine him to an area with enough room for a sleeping space, a playing space and a separate place to eliminate. In the area designated as the elimination place, you can either use newspapers or a sod box. To make a sod box, place sod in a container, like a child's small, plastic swimming pool. You can also find dog litter products at a pet supply store. If you clean up an accident in the house, take the soiled rags or paper towels, and put them in the designated elimination place. The smell will help your puppy recognize the area as the place where he is supposed to eliminate.

Other Types of House-Soiling Problems

If you've consistently followed the housetraining procedures and your puppy continues to eliminate in the house, there may be another reason for his behavior.

- ❖ **Medical Problems:** House soiling can often be caused by physical problems such as a urinary tract infection or a parasite infection. Check with your veterinarian to rule out any possibility of disease or illness.
- ❖ **Submissive/Excitement Urination:** Some dogs, especially young ones, temporarily lose control of their bladders when they become excited or feel threatened. This usually occurs during greetings, intense play or when they're about to be punished.
- ❖ **Territorial Urine-Marking:** Dogs sometimes deposit urine or feces, usually in small amounts, to scent-mark their territory. Both male and female dogs do this, and it most often occurs when they believe their territory has been invaded.
- ❖ **Separation Anxiety.** Dogs that become anxious when they're left alone may house soil as a result. Usually, there are other symptoms, such as destructive behavior or vocalization (see our handout: "Separation Anxiety").
- ❖ **Fears or Phobias.** When animals become frightened, they may lose control of their bladder and/or bowels. If your puppy is afraid of loud noises, such as thunderstorms or fireworks, he may house soil when he's exposed to these sounds.



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"Changing the Face of Municipal Shelters"

Re-Housetraining Your Adult Dog

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Many adult dogs adopted from animal shelters were housetrained in their previous homes. While at the shelter, however, they may not have gotten enough opportunities to eliminate outside, and consequently, they may have soiled their kennel areas. This tends to weaken their housetraining habits. Additionally, scents and odors from other pets in the new home may stimulate some initial urine marking. Remember that you and your new dog need some time to learn each other's signals and routines. Even if he was housetrained in his previous home, if you don't recognize his "bathroom" signal, you might miss his request to go out, causing him to eliminate indoors.

Therefore, for the first few weeks after you bring him home, you should assume your new dog isn't housetrained and start from scratch. If he was housetrained in his previous home, the re-training process should progress quickly. The process will be much smoother if you take steps to prevent accidents and remind him where he's supposed to eliminate.

Establish a Routine

- Take your dog out at the same times every day. For example, first thing in the morning when he wakes up, when you arrive home from work, and before you go to bed.
- Praise your dog lavishly every time he eliminates outdoors. You can even give him a treat. You must praise him and give him a treat immediately after he's finished and not wait until after he comes back inside the house. This step is vital, because rewarding your dog for eliminating outdoors is the only way he'll know that's what you want him to do.
- Choose a location not too far from the door to be the bathroom spot. Always take your dog, on leash, directly to the bathroom spot. Take him for a walk or play with him only after he's eliminated. If you clean up an accident in the house, leave the soiled rags or paper towels in the bathroom spot. The smell will help your dog recognize the area as the place where he's supposed to eliminate.
- While your dog is eliminating, use a word or phrase like "go potty," for example, that you can eventually use before he eliminates to remind him of what he's supposed to be doing.
- Feeding your dog on a set schedule, once or twice a day, will help make his elimination more regular.

Supervise, Supervise, Supervise

Don't give your dog an opportunity to soil in the house. He should be watched at all times when he's indoors. You can tether him to you with a six-foot leash, or use baby gates, to keep him in the room where you are. Watch for signs that he needs to eliminate, like sniffing around or circling. If you see these signs, immediately take him outside, on a leash, to his bathroom spot. If he eliminates, praise him lavishly and reward him with a treat.

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Confinement

When you're unable to watch your dog at all times, he should be confined to an area small enough that he won't want to eliminate there. It should be just big enough for him to comfortably stand. Lie down and turn around in. This could be a portion of a bathroom or laundry room blocked off with boxes or baby gates. Or you may want to crate train your dog and use the crate to confine him (see our handout: "Crate Training Your Dog"). If he has spent several hours in confinement, when you let him out, take him directly to his bathroom spot and praise him when he eliminates.

Oops!

Most dogs, at some point, will have an accident in the house. You should expect this, as it's a normal part of your dog's adjustment to his new home.

- If you catch your dog in the act of eliminating in the house, do something to interrupt him like making a startling noise (don't scare him). Immediately take him to his bathroom spot, praise him, and give him a treat if he finishes eliminating there.
- Don't punish your dog for eliminating in the house. If you find a soiled area, it's too late to administer a correction. Do nothing but clean it up. Rubbing your dog's nose in it, taking him to the spot and scolding him, or any other type of punishment, will only make him afraid of you or afraid to eliminate in your presence. Animals don't understand punishment after the fact, even if it's only seconds later. Punishment will do more harm than good.
- Cleaning the soiled area is very important because dogs are highly motivated to continue soiling in areas that smell like urine or feces (see our handout: "Successful Cleaning to Remove Pet Odors and Stains").

Other Types of House-Soiling Problems

If you've consistently followed the housetraining procedures and your dog continues to eliminate in the house, there may be another reason for his behavior.

- ♦ **Medical Problems:** House soiling can often be caused by physical problems such as a urinary tract infection or a parasite infection. Check with your veterinarian to rule out any possibility of disease or illness.
- ♦ **Submissive/Excitement Urination:** Some dogs, especially young ones, temporarily lose control of their bladders when they become excited or feel threatened. This usually occurs during greetings, intense play or when they're about to be punished.
- ♦ **Territorial Urine-Marking:** Dogs sometimes deposit urine or feces, usually in small amounts, to scent-mark their territory. Both male and female dogs do this, and it most often occurs when they believe their territory has been invaded.
- ♦ **Separation Anxiety.** Dogs that become anxious when they're left alone may house soil as a result. Usually, there are other symptoms, such as destructive behavior or vocalization (see our handout: "Separation Anxiety").
- ♦ **Fears or Phobias.** When animals become frightened, they may lose control of their bladder and/or bowels. If your dog is afraid of loud noises, such as thunderstorms or fireworks, he may house soil when he's exposed to these sounds (see www.sspca.org for, "Helping Your Dog Overcome the Fear of Thunder and Other Startling Noises").



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Positive Reinforcement Training Your Dog With Treats and Praise

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Positive reinforcement is the presentation of something pleasant or rewarding immediately following a behavior. It makes that behavior more likely to occur in the future, and is one of the most powerful tools for shaping or changing your pet's behavior. Correct timing is essential when using positive reinforcement. The reward must occur immediately, or your pet may not associate it with the proper action. For example, if you have your dog "sit," but reward him after he's already stood up again, he'll think he's being rewarded for standing up.

For your pet, positive reinforcement may include food treats, praise, petting or a favorite toy or game. Food treats work especially well for training your dog. A treat should be enticing and irresistible to your pet. It should be a very small, soft, piece of food, so that he will immediately gulp it down and look to you for more. If you give him something he has to chew or that breaks into bits and falls on the floor, he'll be looking around the floor, not at you. Small pieces of soft commercial treats, hot dogs, cheese, cooked chicken or beef, or miniature marshmallows have all proven successful. Experiment a bit to see what works best for your pet. You may carry the treats in a pocket or a fanny pack on the front of your belt. There are even special treat packs available in many pet stores. Each time you use a food reward, you should couple it with a verbal reward (praise). Say something like, "Good boy" in a positive, happy tone of voice. **Note:** Some pets may not be interested in food treats. For those pets, the reward could be in the form of a toy or brief play.

When your pet is learning a new behavior, he should be rewarded every time he does the behavior (continuous reinforcement). It may be necessary to use "shaping," with your pet (reinforcing something close to the desired response and gradually requiring more from your dog before he gets the treat). For example, if you're teaching your dog to "shake hands," you may initially reward him for lifting his paw off the ground, then for lifting it higher, then for touching your hand, then for letting you hold his paw and finally, for actually shaking hands with you.

Intermittent reinforcement can be used once your pet has reliably learned the behavior. At first, you may reward him with the treat three times out of four, then about half the time, then about a third of the time and so forth, until you're only rewarding him occasionally with the treat. Continue to praise him every time, although once he's learned the behavior, the praise can be less effusive - a quiet, but positive, "Good boy." Use a variable schedule of reinforcement, so he doesn't catch on that he only has to respond every other time. Your pet will learn that if he keeps responding, eventually he'll get what he wants. If you have a dog who barks until you reward him by paying attention to him, you've seen the power of intermittent reinforcement.

By understanding reinforcement, you can see that you're not forever bound to carry a pocketful of goodies. Your pet will soon be working for your verbal praise, because he really does want to please you and he knows that occasionally, he'll get a treat, too! There are many small opportunities to reinforce his behavior. You may have him "sit" before letting him out the door (helps prevent door-darting), before petting him (helps prevent jumping up on people) or before giving him his food. Give him a pat or a "Good dog" for lying quietly by your feet or slip a treat into his Kong toy when he's chewing it, instead of your shoe.

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Punishment, including verbal, postural and physical, is the presentation of something unpleasant immediately following a behavior which makes it less likely that the behavior will occur again. To be effective, punishment must be delivered while your pet is engaged in the undesirable behavior, in other words, "caught in the act." If the punishment is delivered too late, your pet will feel "ambushed." From his point of view, the punishment is totally unpredictable, and he's likely to become fearful, distrusting and/or aggressive. This will only lead to more behavior problems. What we humans interpret as "guilty" looks, are actually submissive postures by our pets. Animals don't have a moral sense of right and wrong, but they are adept at associating your presence and the presence of a mess, with punishment.

CRATES & CRATE TRAINING

By Pat Scott

Copyright June, 2004 - 2010

I wouldn't dream of raising a puppy without using a crate. Crates are a great tool to use when you can't actively supervise your pup. And you know how much trouble puppies and young dogs can get into when they are not supervised! A crate will also make the job of housebreaking much easier.

The problem with dog crates is convincing people that crating a dog is not cruel and unusual punishment! The dog is not in "jail". Dogs that are crate-trained actually like their crates. Dogs are den animals. A crate can be your dog's "den" - a safe haven where he can relax and feel secure, a room of his own. Ever wished you could just go to your room for peace and quiet? Well your dog may feel the same way at times.

A puppy should not be confined continuously (except at night), but a crate can be a big help for an hour or two at a time. As the pup grows older, he can spend longer periods of time in a crate as long as it isn't a regular long-term arrangement.

The only problems arise if the pup is forced into the crate suddenly and becomes frightened, or if he is left in it for hours at a time and becomes lonely and bored.

Crates can be very useful for dogs of any age. At some time in your dog's life, he may need to stay at the veterinarian's, where he will be confined in a crate. If he has been crate-trained ahead of time, he will feel safe and secure instead of overly stressed. A dog that can relax and rest in a crate may even have a faster recovery rate.

A crate is also excellent for car travel. It keeps the dog safe from sudden stops and swerves, and keeps the people safe from an excitable dog.

Types and Sizes:

There are two types of dog crates -

1. The fiberglass "airline" kennel, and the folding wire crate. The choice is yours. Some dogs prefer more privacy - you can drape a towel or blanket over a wire crate if desired. Wire crates are generally more expensive but you have the advantage of folding them up if necessary.
2. The crate should be large enough so that the dog can stand up, turn around, and lie down. If using the crate to housebreak a puppy, it is important that the crate not be too large. Buy a crate that will accommodate your pet when it is fully grown. Then get a piece of pegboard that will fit the inside of the crate. Using plastic 'wire ties', secure the pegboard as a divider inside the crate, giving only enough room for the puppy to lay down inside. Some folks have used bricks (or even concrete blocks!) to take up extra space temporarily. As the puppy grows, provide more room by moving the divider. When the puppy does not soil in its crate, remove the divider so the puppy can have use of the full crate.

Getting your dog used to the crate:

When getting the dog used to the crate, keep it near the center of activity so the dog won't feel isolated. A corner of the kitchen or the family room is good. At night you can move the crate to your bedroom so the dog can be with you.

Set the crate up and let the dog investigate it. Show it to him while talking in a happy voice. Have some yummy treats on hand. Put a treat just inside the crate and let the dog get it. Then throw a treat farther inside the crate, until the dog is willingly going all the way inside the crate. Leave the door open during this phase. When the dog is comfortable going into the crate, shut the door with the dog inside. Scratch him through the side of the crate, tell him how wonderful he is, give more treats and let him

Continued...

out. Repeat this step several times. The next step is to leave the room for only a few seconds, then return and let him out. Gradually build up the time you are away. After the dog is crate-trained, he will be content in the crate for several hours at a time, if he is properly exercised beforehand.

Always praise the dog for going into the crate, and during the training process give him a treat every time you put him into the crate. Use a word or phrase, like "go to bed" or "kennel".

Use the crate wisely. Don't crate only when you are leaving the house, or he may associate the crate with being left alone. Place the dog in the crate while you are home, too. By crating when you are home and when you leave, the dog becomes comfortable in it and not anxious that you are leaving him/her alone. This helps to reduce separation anxiety later in life.

Never let the dog out of the crate while he is barking or whining. This would reward him for barking, and he will be training you to let him out when he wants. Try ignoring the dog while he is barking, and let him out after he has been quiet for a few seconds. If the barking persists, you will need to use a correction. Tap the top of the crate, making a loud noise, as you say "Quiet". Praise as soon as he is quiet, and give a treat. Give random treats while the dog is quiet. Be proactive, not just reactive when he barks or whines.

I like to give a stuffed Kong, bully stick, or other safe chewy when I crate a dog.

Feeding the dog in the crate is one way to speed the acceptance of the crate.

When your dog is not confined in the crate, leave the door open so he can go in if he wants. Never permit children to crawl into the dog's crate. This is his own space and should be a place where he can go for peace and quiet when children get overbearing or when he just wants to be alone.

A crate is a wonderful tool for the prevention of problems. It can keep your dog safe, happy, and non-destructive.

Pat Scott is a CPDT "Certified Pet Dog Trainer" and a professional member of the Association of Pet Dog Trainers.



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"Changing the Face of Municipal Shelters"

Destructive Chewing

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Exploring the world with their mouths is normal behavior for dogs. Chewing can, however, be directed onto appropriate items so your dog isn't destroying items you value. Until he's learned what he can and can't chew, it's your responsibility to manage the situation as much as possible, so he doesn't have the opportunity to chew on unacceptable objects.

Taking Control by Managing the Situation

- ❖ Take responsibility for your own belongings. If you don't want it in your dog's mouth, don't make it available. Keep clothing, shoes, books, trash, eyeglasses and television remote controls out of your dog's reach.
- ❖ Don't confuse your dog by offering him shoes and socks as toys and then expect him to distinguish between his shoe and yours. Your dog's toys should be obviously different from household goods.
- ❖ Until he learns the house rules, confine him when you're unable to keep an eye on him. Choose a "safe place" that is dog-proof with fresh water and "safe" toys (see our handout: "Dog Toys and How to Use them"). If your dog is crate trained, you may also crate him for short periods of time (see our handout: "Crate Training Your Dog").
- ❖ Give your dog plenty of people-time. Your dog won't know how to behave if you don't teach him alternatives to inappropriate behavior and he can't learn these when he's in the yard by himself.
- ❖ If, and only if, you catch your dog chewing on something he shouldn't, interrupt the behavior with a loud noise, offer him an acceptable chew toy instead, and praise him lavishly when he takes the toy in his mouth.
- ❖ Have realistic expectations. It's virtually inevitable that your dog will, at some point, chew up something you value. This is often part of the transition to a new home. Your dog needs time to learn the house rules and you need to remember to take precautions and keep things out of his reach.

Chewing is normal teething and investigative puppy behavior (see our handout: "Dealing with Normal Puppy Behavior: Chewing"), however, dogs will engage in destructive behavior for a variety of reasons. In order to deal with the behavior, you must first determine why your dog is being destructive.

Play, Boredom and/or Social Isolation

Normal play behavior can result in destruction, as it may involve digging, chewing, shredding and/or shaking toy-like objects. Since dogs investigate objects by pawing at them and exploring them with their mouths, they may also inadvertently damage items in their environment when they're exploring or investigating. Your dog may be chewing for entertainment if:

- ❖ He's left alone for long periods without opportunities for interaction with you.
- ❖ His environment is relatively barren, without playmates or toys.
- ❖ He's a puppy or adolescent (under three years old) and he doesn't have other outlets for his energy.
- ❖ He's a particularly active type of dog (like the herding or sporting breeds) who needs an active lifestyle to be happy.

Continued...

Solutions:

- ❖ Play with your dog daily in a safe, fenced-in area. If you don't have a yard, a tennis court can be a good place to play. Fetch is a great game that will use up your dog's excess energy without wearing you out!
- ❖ Go for a walk. Walks should be more than just "bathroom time." On-leash walks are important opportunities for you and your dog to be together. Don't forget to allow time for sniffing, exploring, instruction and praise.
- ❖ Increase your dog's opportunities for mental stimulation. Teach your dog a few commands and/or tricks and practice them daily. If you have time, take an obedience class.
- ❖ Provide your dog with lots of toys (see our handout: "Dog Toys and How to Use them").
- ❖ Rotate your dog's toys to refresh his interest in them. "New" toys are always more interesting than old ones.
- ❖ Try different kinds of toys, and watch your dog to make sure he won't tear it up and ingest the pieces.
- ❖ Consider the types of toys that can be stuffed with food. Putting tidbits of food inside chew toys focuses your dog's chewing activities on these toys instead of on unacceptable objects.
- ❖ Make your dog's favorite "off-limits" chew objects unattractive to him by covering them with heavy plastic, aluminum foil, hot pepper sauce or a commercial "anti-chew" product.
- ❖ You might want to consider a good "Doggie Day Care" program for two or three days a week to work off some of your dog's excess energy.

Separation Anxiety

Dogs with separation anxiety tend to display behaviors that reflect a strong attachment to their owners. This includes following you from room to room, frantic greetings and reacting anxiously to your preparation to leave the house. Factors that can precipitate a separation anxiety problem:

- ❖ A change in the family's schedule that results in your dog being left alone more often.
- ❖ A move to a new house.
- ❖ The death or loss of a family member or another family pet.
- ❖ A period at a shelter or boarding kennel.

These behaviors are not motivated by spite or revenge, but by anxiety. Punishment will make the problem worse. Separation anxiety can be resolved by using counter conditioning and desensitization techniques (see handout: "Separation Anxiety").

Attention-Seeking Behavior

Without realizing it, we often pay more attention to our dogs when they're misbehaving. Dogs who don't receive a lot of attention and reinforcement for appropriate behavior may engage in destructive behavior when their owners are present as a way to attract attention – even if the attention is "negative," such as a verbal scolding.

Solutions:

- ❖ Make sure your dog gets a lot of positive attention every day – playing, walking, grooming or just petting.
- ❖ Ignore (as much as possible) bad behavior and reward good behavior. Remember to reward your dog with praise and petting when he's playing quietly with appropriate toys.
- ❖ Make his favorite "off-limits" chew objects unattractive or unavailable to him. Use keep off sprays, etc. on objects that cannot be put away.
- ❖ Teach your dog a "drop it" command so when he does pick up an "off-limits" object, you can use your command and praise him for complying. The best way to teach "drop it" is to practice having him exchange a toy for a tidbit of food.
- ❖ Practice "Nothing in Life is Free" with your dog. This gets your dog in the habit of complying with your commands and makes sure he gets positive attention for doing the right things – so he won't have to be naughty to get your attention.

Continued...

Fears and Phobias

Your dog's destructive behavior may be a response to something he fears. Some dogs are afraid of loud noises (see our section on www.sspca.org - "Helping Your Dog Overcome the Fear of Thunder and Other Startling Noises"). Your dog's destructive behavior may be caused by fear if the destruction occurs when he's exposed to loud noises, such as thunderstorms, firecrackers or construction sounds, and if the primary damage is to doors, doorframes, window coverings, screens or walls.

Solutions:

- ❖ 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 one for him to use when the fear stimulus is present.
- ❖ Don't comfort your dog when he's behaving fearfully. Try to get him to play with you or respond to commands he knows and give him praise and treats when he responds to you instead of to the fear stimulus.
- ❖ Don't crate your dog unless he's thoroughly crate-trained and considers the crate his safe place. If you put him in a crate to prevent destruction and he's not crate-trained, he may injure himself and/or destroy the crate.

What Not To Do:

Punishment is not effective in resolving destructive behavior problems and can make them worse. Never discipline your dog after the fact. If you discover an item your dog has chewed minutes, or even seconds later, it's too late to administer a correction. Your dog doesn't understand that, "I chewed those shoes an hour ago and that's why I'm being scolded now." People often believe their dog makes this connection because he runs and hides or "looks guilty." Dogs don't feel guilt, rather they display submissive postures like cowering, running away or hiding, when they feel threatened by an angry tone of voice, body posture or facial expression. Your dog doesn't know that he's done something wrong; he only knows that you're upset. Punishment after the fact will not only fail to eliminate the undesirable behavior, but may also provoke other undesirable behaviors.



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How to Solve the Digging Problem

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Digging is a normal behavior for most dogs, but may occur for widely varying reasons. Your dog may be seeking entertainment, seeking prey, comfort, protection, attention or escape.

Dogs don't dig, however, out of spite, revenge or a desire to destroy your yard. Finding ways to make the area where the dog digs unappealing may be effective, however, it's likely that he'll just begin digging in other locations or display other unacceptable behavior, such as chewing or barking. A more effective approach is to address the cause of the digging, rather than creating location aversions.

Seeking Entertainment

Dogs may dig as a form of self-play when they learn that roots and soil "play back." Your dog may be digging for entertainment if:

- ❖ He's left alone in the yard for long periods of time without opportunities for interaction with you
- ❖ His environment is relatively barren, without playmates or toys
- ❖ He's a puppy or adolescent (under three years old) and doesn't have other outlets for his energy
- ❖ He's the type of dog (like a terrier) that is bred to dig as part of his "job"
- ❖ He's a particularly active type of dog (like the herding or sporting breeds) who needs an active job to be happy
- ❖ He's recently seen you "playing" in the dirt (gardening or working in the yard)

Recommendations:

We recommend expanding your dog's world & increasing his "people time" in these ways:

- ❖ Walk your dog regularly. It's good exercise, mentally and physically, for both of you!
- ❖ Teach your dog to fetch a ball or Frisbee and practice with him as often as possible.
- ❖ Teach your dog a few commands and/or tricks. Practice these commands/tricks every day for five to ten minutes.
- ❖ Take an obedience class with your dog and practice daily what you've learned.
- ❖ Keep interesting toys in the yard to keep your dog busy even when you're not around (Kong-type toys filled with treats or busy-box toys). Rotating the toys makes them seem new and interesting.
- ❖ For dedicated diggers, provide an "acceptable digging area." Choose an area of the yard where it's okay for your dog to dig and cover the area with loose soil or sand. If you catch your dog digging in an unacceptable area, interrupt the behavior with a loud noise, say, "no dig" and take the dog to his designated digging area. When he digs in the approved spot, reward him with praise. Make the unacceptable digging spots unattractive (at least temporarily) by setting sharp rocks or chicken wire into the dirt.

Seeking Prey

Dogs may try to pursue burrowing animals or insects that live in your yard. Your dog may be pursuing prey if:

- ❖ The digging is in a very specific area, usually not at the boundaries of the yard
- ❖ The digging is at the roots of trees or shrubs
- ❖ The digging is in a "path" layout

Continued...

Recommendations:

We recommend that you search for possible signs of pests and then rid your yard of them. Avoid methods that could be toxic or dangerous to your pets. \

Seeking Comfort or Protection

In hot weather, dogs may dig holes in order to lie in the cool dirt. They may also dig to provide themselves with shelter from cold, wind or rain, or to try to find water. Your dog may be digging for protection or comfort if:

- ❖ The holes are near foundations of buildings, large shade trees or a water source.
- ❖ Your dog doesn't have a shelter or his shelter is exposed to the hot sun or cold winds.
- ❖ You find evidence that your dog is lying in the holes he digs.

Recommendations:

We recommend that you provide your dog with other sources for the comfort or protection he seeks:

- ♦ Provide an insulated doghouse. Make sure it affords protection from wind and sun.
- ♦ Your dog may still prefer a hole in the ground, in which case you can try the "approved digging area" recommendation described above. Make sure the allowed digging area is in a protected spot.
- ♦ Provide plenty of fresh water in a bowl that can't be tipped over.

Seeking Attention

Any behavior can become attention-getting behavior if dogs learn that they receive attention for engaging in it (even punishment is a form of attention). Your dog may be digging to get attention if:

- ❖ He digs in your presence
- ❖ His other opportunities for interaction with you are limited

Recommendations:

We recommend that you ignore the behavior:

- ♦ Don't give your dog attention for digging (remember, even punishment is attention).
- ♦ Make sure your dog has sufficient time with you on a daily basis, so he doesn't have to resort to misbehaving to get your attention.

Seeking Escape

Dogs may escape to get to something, to get somewhere or to get away from something. For more detailed information, please see our handout: "The Canine Escape Artist." Your dog may be digging to escape if:

- ❖ He digs along the fence line
- ❖ He digs under the fence

Recommendations:

We recommend the following in order to keep your dog in the yard while you work on the behavior modifications recommended in our handout: "The Canine Escape Artist."

- ♦ Bury chicken wire at the base of the fence (sharp edges rolled under)
- ♦ Place large rocks, partially buried, along the bottom of the fence line
- ♦ Bury the bottom of the fence one to two feet under the ground
- ♦ Lay chain link fencing on the ground (anchored to the bottom of the fence) to make it uncomfortable for your dog to walk near the fence

Regardless of the reason for digging, we DON'T recommend:

- ❖ Punishment after the fact. Not only does this not address the cause of the behavior, any digging that's motivated by fear or anxiety will be made worse. Punishment may also cause anxiety in dogs that aren't currently fearful.
- ❖ Taking a dog out near a hole he's dug or filling the hole with water. These techniques don't address the cause of the behavior, or the act of digging.

Making Time Alone More Tolerable - Separation Anxiety

by Sherri Regalbuto

www.gooddogz.org/index.php/content/view/101/137/

Separation anxiety is a real and increasingly common problem. Because of our hectic lifestyles, dogs are being left alone more frequently and for longer periods. And, people are adopting more rescue and shelter dogs, which are prone to separation anxiety. This problem can manifest itself in subtle signs or full-blown, sometimes dangerous, behaviors. Some indicators are destructiveness, inappropriate elimination, barking, whining, and even crashing through glass windows or doors. Separation anxiety needs to be handled with patience and care.

First, remember that your attitude is key, so keep your cool. Yelling or punishing only creates more stress and can worsen the problem. For example, if your arrival means angry consequences for your dog, he may add other anxious behaviors to chewing your shoes or eliminating on your rug. Remembering that your dog is expressing anxiety, not spite, can help you maintain perspective and focus on problem-solving instead of punishment. Here are some steps you can take to help your dog feel more comfortable when you leave:

- ❖ Don't give your pooch too much of your attention when you are home. It deprives him of the opportunity to learn to entertain himself and focuses his attention on times when you are gone. Make it a habit to ignore your dog occasionally and be the one to initiate interaction.
- ❖ Keep arrivals and departures low-key. When you come home, try to wait 10-15 minutes before you acknowledge your dog (leaf through the mail, change clothes, etc.) When you are ready to greet him, just say, "Hey (dog's name), how was your day?" with a little rub under that adorable chin. When you leave give them a KONG stuffed with treats or another toy he can play with only when you are gone. This will occupy his attention so you can slip out the door unnoticed.
- ❖ Keep a radio or TV on for continual low noise. The sound of music and voices may soothe him and will make them less likely to hear outside noises that may make him bark.
- ❖ Make sure your dog is getting enough exercise. If he is obedience trained, you can run him through his commands before and after work. If you have not trained your dog, it's time to think about it.
- ❖ Consider hiring a dog walker to provide company and take him out mid-day. Occasional days in doggie day care can also be a welcome break in routine.
- ❖ Mix up your leaving cues. Dogs notice signs of your leaving like putting on your shoes, filling your travel mug, or rattling your keys. To break the pattern and keep him guessing whether you are really leaving, pick up your keys whenever you think about it. Grab your purse and head outside, wait a couple minutes, and come back in. Then play with your dog. Get in your car, drive around the block and come back in and ignore your dog. Or, get dressed for work, give your dog a cookie, go out and come back to take him for a walk.
- ❖ Give your dog acceptable activities. There are many toys on the market that can keep your dog busy. Hide treats around the house or leave treat-stuffed Kongs for him to work on.
- ❖ Sleep with an old shirt and leave it with your dog. He may be comforted by your smell. Or investigate one of the new plug-in products that emit Dog Appeasing Pheromones (D.A.P) to mimic a mother dog's pheromones. They are thought to give dogs a sense of well-being and reassurance.
- ❖ Limit your absences to 7 or 8 hours a day. Longer periods alone can be tough on a dog.
- ❖ If you have the time and patience for another pet, a canine buddy can sometimes help. As a last resort, your veterinarian may suggest a prescription medication to help your dog relax so he can concentrate on behavior modifying exercises that change his response to a stressful situation.



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"Changing the Face of Municipal Shelters"

Separation Anxiety

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Dogs with separation anxiety exhibit behavior problems when they're left alone. Typically, they'll have a dramatic anxiety response within a short time (20-45 minutes) after their owners leave them. The most common of these behaviors are:

- ❖ Digging, chewing and scratching at doors or windows in an attempt to escape and reunite with their owners.
- ❖ Howling, barking and crying in an attempt to get their owner to return.
- ❖ Urination and defecation (even with housetrained dogs) as a result of distress.

Why Do Dogs Suffer From Separation Anxiety?

We don't fully understand exactly why some dogs suffer from separation anxiety and, under similar circumstances, others don't. It's important to realize, however, that the destruction and house soiling that often occur with separation anxiety are not the dog's attempt to punish or seek revenge on his owner for leaving him alone, but are actually part of a panic response.

Separation anxiety sometimes occurs when:

- ❖ A dog has never or rarely been left alone.
- ❖ Following a long interval, such as a vacation, during which the owner and* dog are constantly together.
- ❖ After a traumatic event (from the dog's point of view) such as a period of time spent at a shelter or boarding kennel.
- ❖ After a change in the family's routine or structure (a child leaving for college, a change in work schedule, a move to a new home, a new pet or person in the home).

How Do I Know If My Dog Has Separation Anxiety?

Because there are many reasons for the behaviors associated with separation anxiety, it's essential to correctly diagnose the reason for the behavior before proceeding with treatment. If most, or all, of the following statements are true about your dog, he may have a separation anxiety problem:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> The behavior occurs exclusively or primarily when he's left alone. | <input type="checkbox"/> The behavior always occurs when he's left alone, whether for a short or long period of time. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> He follows you from room to room whenever you're home. | <input type="checkbox"/> He reacts with excitement, depression or anxiety to your preparations to leave the house. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> He displays effusive, frantic greeting behaviors. | <input type="checkbox"/> He dislikes spending time outdoors by himself. |

Continued...

What to Do if Your Dog has Separation Anxiety

For a minor separation anxiety problem, the following techniques may be helpful by themselves. For more severe problems, these techniques should be used along with the desensitization process described in the next section.

Keep arrivals and departures low-key. For example, when you arrive home, ignore your dog for the first few minutes, and then calmly pet him.

Leave your dog with an article of clothing that smells like you, an old tee shirt that you've slept in recently, for example.

Establish a "safety cue"--a word or action that you use every time you leave that tells your dog you'll be back. Dogs usually learn to associate certain cues with short absences by their owners. For example, when you take out the garbage, your dog knows you come right back and doesn't become anxious. Therefore, it's helpful to associate a safety cue with your practice departures and short-duration absences.

Some examples of safety cues are: a playing radio; a playing television; a bone; or a toy (one that doesn't have dangerous fillings and can't be torn into pieces). Use your safety cue during practice sessions, but don't present your dog with the safety cue when you leave for a period of time longer than he can tolerate or the value of the safety cue will be lost. Leaving a radio on to provide company for your dog isn't particularly useful by itself, but a playing radio may work if you've used it consistently as a safety cue in your practice sessions. If your dog engages in destructive chewing as part of his separation distress, offering him a chewing item as a safety cue is a good idea. Very hard rubber toys that can be stuffed with treats and Nyla bone-like products are good choices.

Desensitization Techniques for More Severe Cases of Separation Anxiety

The primary treatment for more severe cases of separation anxiety is a systematic process of getting your dog used to being alone. You must teach your dog to remain calm during "practice" departures and short absences. We recommend the following procedure:

- ❖ Begin by engaging in your normal departure activities (getting your keys, putting on your coat), then sit back down. Repeat this step until your dog shows no distress in response to your activities.
- ❖ Next, engage in your normal departure activities *and* go to the door and open it, then sit back down.
- ❖ Next, step outside the door, leaving the door open, then return.
- ❖ Finally, step outside, close the door, and then immediately return. Slowly get your dog accustomed to being alone with the door closed between you for several seconds.
- ❖ Proceed very gradually from step to step, repeating each step until your dog shows no signs of distress (the number of repetitions will vary depending on the severity of the problem). If at any time in this process your actions produce an anxiety response in your dog, you've proceeded too fast. Return to an earlier step in the process and practice this step until the dog shows no distress response, then proceed to the next step.
- ❖ When your dog is tolerating your being on the other side of the door for several seconds, begin short-duration absences. This step involves giving the dog a verbal cue (for example, "I'll be back."), leaving and then returning within a minute. Your return

must be low-key: either ignore your dog or greet him quietly and calmly. If he shows no signs of distress, repeat the exercise. If he appears anxious, wait until he relaxes to repeat the exercise. Gradually increase the length of time you're gone.

- ❖ Practice as many absences as possible that last less than ten minutes. You can do many departures within one session if your dog relaxes sufficiently between departures. You should also scatter practice departures and short-duration absences throughout the day.

- ❖ Once your dog can handle short absences (30 to 90 minutes), he'll usually be able to handle longer intervals alone and you won't have to work up to all-day absences minute by minute. The hard part is at the beginning, but the job gets easier as you go along. Nevertheless, you must go slowly at first. How long it takes to condition your dog to being alone depends on the severity of his problem. *Continued...*

Teaching "Sit-Stay" and "Down-Stay"

Practice sit-stay or down-stay exercises using positive reinforcement. Never punish your dog during these training sessions. Gradually increase the distance you move away from your dog. Your goal is to be able to move briefly out of your dog's sight while he remains in the "stay" position. The point is to teach him that he can remain calmly and happily in one place while you go to another. As you progress, you can do this during the course of your normal daily activities. For example, if you're watching television with your dog by your side and you get up for a snack, tell him to stay, and leave the room. When you come back, give him a treat or quietly praise him.

Interim Solutions

Because the above-described treatments can take a while, and because a dog with separation anxiety can do serious damage to himself and/or your home in the interim, some of the following suggestions may be helpful in dealing with the problems in the short term:

- ❖ Consult your veterinarian about the possibility of drug therapy. A good anti-anxiety drug should not sedate your dog, but simply reduce his anxiety while you're gone. Such medication is a temporary measure and should be used in conjunction with behavior modification techniques.
- ❖ Take your dog to a dog day care facility or boarding kennel.
- ❖ Leave your dog with a friend, family member or neighbor.
- ❖ Take your dog to work with you, even for half a day, if possible.

What Won't Help a Separation Anxiety Problem?

- ❖ Punishment is not an effective way to treat separation anxiety. In fact, if you punish your dog after you return home it may actually increase his separation anxiety.
- ❖ Getting another pet. This usually doesn't help an anxious dog as his anxiety is the result of his separation from you, his person, not merely the result of being alone.
- ❖ Crating your dog. Your dog will still engage in anxiety responses in the crate. He may urinate, defecate, howl or even injure himself in an attempt to escape from the crate.
- ❖ Leave the radio on (unless the radio is used as a "safety cue" - see above).
- ❖ Obedience school. While obedience training is always a good idea, it won't directly help a separation anxiety problem. Separation anxiety is not the result of disobedience or lack of training, it's a panic response.



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"Changing the Face of Municipal Shelters"

The Canine Escape Artist

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Escaping is a serious problem for both you and your dog, as it could 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're liable for any damage or injury your dog may cause and you may be required to pay a fine if he's 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/Frustration

Your dog may be escaping because he's bored and lonely if:

- ❖ He is left alone for long periods of time without opportunities for interaction with you.
- ❖ His environment is relatively barren, without playmates or toys.
- ❖ He is a puppy or adolescent (under 3 years old) and doesn't have other outlets for his energy.
- ❖ He is a particularly active type of dog (like the herding or sporting breeds) who needs an active job in order 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 school yard to play with the children.

Recommendations:

We recommend expanding your dog's world and increasing his "people time" in the following ways:

- ❖ Walk your dog daily. It's good exercise, both mentally and physically.
- ❖ Teach your dog to fetch a ball or Frisbee and practice with him as often as possible.
- ❖ Teach your dog a few commands and/or tricks. Practice these commands and/or tricks every day for five to ten minutes.
- ❖ Take an obedience class with your dog and practice daily what you've learned.
- ❖ Provide interesting toys (Kong-type toys filled with treats or busy-box toys) to keep your dog busy when you're not home.
- ❖ Rotate your dog's toys to make them seem new and interesting (see "[Dog Toys and How to Use them](#)").
- ❖ Keep your dog inside when you're unable to supervise him.
- ❖ If you have to be away from home for extended periods of time, take your dog to work with you or to a "doggie day care," or ask a friend or neighbor to walk your dog.

Sexual Roaming

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

Recommendations:

- ❖ Have your male dog neutered. Studies show that neutering will decrease sexual roaming in about 90% 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's important to have him neutered as soon as possible.
- ❖ Have your female dog spayed. If your intact female dog escapes your yard while she's in heat, she'll probably get pregnant. Millions of unwanted pets are euthanized every year. Please don't

contribute to the pet overpopulation problem by allowing your female dog to breed indiscriminately.

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 desensitize him to it (see www.sspca.org for: "Helping Your Dog Overcome the Fear of Thunder and Other Startling Noises"). You may need professional help with the desensitization process. Check with your veterinarian about giving your dog an anti-anxiety medication while you work on behavior modification.
- ❖ Leave your dog indoors when he is likely to encounter the fear stimulus. Mute noise by leaving him in a basement or windowless bathroom and leave on a television, radio or loud fan.
- ❖ 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's escaped.

Factors that can precipitate a separation anxiety problem:

- ❖ There has recently been a change in your family's schedule that has resulted in your dog being left alone more often.
- ❖ Your family has recently 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, and 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 won't 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 doesn't 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.

Why Punishment Usually Doesn't Work

- ❖ Never punish your dog after he's already out of the yard. Dogs associate punishment with what they're doing at the time they're punished. Punishing your dog after the fact won't 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.
- ❖ Punishment is only effective if administered at the moment your dog is escaping and if he doesn't associate the correction with you. If you can squirt him with a hose or make a loud noise as he is going over, under or through the fence, it might be unpleasant enough that he won't want to do it again. However, if he realizes that you made the noise or squirted the water, he'll simply refrain from escaping when you're around. This type of correction is difficult to administer effectively, and won't resolve the problem if used by itself. You must also give your dog less reason to escape and make it more difficult to do.

Dog Park Tips

The following information is taken from Sue Sternberg's book, *Out and About With Your Dog*, available from www.greatdogproductions.com.

- ❖ Recognize that your dog may not get along with ALL other dogs, and that some combinations simply don't work. It is fine to leave the dog run and come back another time, or take a personal, one-on-one walk with your dog in the neighborhood and come back in a few minutes to see if the run has emptied out a bit.
- ❖ Consider leaving your cell phone off, or not taking calls, unless it's an emergency, during your dog's time at the dog run. The more attention you give your dog, and the more you participate, the better the relationship. This is a good time for you and your dog to be together, and doesn't your dog deserve your undivided attention?
- ❖ Make sure your dog's play partner(s) are playing fair, and that your own dog is playing fair, too. This means that each dog takes turn pushing and initiating physical contact (being on top) and that neither dog is pushing another dog relentlessly. There should be frequent role reversals in healthy play.
- ❖ Make sure your own dog is actually playing with another dog, and not just responding in a defensive, deflective way based on fear. Call your dog to you, and when you release him to go back to "play," see if he indeed does return to engage with the same dog(s). If not, he may not have felt that what he was previously experiencing was really playful or fun for him.
- ❖ Watch your own dog, and make sure he is not targeting ONE other dog exclusively and going after that particular dog relentlessly - even if you think your dog is "just playing." Playing is a balance between the dogs, a give and take - not one dog pushing and jumping and mouthing the other dog over and over and over again. If your dog is doing this to another dog, go and get him, or call him to you and get him under control. The same holds true if your dog is the target of another dog's obsession. Go and rescue your dog from the situation.
- ❖ Watch out for "ganging" up; when two or more dogs "gang up" and relentlessly chase or surround another dog. Have all the owners call their dogs, and probably one or more of the gang members should leave the run for that time, as they'll usually start back up again.
- ❖ Toy dogs should play with other toy or smallish dogs, and should absolutely not be in the run with the big dogs. A predatory attack can happen instantly and without warning. The risk to toy dogs is too great.
- ❖ Beware of high-speed games of chase. Alone, two dogs playing chase is probably fine, but if other dogs join in, then a high-speed game of chase can arouse other dogs, and in an instant this can turn into a predatory attack. It's hard to get control once dogs begin this high-speed chase, which is why you want to catch it early, and why you want to spend a lot of time training your dog in the run. You want control when your dog starts to get out of control. But you can't wait until he is out of control to train your dog to listen to you. Train him while he is relatively calm.
- ❖ Participate in your dog's playtime. Interrupt every few minutes by calling your dog to you, rewarding with at least one treat every two seconds, and keep your dog with you for at least 10 seconds. For this entire 10 seconds, praise, pet and reward your dog often enough so that he doesn't have a chance to look away from you. This encourages attention, and allows your dog to calm down and focus on a human in between aroused playtimes.
- ❖ Playing with other dogs is very, very fun for your dog, sometimes more fun than being with people, and sometimes more fun than being with YOU. This puts you at a disadvantage in every other situation with your dog. It is important to include yourself in your dog's play activities. Watch your dog, encourage your dog, interrupt your dog, play with your dog.
- ❖ Call your dog to come to you frequently, not just when it's time to leave. By calling him over to you frequently, rewarding him with something valuable, and then releasing him back to play, you can avoid the difficulty many dog park frequenters experience: the dog who can't be caught when it's time to leave. Make sure that calling your dog to come to you doesn't just signal the time to leave. By calling him and having him sit by your side, receive your praise and petting for a brief time before releasing him with permission to go back and play teaches your dog that coming to you is merely a pleasant interruption, and not an end to his fun.



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"Changing the Face of Municipal Shelters"

Dog Toys And How To Use Them

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"Safe" Toys

There are many factors that contribute to the safety or danger of a toy. Many of those factors, however, are completely dependent upon your dog's size, activity level and personal preference. Another factor to be considered is the environment in which your dog spends his time. Although we can't guarantee your dog's enthusiasm or his safety with any specific toy, we can offer the following guidelines.

Be Cautious

The things that are usually the most attractive to dogs are often the very things that are the most dangerous. Dog-proof your home by checking for: string, ribbon, rubber bands, children's toys, pantyhose and anything else that could be ingested.

Toys should be appropriate for your dog's current size. Balls and other toys that are too small can easily be swallowed or become lodged in your dog's mouth or throat.

Avoid or alter any toys that aren't "dog-proof" by removing ribbons, strings, eyes or other parts that could be chewed and/or ingested. Avoid any toy that starts to break into pieces or have pieces torn off. You should also avoid "tug-of-war" toys, unless they'll be used between dogs, not between people and dogs.

Ask your veterinarian about which rawhide toys are safe and which aren't. Unless your veterinarian says otherwise, "chewies" like hooves, pig's ears and rawhides, should be supervision-only goodies. Very hard rubber toys are safer and last longer.

Take note of any toy that contains a "squeaker" buried in its center. Your dog may feel that he must find and destroy the squeak-source and could ingest it, in which case squeaking objects should be "supervision only" toys.

Check labels for child safety, as a stuffed toy that's labeled as safe for children under three years old, doesn't contain dangerous fillings. Problem fillings include things like nutshells and polystyrene beads, however, even a "safe" stuffing isn't truly digestible.

Remember that soft toys are not indestructible, but some are sturdier than others. Soft toys should be machine washable.

Toys We Recommend

Active Toys:

❖ Very hard rubber toys, like Nyla bone-type products and Kong-type products. These are available in

Continued...

a variety of shapes and sizes and are fun for chewing and for carrying around.

- ❖ "Rope" toys that are usually available in a "bone" shape with knotted ends.
- ❖ Tennis balls make great dog toys, but keep an eye out for any that could be chewed through and discard them.

Distraction Toys:

- ❖ Kong ®-type toys, especially when filled with broken-up treats or, even better, a mixture of broken-up treats and peanut butter. The right size Kong can keep a puppy or dog busy for hours. Only by chewing diligently can your dog access the treats, and then only in small bits - very rewarding! Double-check with your veterinarian about whether or not you should give peanut butter to your dog.
- ❖ "Busy-box" toys are large rubber cubes with hiding places for treats. Only by moving the cube around with his nose, mouth and paws, can your dog access the goodies.

Comfort Toys:

- ❖ Soft stuffed toys are good for several purposes, but aren't appropriate for all dogs. For some dogs, the stuffed toy should be small enough to carry around. For dogs that want to shake or "kill" the toy, it should be the size that "prey" would be for that size dog (mouse-size, rabbit-size or duck-size).
- ❖ Dirty laundry, like an old t-shirt, pillowcase, towel or blanket, can be very comforting to a dog, especially if it smells like you! Be forewarned that the item could be destroyed by industrious fluffing, carrying and nosing.

Get The Most Out Of Toys!

- ❖ Rotate your dog's toys weekly by making only four or five toys available at a time. Keep a variety of types easily accessible. If your dog has a huge favorite, like a soft "baby," you should probably leave it out all the time, or risk the wrath of your dog!
- ❖ Provide toys that offer a variety of uses - at least one toy to carry, one to "kill", one to roll and one to "baby."
- ❖ "Hide and Seek" is a fun game for dogs to play. "Found" toys are often much more attractive than a toy which is blatantly introduced. Making an interactive game out of finding toys or treats is a good "rainy-day" activity for your dog, using up energy without the need for a lot of space.
- ❖ Many of your dog's toys should be interactive. Interactive play is very important for your dog because he needs active "people time." By focusing on a specific task, like repeatedly returning a ball, Kong or Frisbee, or playing "hide-and-seek" with treats or toys, your dog can expel pent-up mental and physical energy in a limited amount of time and space. This greatly reduces stress due to confinement, isolation and/or boredom. For young, high-energy and untrained dogs, interactive play also offers an opportunity for socialization and helps them learn about appropriate and inappropriate behavior with people and with other animals, like jumping up or being mouthy.



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"Changing the Face of Municipal Shelters"

Please Don't Chain Your Dog! Alternatives to Chaining

From Ark Valley Humane Society

**** *In California, it is illegal to chain a dog for longer than 3 hours in any 24 hour period, per California Health and Safety Code Section 122335.*****

We all see dogs chained and there are some reasons why people chain their dogs. Some people think dogs should live outdoors. Some keep a dog chained because it gets out of the yard or digs holes. Sometimes the dog causes problems if left in the house. Sometimes the dog is left out to guard the home. **Not only is continuous tethering or chaining bad for dogs, it's illegal in California.** As pack animals, dogs have been bred for thousands of years to form a strong attachment to humans.

Normally friendly dogs can become neurotic, unhappy, or aggressive if kept chained and isolated. Chained dogs are more likely to bite than unchained dogs, and chained dogs can hang themselves if they are tethered too close to a fence and try to jump it. Chained dogs are subject to attacks by other animals and cruel humans.

If you would like to provide your dog with an alternative to a rope or chain, please consider these suggestions from the U.S. Humane Society: Install a fence on your property or consider installing a large chain-link dog run. If you install a dog run, make sure it meets these minimum requirements – and allow extra space for a doghouse/shelter.

Number of Dogs and Appropriate Dog Run Size

Less than 50 pounds

- 1 – 6 X 10 feet (60 square feet)
- 2 – 8 X 10 feet (80 square feet)
- 3 – 8 X 12 feet (96 square feet)

More than 50 pounds

- 1 – 8 X 10 feet (80 square feet)
- 2 – 8 X 12 feet (96 square feet)
- 3 – 10 X 14 feet (140 square feet)

If you have a fence your dog can jump, install a 45-degree inward extension to the top. Home improvement stores sell these extensions. If your dog digs under the fence, bury chicken wire to a depth of 1 foot below where the fence meets the ground (be sure to bend in the sharp edges), or place large rocks at the base of the fence.

If the two previous options don't work for you, consider using a cable runner or electronic fence. These options aren't perfect, but will give your dog more freedom. You should also have a fence that protects your dog from people and other animals. If your dog digs, consider putting plastic garden fencing or another barrier around the area, or provide your dog with his own sandbox. Bury toys in the sandbox and use positive reinforcement to teach your dog it is OK to dig there.

Enroll your dog in an *obedience class – especially if his behavior is the main reason you keep your dog outdoors.

The number one thing you can do to keep your dog behaving well and is to allow him/her to be inside the house at least when you are home. By giving a dog enough proper toys, exercise, positive reinforcement and time inside the house with you, you can often change bad behavior and teach good house manners.

Also, a dog inside the home is a greater deterrent to intruders than a chained dog outdoors. In addition to being safely confined, dogs outdoors need shelter from the weather. To protect your dog from weather, provide a well-constructed doghouse complete with hay bedding for winter, and plenty of shade and fresh water during the summer.



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What You Should Know About Upper Respiratory Infections

Source: Human Society of the United States

What is An Upper Respiratory Infection (URI), and Why are Animals From Shelters Susceptible?

In a typical shelter, many animals are taken in every day, some of whom have never received proper health care and many of whom are already carrying infectious diseases. Feline upper respiratory infection (feline "URI") and canine "kennel cough" are the animal equivalents of a human cold or flu infection, and these disease often affect sheltered dogs, cats, puppies and kittens. They are "species specific" and therefore cannot infect humans.

Feline URI and canine kennel cough are usually mild diseases that can be easily treated. Without treatment, however, they can severely debilitate an animal and even lead to fatal pneumonia. Animals who have been subjected to overcrowding, poor nutrition, extreme heat or cold, fear or infection with another disease before being admitted to the shelter are more susceptible to these illnesses and may develop more severe symptoms. Even if animals are vaccinated against these infectious diseases as soon as they enter the shelter, vaccines may take up to two weeks to provide protections from disease. And many animals are infected prior to entering the shelter.

What Are the Symptoms I Should Look For In My New Cat or Dog?

In cats and kittens, the signs of feline URI may include sneezing; fever; runny nose; red or watery eye; nasal congestion (often seen as drooling or open mouth breathing); ulcers on tongue, lips, nose, or roof of mouth; lack of appetite or thirst; and lack of energy. Dogs and puppies affected with canine kennel cough often exhibit a hacking or honking cough, sometimes followed by gagging. Some dogs and pups may only have a runny nose. Without veterinary care, they may become lethargic, run a fever, and lose their appetite.

What Should I Do If My New Companion Animal Has These Symptoms?

Seek veterinary care as soon as possible (*immediately* for young pups and kittens or for adult pets who stop eating).

What Can I Do to Help My Pet Get Well Fast?

Follow the veterinarian's instructions closely. Use all medications exactly as prescribed, even if your pet's condition seems to have improved. Encourage your pet to rest as much as possible by providing a quiet, warm place. This is not a good time to introduce your animal to family members and other pets in the household or your neighborhood. Provide food as recommended by your veterinarian and encourage your pet to eat; try warming a high-quality canned food. Gently wipe any discharge from the eyes and nose with a warm, damp towel. To help ease the discomfort of a congested cat or dog, use a vaporizer or place the animal in the bathroom and run hot water in the shower for a few minutes every day. Provide lots of love and concern and be patient; your new companion will be ready to join in your normal family activities soon.

What to Do if Your Pet is Poisoned

ASPCA Hotline (888) 426-4435

Don't panic. Rapid response is important, but panicking can interfere with the process of helping your pet.

Take 30 to 60 seconds to safely collect and have at hand any material involved. This may be of great benefit to your vet and/or APCC toxicologists, as they determine what poison or poisons are involved. In the event that you need to take your pet to a local veterinarian, be sure to take the product's container with you. Also, collect in a sealable plastic bag any material your pet may have vomited or chewed.

If you witness your pet consuming material that you suspect might be toxic, do not hesitate to seek emergency assistance, even if you do not notice any adverse effects. Sometimes, even if poisoned, an animal may appear normal for several hours or for days after the incident.

Call the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center

The telephone number is **(888) 426-4435**. There is a \$65 consultation fee for this service.

Be ready with the following information:

- The species, breed, age, sex, weight and number of animals involved.
- The animal's symptoms.
- Information regarding the exposure, including the agent (if known), the amount of the agent involved and the time elapsed since the time of exposure.
- Have the product container/packaging available for reference.

Please note: If your animal is having seizures, losing consciousness, is unconscious or is having difficulty breathing, telephone ahead and bring your pet immediately to your local veterinarian or emergency veterinary clinic. If necessary, he or she may call the APCC.

Be Prepared

Keep the telephone number of the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center—**(888) 426-4435**—as well as that of your local veterinarian, in a prominent location.

Invest in an emergency first-aid kit for your pet. The kit should contain:

- A fresh bottle of hydrogen peroxide, 3 percent USP (to induce vomiting)
- A turkey baster, bulb syringe or large medicine syringe (to administer peroxide)
- Saline eye solution
- Artificial tear gel (to lubricate eyes after flushing)
- Mild grease-cutting dishwashing liquid (for bathing an animal after skin contamination)
- Forceps (to remove stingers)
- A muzzle (to protect against fear- or excitement-induced biting)
- A can of your pet's favorite wet food
- A pet carrier
- Always consult a veterinarian or the APCC for directions on how and when to use any emergency first-aid item.

Ventura County Animal Services
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