Dog Problems Solved!

Learn why your dog is behaving like it is and how to stop the problem quickly

Solutions for dogs that are...

Aggressive  Fighting  Possessive
Barking   Hyperactive  Running away
Begging   Jumping up  Stealing
Biting    Naughty    Shy
Chasing   Neurotic   Submissive
Chewing   Nipping    Un-trainable
Destructive Not coming  Un-housetrainable
Digging   Psychotic  Whining
Fearful   Pulling    And more...
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Part 1 – Understanding Dogs And Their Owners

Psychology Of Dog Training: Why Do We Correct Our Dogs?

What are we trying to accomplish when we correct a dog? Do we want to make the dog submissive to us? Are we trying to show the dog that we’re displeased with his behavior? Do we want the dog to feel guilty or ashamed over what he has done or how he is behaving? I think not. When we strip away all of the emotional considerations involved in any incident where we feel the dog deserves a correction, whether it be anger, disappointment, a sense of betrayal, or embarrassment, we want him to stop doing something that isn't appropriate. The owner wants the dog to settle down.

Unfortunately, this kind of thinking, while justifiable in most cases, simply won't work because dogs can’t learn not to do things; they can only learn to do things. Now, I’m not suggesting that a dog can't learn to be still; my point is that a dog can learn to be still only by learning how to be calm. So, while we may think that we want inaction from our dog to accomplish our aim of settling the dog down, we really need action.

What gets dogs into trouble with their human companions are the canine's natural tendencies and inclinations, their wild instincts. These instincts would be completely appropriate and normal if the dog were living in the wild, and so it is to be expected that dogs become excited at the arrival of strangers or at the return of their owners. It is natural behavior for a dog to be destructive when left alone, or to pull rambunctiously when walked on a lead. When dogs do these things the problem isn’t that our pets are acting abnormally and that we’re bad dog owners: These behaviors are inborn traits.

The real problem is how we perceive a dog’s behavior and then how that perception influences the way we present training problems to our dogs. Rather than saying to the dog, "Don't pull on your lead," we need to speak in terms of an instinctual message: "Be attracted to me even though there are powerful distractions about." Rather than commanding a dog not to jump on strangers, we need to train him how to make contact with strangers. We can't tell a dog not to bark, or to cease being a pest, but we can train him to have an unswerving focus on an objective.

Through such a focus, a dog can be commanded to settle down. Ultimately, the dog can develop so much patience that whenever he wants something, calmness
rather than nervousness will be his habit for success. If we analyze what we’re trying to accomplish in those everyday situations that require manners from our dog, we'll find that we actually want to train our dog to do things.

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**The Importance Of Understanding Dog Behavior**

In order to understand dog behavior, you must first consider the effects of the human contact that occurs from the day the domestic puppy is born until the end of his life. These interactions are strong catalysts that add to the inherent differences between the wolf and dog. Whereas the dog easily weaves into the family and social structure of humans, the wolf has failed to do so.

The integration of the dog into the human environment is so comfortable and complete that many people even refer to their dogs as their children. The analogy comes to mind for many people because the canine is often adopted as a family member and fits the child's role easily and naturally. To create the most rewarding human-canine relationship, the unique qualities of the domestic dog must be considered by themselves rather than from the standpoint of the wolf.

Similar to the human child, the dog seeks affection and approval, and has the ability to learn. Like children, dogs are playful, affectionate, curious, adaptable, innocent, and basically happy-go-lucky creatures. Depending upon the home environment and many other factors, the dog, like the child, can be an angel or a delinquent.

Few dogs go through life without acquiring some behaviors an owner finds annoying or even intolerable. Intolerable behavior can be the result of either genetics, caused by inexperienced breeders indiscriminately breeding poor-tempered dogs, or the environment in which the dog has been raised without proper training and guidance. Just like children, if dogs are not disciplined and taught manners, they can become out of control and a problem to themselves and everyone in the community. These problem dogs all too often wind up at animal shelters waiting on death row for an unnecessary demise.

If the owner is willing to endure the undesirable behaviors, the problem dog may receive a lifetime sentence to the backyard with very little human contact. The jail sentence to the yard only exacerbates the problem behavior, and often turns the dog into an incessant barker, chewer, digger, or aggressor. Fortunately, behavior modification through obedience training is very effective in repairing problem behavior.

A comprehensive obedience and behavioral course can teach owners how to prevent and resolve behavior problems. The ideal purpose of obedience training
is to channel appropriate behavior and discourage problem behavior. The majority of dogs, regardless of their age, can be rehabilitated. Problem behavior can be redirected into appropriate behavior with clear, consistent, and persistent communication from the dog owner through obedience training.

Obedience training communicates concrete rules which provide the dog with predictable outcomes via reinforcement and consequences. Obedience training with competent instruction teaches the owner the essential skills for raising a well-mannered, well-adjusted canine by using principles of consistency, persistency, and reinforcement for good and inappropriate behavior.

Choosing Dog Training Methods

Before choosing a particular training method, carefully examine the technique to ensure that it will communicate proper associations. Certain methods may not communicate what you intend. A dog-aggressive Akita was enrolled in a training program that his owner thought was reputable. The trainer convinced the owner that the only way to break the Akita of aggression toward other dogs was to let a more dominant dog put him in his place. The trainer's dog displayed dominance toward other dogs, so she placed him in a room with the Akita and left the two dogs to work things out. When the trainer heard a window crashing, she opened the door to find that her dog was injured, and the Akita had been richly rewarded for his aggressive behavior with a nice victory under his collar.

If this method does not make sense to you, it probably won't make sense to the dog, either. One trainer sent around a flyer giving free advice to the general public on how to stop dogs from digging. The trainer suggested filling the newly dug hole with water and taking the dog over to the hole by the scruff of the neck to dunk his head in the water filled-hole. The next sentence on this flyer cautioned the owner that the dunking probably would not stop the dog from digging; instead, forcing the dog down to the water by the scruff of the neck was a demonstration of dominance, a root cure-all for problem behavior. The trainer thought through the method far enough to figure out that the water would have no effect on future digging. Unfortunately, he did not explain that the dog would learn to mistrust his owner for trying to drown him. Shortly after this flyer was distributed, another trainer was indicted for animal abuse for employing this very correction technique.

Occasionally, even thinking through a method does not result in a clear understanding of how it works. One day a fellow drove up to class in a pickup with his dog in the back. The dog trainer explained to him that it was very dangerous to have the dog in the back of an open pickup. He went through the normal lecture on how the dog's nose and eyes could be damaged from debris in
the air, the danger of the dog being thrown out of the truck in an accident, etc. The fellow proudly said, "I fixed the dog from jumping out of the truck. He was jumping out and I would throw him back in. We did this for five or six times when I finally got really mad and threw him in the truck for the seventh time and stuffed a piece of horse manure in his mouth for good measure. After that the dog never jumped out again, and the next time he does something bad, I am going to use that manure trick again."

It was really hard to determine if the dog stopped jumping out of the truck because he got tired of being thrown back in, or if he was grateful for the gourmet horse manure treat. If you are not sure about exactly how or why a method works, it is probably best to avoid the technique altogether. Even the most popular methods use techniques that may not be suited for every breed or temperament of dog. A trainer who evaluates each method based on the efficacy of the associations and motivators will be better equipped to match the appropriate obedience method with the dog's individual temperament.

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**To All Dog Owners: Are You Guilty Of Anthropomorphism?**

For years Hollywood has portrayed motion-picture canines as animals whose motivations are based on human perceptions and values. Lassie saves a rabbit from death, for example, or Benji solves a crime, or Rin Tin Tin protects the fort from outlaws. These animal films are very entertaining, and the canine actors are extremely well trained, but they tend to give the viewer a distorted, unrealistic picture of a dog's ability to think and reason.

This misrepresentation of canine behavior is the downfall of many dog owners and their unfortunate pets. A person who has never taken a dog training course or read a good training manual containing information on canine behavior very often expects from his or her dog things that canines are unable to do. Such a person may teach even those behaviors that the dog is capable of carrying out in a confusing and haphazard manner. Many poor dogs are then unjustly labeled, spiteful, stupid, stubborn, and sometimes just plain bad. The proper label is ignorant, and it belongs to the owner, not the dog. Whenever you try to evaluate canine behaviors through a human point of view, you will misinterpret them.

All but the very worst anthropomorphic dog owners can be helped if they make a valid effort to understand their dogs. It is not a crime to be anthropomorphic, but it should be a crime if you own a dog and make no effort to understand him. Some aspects of anthropomorphism are harmless to the dog - and can even be enjoyable. For example, giving your dog a special dinner on his birthday or filling a Christmas stocking with dog toys and treats is not detrimental; What dog owners should learn about anthropomorphism should directly concern the dog's
training, especially when it comes to good timing and fair corrections. For example, owners often correct their dog based on a "guilty look" on the dog's face, assuming he "knows" he was wrong. The dog doesn't know, any more than he knows it is his birthday or Christmas.

Here is another good example of anthropomorphism. Many dog owners - especially owners of younger dogs - experience a chewing problem at some point. Many calls come in on a regular basis from frustrated owners who say that their dogs chew furniture, rugs, shoes, and the like when left alone in the house. They say that they have tried everything. "He knows he has done wrong," they say. When asked what they have done to correct the dog, they say, "I holler at him and show him what he chewed. I tell him he is bad, and I smack him with the newspaper."

This procedure is usually repeated many times while the dog continues to destroy the house. Eventually the time arrives when the owner comes home and the dog runs and hides. Some dogs may even stand and shiver with a terribly "guilty look" on their face. Then, periodically, the owner will come home and not find a mess. The owner will be happy and will praise and pet the dog. The dog will respond to the happy sound and good-feeling rubs with a wagging tail and a happy appearance.

This cheerful behavior, unfortunately, reinforces in the owner's mind that the dog knows that avoiding chewing is "right" and that chewing up the house is "wrong." "He's just a bad dog," the owner thinks or "He's really spiteful. He wants to get even with me for leaving him home." These statements are all based strictly on human emotions and a human perspective. Owners such as these are being anthropocentric. They view everything in terms of human experience and human values.

- :: -

Sending Your Dog Mixed Messages

Dog behavior problems are frequently the result of unclear communication. The owner may not even be aware that the messages he is sending to the dog are confusing. The owner of a well-trained Standard Poodle was unaware of her confusing messages during an epic long session of grooming. The Poodle tired and attempted to sit. The owner, wanting the dog to remain standing, yelled "Don't sit." The dog stood for a few seconds in a crouched position, and, confused about what the word "don't" meant, tried to sit again. Totally perplexed, he was trying very hard to comply with what he thought was his owner's request.

Good communication with your dog is comprised of clear, consistent, distinct messages. A dog cannot possibly respond correctly if the vocabulary or the rules
change at whim from day to day. Another example of inconsistent, mixed messages is demonstrated by the owner who allows a behavior occasionally, punishes the dog for it at other times, and does not use distinct cues to inform the dog when the conduct is not acceptable.

A dog who is petted for jumping up when the owner arrives home from softball practice is going to be encouraged, to the owner's dismay and anger, to jump up when the owner comes home from a party all dressed up. Unfortunately, few dogs are able to distinguish between the owner's softball jump up clothes and the owner's party stay off clothes. Consequently, without any distinct warning, the dog may receive a swat for jumping up on the wrong clothes. The dog learns that jumping up will sometimes be rewarded by petting and other times, for no apparent reason, will elicit a smack.

The only lesson a dog may learn from inconsistent messages is that the rules are unstable. Clear and consistent communication requires that an owner teach a command for each desired and undesired behavior to inform the dog about acceptable behavior. For example, you can teach a jump up command that tells the dog jumping up is acceptable, and another command such as, "off" that instructs him not to jump up. When messages are confusing, the dog can neither establish a pattern to earn the owner's approval, nor predict the owner's reactions. The dog who cannot establish a way to earn his owner's approval gives up trying to please. The dog who does not know how to predict his owner's reactions becomes fearful, mistrusting, and avoidant.

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**Timing: One Of The Most Important Aspects Of Dog Training**

Timing is probably the most important factor in how fast your dog learns something. What we mean by timing is this: Let's say that your dog put his nose on the hot oven door. A few moments later he walked into the family room, looked at the TV, and then felt the burning sensation on his nose. He would associate the burning sensation with the TV. Because of the lapse in time, he would never in a million years associate the experience of his burned nose with the oven door.

Timing is vital when teaching your puppy the rules around your house, such as not to chew the rug. For example, say you walk into the living room five minutes after the puppy has finished chewing the rug. You find him sleeping in the corner and drag him over to the rug. You point to the rug and scold him. Your correction is too late. Your pup will never figure out that the disagreeable experience he is having now has anything to do with what he did five minutes before.
Correcting a dog more than a few seconds after he does a behavior is too late. He will no longer associate your correction with his previous deed. Of course, if you come into the room even many hours later ranting like a maniac, your dog is going to cower and act apprehensive. Do not misinterpret apprehension for "guilt". To help your dog learn rapidly and efficiently, it is up to you to develop good timing.

So what is good timing? Good timing is correcting or praising your dog as he is thinking about doing a behavior. That's the best way to get a dog to associate your correction or praise with the behavior you are trying to influence. You do not have to be a dog mind-reader to know what your dog is thinking. Canines are open, honest creatures. Everything they are about to do is written all over their faces.

The ability to anticipate a dog's next move is called "reading the dog." It's not as hard as it may sound. The more time you spend with your dog, the better you will become at "reading" him. Imagine this scenario: You are expecting company and put out a plate of cheese and crackers on the coffee table. Your dog looks at the cheese and takes a few steps toward the table. Now is the time to tell him "Naaaaa!" Chances are good that he was thinking about taking the cheese. Well-timed corrections will teach your pet to avoid stealing food.

The next best time to correct your dog is just as he is doing the unwanted behavior. Using our example, this means a tough "Naaaa!" just as the dog's mouth is reaching for the cheese. The worst time to correct is ten seconds after the dog has done the unwanted behavior. Yelling at the dog when you discover an empty cheese plate will not effectively teach him to avoid stealing the cheese in the first place.

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**Does Punishing My Dog Really Work?**

Punishment is the use of an adverse stimulus on your dog in order to reduce the probability of a problematic behavior in the future. Punishment is generally considered to be only marginally effective in dog training due to the time gap between behavior and reinforcement. An example of punishment might be: An owner comes home to find some shredded paper on the floor. He angrily proceeds to drag the dog to the mess and both verbally and physically reprimand the dog for the mess.

This dog will almost certainly be afraid of his owner's actions. This dog may show subordinate behavior or even aggression as a result of the forceful nature of the punishment. The dog may not make the association between the act and the
punishment. The timing between events makes it extremely difficult for the dog to make a connection.

Punishment should be avoided whenever possible. Those who have used punishment as a training tool often say it rarely works out, admitting that the technique may not teach the dog anything and may very well cause conflict in the relationship between the dog and its owner.

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**Consistency & Persistence Pays Off When Training Your Dog**

If the rules change from day to day, the dog becomes confused. He needs to know how to consistently earn reward and avoid punishment or he will give up responding. The good trainer is consistent and always uses the same command for the same behavior. Most dog owners teach the dog that the command "down" means to be in a prone position. Unfortunately, many dog owners use the same command to mean, lie down, remove thyself from the couch or bed, or stop jumping on people. When a command has many different meanings, the word ceases to have an important message.

Give each behavior its own command. The command "off" can be used to mean paws on the floor, and "down" may remain to define the prone position. After you decide on consistent commands, the next step is to be persistent in using them. Dogs are naturally good at persistent behavior, and even better if rewarded for it.

Many a dog owner has given up trying to correct the dog that barks all day or jumps on people. Dog owners drop out of obedience classes all the time because they are worn down by their dogs' seemingly persistent behaviors, and they give up trying to teach their dogs new behaviors. The key is that the owners gave up, and the dogs learned that persistence pays off. When an owner gives in, the dog's persistent behavior is strengthened and reinforced. Any determined dog owner can wear the dog down. Therefore, it is extremely important that you be more persistent than the dog about continuing the training process until the dog performs the desired behavior.

The dog must learn that the energy he spends engaging in undesirable behavior is not worth the effort, because you will persist. If you correct him for jumping up the first four times and don't correct him for the fifth jump up you simply teach him to jump up five times for the payoff. Similarly, if you correct the dog for barking at the moon sometimes and not at other times, you teach him that sometimes barking is acceptable and sometimes it is not. The dog will continue to bark to determine when barking is acceptable and when it is not acceptable.
Consequently, correcting barking sometimes actually encourages even more barking. If you don't correct the dog for barking in the backyard because you are not at home, he will learn that barking is acceptable when you’re away. If you sneak out of the house so as not to cue him that it is acceptable to bark, he only needs to bark twice with no correction to figure out that you are not at home. A behavior will be extinguished or changed only if you persist in correcting the dog every time he misbehaves.

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**Discipline Your Dog Instead Of Punishing Him**

Too often, dogs do not understand why they are receiving punishment or which behavior produced the punishment. Dog owners attribute unrealistic reasoning abilities far beyond the animal's mental capacity. The owner may believe the dog knew what he was doing wrong because he had the "guilty" look on his face when the owner yelled, "WHAT IS THIS ON THE FLOOR!" while pointing to a mess. The belief that the dog knew better incites the owner to severely punish him despite the fact that the destruction occurred several hours before the owner got home. The dog connects the punishment with the owner coming home, not with the misbehavior that took place several hours ago. The next day, the owner is prepared to find a mess, and the first thing he or she does upon arriving home is search the house for evidence of dog damage.

The posture of an owner searching for a pile of unmentionables is not at all friendly and loving. The owner's hunched over shoulders and wiggling nose, searching for a mess, make the person look mean and contorted. The verbal greeting may go something like, "So what did you destroy today?" The "guilty" look is the dog's response to the owner's weird behavior.

The dog is remembering previous inexplicable punishment. In his mind, greeting the owner at the door will result to punishment. The dog forgot about the mess that he made hours ago. Punishing your pet long after the crime has been committed, rather than during or immediately after the act, has no purpose other than to confuse or make the dog fearful. Many owners report that they do not even suspect a problem when they walk in the door, and yet the dog still looks guilty. Maybe there have been enough messes for the dog to realize that a mess on the floor is a good indication that a correction is approaching when the owner gets home. However, the dog simply does not have the ability to connect that refraining from chewing at noon will prevent a punishment at 5:30 pm.

There is no evidence to suggest that dogs deliberately misbehave to make their owners angry. Dogs misbehave because they were not taught proper behavior, or they are bored, frustrated, and anxious, to name a few reasons. Dogs chew,
bark, etc., to satisfy their immediate needs and emotions, not to spite their owners. Dogs want to please their owners and not spite them.

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Understanding The Shakedown For Dog Discipline

An alternative means of discipline for your dog is known as the “shakedown.” This method is suggested for shy dogs and for dogs who have large jowls (St. Bernards, Newfoundlands, some boxers), for whom chin discipline would not be as effective. This is also suggested as an alternative method for puppies, until they are at least six months old.

Note: Physical discipline should be reserved for serious dog crimes only, and not to be used for every episode of bad behavior. Verbal correction might suffice for many dogs, but you should know more than one method of discipline before the unfortunate necessity of using one arises.

In the shakedown the dog is sitting, anchored in place with tension on the training collar. When you have seated the dog, and are sure it will not move, wheel around in front of it and kneel down. Grasp the scruff of the dog’s neck with both hands and lift it right off its front feet into the air. Look directly into the dog’s face, and shake the dog back and forth in quick, firm motions, gradually lowering the dog. Scold the dog while you look at it, and keep it elevated a good thirty seconds. It may be difficult to raise some larger breeds, in which case you will have to sacrifice this part of the procedure. Most dogs, however, can be lifted up off their front feet with a little effort.

After discipline in this fashion, the dog will be shaken up mentally and physically. Eye contact is essential. When you grasp the dog under its chin, make sure that you have one or both thumbs looped under the training collar, to stop the dog from breaking away. With your fingers, grab hold of quite a bit of neck scruff, and hold it firmly.

For young puppies amend this method somewhat. First, cut down on the intensity and duration of your correction. A young pup should be disciplined by simply grabbing with one hand the scruff of the neck and giving it a good shake. This method approximates the technique a mother of a litter uses to keep order in the litter, to stop fighting between litter members, or to help wean her pups away from her to solid food. Discipline methods that reflect instinctual canine behavior will communicate displeasure in ways a dog can understand. Other corrections like throwing or hitting the dog with objects, spanking with newspapers, or simple pleading only serve human, not canine, ends, and do not communicate displeasure clearly to the dog.
Understanding & Respecting Your Dog's Natural Instincts

One thing that all dogs have in common is a desire to please their owners. Unfortunately, an interspecies language barrier makes it difficult to get the point across. Training lets you overcome this barrier. It establishes a means of communication between you and your dog that's bound to brighten your relationship. After all, training shows your dog how to earn exactly what it craves - your approval.

Before you start actively training your dog, you might want to invest a little time learning a touch of the dog's language. We don't just mean barking. Body language is an extremely important communication tool between dogs and other creatures. If you spend just a few moments watching your dog, you may come away with the ability to understand, even "connect" with your dog, much to its delight.

For instance, dogs often show they want to romp by making a "play bow." You'll recognize a play bow when your dog stretches out his forelegs before him and directs his rear end straight up in the air. Dogs instantly understand what this posture means, whether it is performed by another dog or a human being. Try imitating the play bow in front of your dog when it seems to be in the mood for fun. Chances are, your pet will reward you with an intriguing and exuberant response.

Other forms of canine body language worth understanding are signs of submission and aggression. Dogs who are submissive will often crouch down when you approach them, tuck their tail between their legs or roll over to expose the belly. They may urinate on the floor. This is a dog who doesn't want to assert itself. This dog may need a lot of reassurance. Training may help the submissive dog "find itself."

An aggressive dog, besides showing teeth or letting out a low growl, may indicate aggression by raising the hair on the back, putting the ears forward and holding the tail high. You can usually catch a glimpse of the dog's mood by the ugly look in its eyes. In fact, reading the expression in a dog's eyes is a powerful way to gauge its feelings, both good and bad. Most dogs do not like to maintain eye contact with a human being or more dominant dog for long; they will shift their gaze sideways before looking back again. In the wild, animals often interpret direct staring as a challenge. Once you build a trusting relationship with a dog, however, you will probably find your dog sending long, loving looks your way without fear of reprisal.
Another thing to remember is that your puppy naturally begins to learn the moment it sets foot in your house, even if you do not know it. Dogs are creatures of habit. They soon establish routines and expectations based on what patterns are set by their owners. Consider the dog who perks up every time it hears a can opener pierce a can lid. Or the one who whines when it sees its owner pick up car keys, because it has learned that soon enough it will be alone for the day. And surely you've seen many a dog surge into action by the sight or sound of a leash being picked up.

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How To Get Your Dog To Substitute Good Behaviors For The Bad Ones

One way of training your dog to stop an annoying behavior is to use substitution. One kind of substitution is to put an activity you approve of in the place of one you do not. For example, teach the dog who jumps up on people that sitting, not jumping, gets her the attention she's looking for. And be consistent. If you don't want your dog to jump up in greeting, don't ever let her.

You can help steer your dog away from inappropriate behavior by making the objects you want to protect do their part to discourage your dog. You can do so in three ways:

1. Make the object taste bad. Coat the object with something dogs find hateful, such as Bitter Apple, available in any pet-supply store. Tabasco sauce is another disagreeable taste to dogs.

2. Make the object startle him. Balloons and mousetraps make sharp noises that startle your dog and help him decide that maybe he'd better leave the booby-trapped area alone. Some products give off a piercing noise when motion is detected near them, and these can work, too.

3. Make the object shocking. Vinyl mats and strips that give off a tiny static shock can be very effective in teaching dogs to stay off furniture and counter tops.

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Dog Training Tip: Your Dog Will Always Move To Seek Pleasure & Avoid Displeasure

Quite simply, your dog is going to try very hard to do the things that are going to earn her a reward, and not to do the things that are going to earn her a
correction. Sound obvious? It is, but you’d be surprised at how often we send mixed messages to our dogs!

Here’s an example: Have you ever walked down the street and encountered a dog who lunged or growled at you from the end of her leash? If so, then you know that the most common reaction from the person at the other end of the leash is to pet and soothe and sweet-talk the dog. Now that’s a classic crossed-up signal, since it rewards the dog for her antisocial behavior; a more appropriate response would be a good sharp vocal and physical correction (more on those to come). We’re all guilty of that kind of hypocrisy now and then, but it’s important not to make it a habit, or you’ll have an awfully confused dog to show for it!

Educating your dog means becoming an authority figure to her and earning her respect and allegiance as you teach what she needs to know. Before you dive right into her lessons, stop and think about your own education. Think about the teachers you loved and the teachers you hated. Chances are, the ones you adored and respected were the fair, calm ones who made you enjoy what you were learning, and the ones you loathed were the short-tempered, arbitrary ones who drilled you on your lessons without ever cracking a smile. Don’t forget them as you educate your dog, because great teachers of kids and great teachers of canines have a whole lot in common.

Dog education takes time. If some videotape or book tells you that you can have a perfectly trained dog after one or two weeks, don’t believe it! First of all, dog training isn’t something you can do once and then forget: Even if your dog can learn everything she needs to know in a week, she’s not going to retain much of it if you don’t keep practicing with her. Expect that your new pup will need several weeks to understand the rules of your house and the new words you’ll teach her. Dogs learn at very different rates, and by the way, slower doesn’t necessarily mean dumber. Sometimes the brightest dogs are also the most stubborn, so keep the faith and know that every dog, no matter how resistant, can be educated.

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**Why Most Behavioral Problems Come From Dogs That Are “Leader-Types”**

Most problem dogs are leader types, they are trying to control the activities of the family or certain individuals in the group. In some cases the dogs are in conflict with their physical environment or external social elements, such as fences, tethers, neighborhood children, cats, other dogs, mailmen or visitors. A dog that wants to control these elements, or to lead the activities of its human family pack, is doomed to a life of frustration.
Leader-type dogs exhibit any or all of the following behavior, both on and off their home territory:

- Precedes owner through doors or when walking in almost any direction.
- Does not obey the owner's commands.
- Displays anxiety about new people or situations.
- Interferes with the owner's interactions with other people.
- Nudges the owner persistently for physical petting.

When a dog assumes a leadership role in its owner relationships, it usually exhibits behavior that provides clues, even off the home property. Some easily detected signs are:

- Protectiveness of the owner.
- Nervousness (anxiety about the new area, scouting the area).
- Lack of response to the owner's direction.
- Rushes in or out of doors ahead of the owner.
- Interferes with the owner's interactions with other people in the new situation.

How A Dog's Vision May Cause Mistaken Behavioral Problems

Most people are aware that their dog's senses of hearing and smell are keener than those of humans. Not as commonly understood, though, is the dog's deficiencies in some sensory processes. Whether this leads to problems often depends on the way people interact with the dog. The following information helps explain many canine behaviorisms, and canine reactions that owners don't understand and/or respond to inappropriately when it comes to a dog's visual perception, which create problems or diminish the positive quality of their relationships.

Dogs don't recognize details within an outline, such as noses, eyes, etc., on a human face, but are fairly keen at perceiving outlines. In a Pavlovian experiment they were trained to discriminate between perfect circles and egg-shaped outlines. They performed nicely. But, when the ellipse was gradually rounded until it was 8/9ths of a circle, the dogs failed to recognize the difference, a task most people perceive easily. If repeatedly asked to do this, the dog lost all its previously learned responses, even to the big differences between circles and ellipses. Many dogs became neurotic and had to be retired to kennels for a rehabilitation program of rest. This experiment shows the dog's extreme sensitivity to visually perceived stimuli when they suddenly produce inconsistent feedback.
In a real-life, the owner's hands usually signal positive treatment, such as petting. When the same hands inflict punishment or pain, the dog usually displays a momentary, often subtle, ambivalent behavior, vacillating between affectionate and defensive responses. During initial interviews with clients, this reaction is clearly seen in dogs that have been punished by hand, so to speak. Further, when strangers reach to pet these dogs, the actions may trigger a full expression of submission or aggression, depending on the nervous makeup of the dog and its environmental history.

Most owners are not aware that their puppy's vision does not reach maturity until about 4 months of age. Until then, things appear in various degrees of fuzziness, which makes visual identification of objects and individuals difficult. This can cause some pups to bark or growl at family members. If punished, the pups become confused and the seeds are sewn for problems such as submissive wetting and biting.

Imperfect ability to distinguish various shapes may explain why some dogs, in dim lighting, become unnerved, growl at or shy away from their owners. Though they can virtually "see in the dark" as compared with people, their poor ability to distinguish shapes may be impaired in reduced light. So, when they are approached in low light levels by the owner, they may growl. Rather than simply clear up the mystery by speaking the dog's name, many owners punish or back away from the pet, reinforcing the behavior. From that point, the problem usually escalates and the relationship between owner and dog degenerates.

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Behavior Problems That Arise From A Dog's Sense Of Touch

The sense of touch probably leads to more serious problems in the dog's human relationships than any other. And dog owners are typically not keen to the upcoming information regarding a dog's nature. When a dog is stimulated by touch, the incoming visual, auditory, and tactile nerve fibers all converge initially in the unconditioned defensive reflex centers, the sense of touch somehow appears to take precedence over the others in producing defensive behavior.

Dog reflex researchers described docile, submissive dogs who would bite aggressively, repeatedly, after surgical removal of their cerebral cortices when the base of their necks (a kill-area attacked by predators or enemies) were simply touched! This indicates that the nerve centers for bite inhibition are not a brain-stem activity, but are in the conscious cerebral cortex. Biting when touched in this sensitive area is an involuntary brain stem activity. The fact that control, or inhibition, of the bite behavior lies in the "gray matter" of the brain explains why dozing or sleeping dogs may automatically bite without inhibition when touched,
or when they get stepped on which is probably the basis for the ancient wisdom, "Let sleeping dogs lie."

Defensive and/or aggressive responses to touch seem contrary for an animal born in close physical contact with litter mates, providing needed warmth and comfort. Defensive and aggressive behavior between puppies is seen when play-fighting starts between 2 ½ and 4 weeks of age and continues into adulthood. However, if the family toddler is the target of the play-bite, critical problems result, especially if the pup is severely punished immediately after the incident. Punishment creates a negative association of pain and social rejection between infant and the maturing dog. The dog then often becomes defensive, growls or tries to avoid the child's approaches. Parents then may scold or further punish the dog, creating an escalating, negative social relationship between the dog and its family members.

These cases can usually be resolved when the parents understand the causes, and are willing to undertake a program to inhibit the negative, learned emotional association with the child, replacing it an emotionally positive association provided by the parents' example when the child is first perceived by the dog. However, it should be mentioned that emotional switch-conditioning requires committed and enlightened parents who will follow both the spirit and letter of the techniques used in the program.

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### 6 Ways You Can Reverse The Roles Of A Demanding Dog

Dominance aggression is a very common form of aggression because of its inherent nature. In order for the human owner to achieve and maintain dominance, he must understand the dog's urges and know how to diffuse them in a positive manner. It is important to note that dominant dogs generally escalate their aggression when physical corrections are administered via leash and collar. Overwhelming physical force has backed many of these dogs down yet often proved to be only a temporary solution.

**Treatment:** Management generally consists of learning how not to trigger aggressive responses. If you call your dog and he will not come, leave him alone. If you want to pet him and you call him over with success, you may pet him; otherwise, do not go to him. Praise him only when he responds to your command to come. Do not go to him and stroke him when he will not come to you. Furthermore, remember not to pet him when he comes over, nudging you with his nose, pushing at your arm for some strokes. It is important that you don't acknowledge demanding behavior in order not to encourage these demanding tendencies.
The common areas to recognize and control the hierarchical structure include:

1. Who sleeps in the best spot. The best spot is that area that is considered either most comfortable or closest to the dominant figure in the pack.

2. Who eats first. Survival of the fittest insures that the strong eat before anyone else. Feed yourself first.

3. Who walks in front. He who is in front is the leader. If you are always following your dog, he is the leader and you are the follower. Commonly, dogs are walked on a lead, and they pull their owners constantly around the neighborhood. Why would the dog think that the owner is in charge?

4. Who protects the pack. The strong protect the pack. When your dog has a hard time settling down when a visitor arrives at your door, and the barking appears to be somewhat aggressive, the dog assumes that it is his job to inspect and decide who can and who cannot enter his domain. This may be a manifestation of a protection or dominant drive. It is up to you to teach your dog that he is not to be involved in protection issues because you will take care of such problems for him.

5. Who owns the toys. The dog that can control his toys may be inadvertently trained to guard his toys. Leaving his toys around for him to play with at his will may suggest ownership of these toys. It is a good habit to take your dog's toys away when he is not using them and give them to him when you wish to play.

6. Who controls the play time. Dogs will almost throw their toys or balls in your lap in an attempt to elicit play from you. Although this can be a harmless act, it may also be a dominant act as well. Be sure to initiate play on your terms; it is amazing what a dog will do for his owner for a short play session. Use play as a reward for your dog's compliant behavior.

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**6 Reasons Why You & Your Dog Should Attend Group Obedience Classes**

Education begins at home, but it doesn't end there. It's important that you supplement your dog's home schooling with a good obedience class - or several! Why is obedience school so necessary? Well, here's a starter list:

1. You and your dog will learn more advanced commands. You've got a good start with "sit" and "let's go," but in class you'll master exercises like "down," "stay," "heel," "stand" and "come" as well - the vocabulary she'll need to become a really responsive and trustworthy friend and partner.
2. Your instructor can address your specific needs. Books and videotapes are great, but they can't stay after class to discuss your dog's individual problems or strong points, they can't demonstrate new moves to you, and they can't tell you whether you're holding your leash funny or giving your dog a confusing command. There's really no substitute for the one-on-one attention and suggestions of a good instructor.

3. You'll learn from the other people and dogs in the class. Your classmates may have new ideas for you, or you may pick up tips just from watching them. And you'll find that they're sympathetic to your problems and proud of your successes in ways that your non-dog-loving friends may not be.

4. Your dog will get used to other people and dogs. This is a biggie. No amount of backyard practice can teach your dog to behave in the presence of other exciting people or pups. And if your dog is still a little worried about the world at large - and many of them are - obedience class will give her a chance to make friends and gain confidence. So even if you've already been through obedience class with another dog and know the ropes, it's a good idea to take your new dog to a class of her own.

5. It'll give you an incentive to train your dog. Let's face it, sometimes it's tough to get motivated for your daily training sessions when you know only a couple of exercises and you don't have an instructor and classmates to keep you from getting lazy!

6. You'll have a terrific time. Obedience class is fun! You'll make new friends (I know several married couples who met in obedience class) and get lots of exercise, and your relationship with your new dog will soar to new levels. And who knows? You might just get hooked on dog training and find yourself with a new hobby.

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Offering Less Treats Go A Long Way

Start to ask more of your dog for less of a reward. Continue to use the treat in your hand for all of the position changes, but do not give it to him every time. Instead, vary the time when you give the reward to him. This is also a good time to start varying the type and amount of reward you offer. Ask a friend to approach your dog and offer three treats. Initially, have your dog sit for a bit of kibble, then sit and lie down for kibble, then sit, lie down and stand for kibble. Eventually, you want 10 position changes or so for just one bit of kibble.
To phase out food, simply keep the food in your pocket and with an open hand signal your dog. You will find the treat (hand) movement has become a hand signal and that your dog was actually responding to your hand movement with the lure. The dog therefore learns hand signals very quickly. You can offer kibble from your pocket as a reward. Make the reward much better than what you used as a lure. If he does not follow, simply try again.

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**Over-excitability And Inhibition Behavior In Dogs**

Over excitability is the term used to describe most of the problem dogs we see, especially when they are stressed by new surroundings, strangers, other dogs, social isolation, physical restraint, stimulation, and sudden loud noises. At the other end of the spectrum of behavioral reactivity, we see highly inhibited animals that react to stress by total inaction or slow, stiff movements, and apparent depression, seeming to lose contact with environmental stimuli. The problem usually occurs while the owners sleep at night, or when the dogs are left alone, especially for a long period of time. The stress of being ignored, even if the owners are there, stimulates the mother to introverted behavior (self-mutilation) and stimulates the extremely excitable son toward extroverted over-activity.

Both excitability and inhibition can be heightened by many herbs and synthetic drugs, as well as those extracted from living tissues. The fact that such drugs do not affect all individuals (dogs or people) in the same way supports the belief that the balance among internal neurochemicals may be the primary factor influencing the behavioral expression of excitability or inhibition.

The individual body chemistry of animals develops and fluctuates throughout life. Hormonal imbalances produce not only structural and physiologic, but behavioral changes as well. Among the body's hormone-producing glands and controlling organs, the emotional centers of the brain's limbic system appear to exert considerable influence. Certain drugs not only influence the balance among these factors, but mild or extreme psychological stress can produce subtle and gross neurochemical imbalances.

The fact that seemingly mildly stressful experiences induce these reactions may help explain a good deal of what is generally described as "spontaneous aggression" or the popularly labeled "Springer rage syndrome". In this case, the nervous processes responsible for defensive behavior, such as a dog's biting, can be sensitized but not fully activated by mildly threatening stimuli. However, depending on the particular dog's nervous system makeup, repeated stimulation can push the dog over the brink and into a full-blown "rage avalanche," where up to several minutes of furious behavior are necessary to exhaust the imbalance.
and restore equilibrium. The dog then often resumes its usual gregarious personality or appear contrite, confused.

Most dogs that are highly excitable usually exhibit a behavior problem for which the owners have applied various degrees and types of punishment. These included scolding (a stimulus that can facilitate a snapping response), muzzle-clamping with the hands, shaking by the scruff or jowls, physical take-downs, and mild to severe hitting with the hands or objects such as rolled up newspapers.

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**Nervous System Types & Stress**

Dogs of any breed, size or type can suffer from stress. In fact, a certain amount of stress is necessary for a healthy life. Hunger produces a form of stress that motivates us to find food, which is a healthful activity. However, a pet dog that receives a doting owner's petting and praise on demand all weekend tends to build an insatiable appetite for constant social gratification. Once he is left alone, particularly for a long period of time, the dog is frustrated by a frustrating problem where he cannot find his "emotional food."

Whether this condition results in problem behavior depends on the stability of the dog's nervous system and how the animal behaves to relieve tensions that will always arise from frustration. A chewing problem develops in the orally oriented animal. The tension relief is manifested by chewing up objects that smell and taste of the owner, of things that, to the dog, are symbolic of the owners.

In some cases, litter mates of the same sex where one is a chewer and the other well behaved, even when both have been equally overindulged. On the other hand, in some situations, litter mates living in non-indulgent homes where the problematic stress was created simply by the owner returning home late.

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**Does Your Dog Have Problems With Fighting Other Dogs?**

Dogs that have severe fighting problems with other dogs are the ones that cause their owners the most worry. It is this vice that many owners hope a psychiatrist will be able to probe and cure, but since this is the process of investigating into the past of a dog's mind, which cannot be probed because the dog cannot answer questions, no progress can be made with psychiatry.

That does not mean we cannot understand a dog's present state of mind. Although past events might have had disastrous effects on the dog and might
have affected his mind and emotional makeup, it would have to be the owner who is psychoanalyzed to find the answer to the dog's problems. But because few owners would have the nerve or sense to go to a human doctor to find out why their dogs fight, I think we can leave out this subject too.

A dog fights for several reasons, usually the right to survive, whether this be taken as the right to eat and live peaceably or simply that the dog wants to live up to a certain standard whereby he has no enemies or neighbors that irritate him. We do not know which motive fits each individual case. What we do know is that dogs pretend to fight in play, mauling each other in a rough and tumble which nobody minds. Puppies have mock fights all the time to strengthen their limbs and develop their jaws and to wear off their superabundance of energy, but the subject we are looking at here is serious dog fighting, which is dangerous for dogs and humans and has been known to end in death for the smaller and weaker dog.

Even if the fight is not so bad as to end in death it can cause the owner of a dog to have a heart attack from fear or people can be bitten. It is most unpleasant and terrifying, to say the least. Most people don't realize it takes only a minute for two dogs to get really to grips, before that they are playing for a hold. Therefore, when you go to separate a dogfight, there is no need to rush in and be bitten. It is far safer to watch at close range until you can safely get a hold of a collar or of the loose skin between the eyes of the dog.

Once a dog has got a hold on another dog, it is unlikely that he will turn around and bite you for to do so he would have to release the other dog. You are reasonably safe when it has got a hold in slipping a lead on or grabbing the choke chain or scruff. It is generally useless beating the dogs in a dogfight; they would be mentally unaware of pain at that moment, and unless you knocked either dog out you would not separate them once either had a real hold.

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Part 2 – Dog Problems And How To Cure Them Quickly And Easily

Preventing Fear & Mistrust In Your Dog

Dogs become fearful when the owner's correction is too abusive. For a correction to be effective and convey accurate information to the dog, it must fit the transgression. A puppy that is teething and nips does not need, and will not understand, a correction fit for the dog who has just bitten someone because the person's hand touched his food dish. Unnecessarily abusive corrections will inhibit the dog from developing an outgoing, joyous, companion personality.

The owner who finds a day-old pile of feces left by the 10-week old puppy and reacts by beating the puppy until he cowers has only taught the animal to be very fearful and mistrusting in his owner's presence when feces are on the floor. Beatings and physical abuse only produce fear and mistrust. Abusive treatment of any living entity is inhumane, cruel, and not to be tolerated for any reason. If any canine behavior, perhaps other than a deliberate act of aggression, can elicit enough anger in a pet owner to result in a severe beating, then ownership of a dog should be seriously reevaluated and professional advice sought. A trusting relationship cannot develop or flourish in an abusive atmosphere.

Furthermore, a dog may also learn to mistrust an owner who delivers untimely corrections or discipline. Specifically, a correction must occur immediately following the behavior or during the enactment of an undesirable behavior. The dog will not connect a correction with the undesirable behavior if the correction occurs several minutes after the event. The puppy who was beaten after the owner came home to a dried up mess on the floor associated the punishment with the owner coming home rather than the accident on the floor. The dog associates punishment, and praise for that matter, with the last event or action that occurred prior to the consequence. A correction must occur during or immediately following the behavior for the dog to connect the punishment with the undesirable action. On the other hand, if the owner should unintentionally lose control of his or her temper once or twice in the relationship, a dog is a very forgiving animal. Depending upon how traumatic the temper tantrum was, the dog may eventually forget and forgive.

Communication problems also develop when the owner credits the dog with too much ability to comprehend messages. Such an owner expects the dog, frequently without the dog receiving formal training, to automatically know what or what not to do. When the dog does not respond as expected, the owner becomes
angry and punishes the dog. The owner who truly believes the dog inherently
knows which behaviors are wrong neglects to teach the dog right from wrong.
The dog, who in spite of the owner's claims cannot read minds, does not know
what behaviors deserve the punishment or how to avoid a reprimand, and
therefore becomes mistrustful and confused.

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The Psychotic Dog

A psychosis is defined as a mental disturbance of such degree that there is
personality disintegration and loss of contact with reality. The line between
neurotic and psychotic behavior is not well defined, even by psychiatrists and
psychologists. Two prevailing criteria can be added to the definition of a neurotic
dog to describe, for this purpose, a psychotic behavior. These involve
circumstances in which the dog's behavior is dangerous to himself or to the
safety of others, and in which the dog appears to be unaware of the behavior
during and/or very shortly thereafter his actions.

If only the first criterion were to be applied to biting or self-mutilating dogs, then
they would incorrectly be considered psychotic. In fact, many people believe that
any biting dog should be labeled as a "psycho" and destroyed immediately,
regardless of the circumstances. On the other hand, if the second element
applies, and the dog is unaware of his behavior, it would seem reasonable to
apply the psychotic label. The dog that appears to have withdrawn from reality or
suffers episodes of withdrawal could be either psychotic or physically ill. If the
behavior fits the basic neurotic model and is also in some way harmful to life or
well-being, then the animal may be psychotic, if otherwise healthy.

Dogs that are defined as psychotic have included the following symptoms: Dogs
that suffer "avalanches" of rage for no clinical reasons and do not respond to
external stimuli; manic-depressive animals that vacillate between depression and
wild activity; and depressed dogs that fail to respond even to powerful stimuli,
such as hunger, as when dogs starve to death in the presence of food. These
cases have been seen in pet dogs as well as laboratory animals. The rage and
manic-depressive states occur mainly in excitable types, whereas depression
usually occurs in those with inhibitive tendencies. Some notable factors in the
medical histories of apparently psychotic pet dogs are listed below.

* Early distemper (before 3 months of age).
* Serious parasitic infection (before 6 months of age).
* Severe beatings.
* Accidental injury, especially to the spine and/or head.
* Accidental drug overdose.
* Prolonged corticosteroid or other drug therapy.
* Diabetes
* Extreme psychic trauma.

The underlying physical problems are rarely, if ever, investigated with the same dedication applied to humans with similar conditions. As a result, the dogs are generally destroyed, which solves the owner's immediate problem, but offers no progress toward understanding of the problem's causes.

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Possible Origins of Aggression Within Dogs

Aggressive temperaments in canines are usually the result of both genetics and the environment. A dog's environment can trigger aggressive behavior, particularly if he has a propensity toward aggression. For instance, people often blame a dog's aggression on being abused or teased by children. Fortunately, a dog's environment can be modified to protect him from abuse and teasing.

You can and should insulate the dog's space from negative interactions and incidents that might prompt aggression you cannot control. A chain link fence does not adequately protect the dog when the owner is at work or away because individuals or poorly supervised children may have access to him through the fence. Leaving the dog inside the house or constructing a double fence or a run far from the street fence are safer solutions. Protecting a dog from the environment is his owner's responsibility.

Aggression may also be the result of an injury. An injured dog may not understand the origin of the pain. As a result, he may snap at any object, including a helpful hand, that approaches the injured site. In cases of extreme pain, the dog may even lunge at anyone walking close. No matter how gentle a dog's temperament is under normal circumstances, take precautions such as using professional handling gloves, a muzzle, or at the least, wrap cloth around your hands before touching an injured dog.

Females with litters will often exhibit aggressive behavior around their puppies. Aggression associated with protecting the young is a natural behavior, and correcting the bitch may produce unnecessary negative interactions. The majority of bitches will allow trusted individuals to handle their puppies. Take time to gain the trust of the bitch before attempting to handle her puppies. Many bites are the result of an unsuspecting passerby or visitor invading the dog's perceived territory. No one should walk into another person's (dog's) yard or house uninvited, and certainly the house or yard should not be left open for people to enter.
High fences can prevent children from scaling them to retrieve lost balls, and security locks on gates are good deterrents for the average person. Even the mildest mannered dog may feel threatened by people walking in or invading his territory, especially when no one is home. Then again, there may be no apparent provocation for the dog to bite. This type of attack is known as rage syndrome or idiopathic aggression, and it is very dangerous. When a dog bites for no apparent reason, the victim is least able to avoid the bite. There may be no cues to indicate an impending attack. This type of aggression has been associated with a few specific breeds, but there have been reports of unprovoked attacks in many breeds.

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**How To Remain Safe & Calm Around Strange Or Aggressive Dogs**

A knowledge of canine body language can protect you and your children around strange or threatening dogs. If you understand how the animal will interpret your body movements and facial expressions, you will know how to act in a nonthreatening way and avoid a possible aggressive attack. Here are a few rules to follow:

1. Never approach an unknown dog without first asking its owner if it's all right. If the owner is not around, don't approach the dog.

2. Never run up to a dog, or make quick, jerky gestures toward it that might be interpreted as a threat. Move slowly and deliberately.

3. Many people immediately squat down to be at a dog's eye level. Don't do this. Staring into a strange dog's eyes may be considered a challenge by the dog; an invitation to fight. If you get down low, you're telling the dog, "Look, I'm submissive to you."

4. When you meet a dog for the first time, make your hand into a loosely closed fist, fingers down, and extend it slowly to allow the dog to sniff your knuckles. Never put your open hand over the dog's head as if to pat it, because this is interpreted as a threat by many dogs. If the dog is calm and friendly, you can then turn your hand over, palm up, but continue to keep your fingers curled in lightly; then you can gradually uncurl your fingers and let the animal nuzzle your hand if it wants to.

5. If a strange dog approaches you, stay still. If you're standing, put your arms at your sides. Don't raise your arms as the dog may think that you are threatening it. If you're on the ground, lie face-down. Let the animal sniff at you - soon it will lose interest and go away.
6. Adults should never snatch a small child away or up from a dog, because the animal may then perceive the child as a toy; a stuffed animal to run and grab. If an adult calmly places herself between the child and the dog, the dog will understand that she's being protective, and that's pack-related behavior.

7. Running away is interpreted by a dog as flight behavior and almost always triggers an instinctive chase reaction in a dog, in which it sees you, the runner, as potential prey. To sum up, stay calm and use common sense around any dog. It will understand by your reactions and body language that you are not a threat and will leave you alone.

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**Has Your Dog Changed From Peaceful To Aggressive? 6 Tips That Can Help**

Aggression in dogs may be associated with fear, establishing, controlling, and protecting territories both inside and outside the home, dominance, object guarding, psychoses, relationships with others of the same species, play, or feeling pain. Dogs become aggressive because they feel threatened, whether the threat is real or only imagined. They will use the only weapons they have at their disposal - their teeth and bodies - to ward off the potential danger. Signs of aggression vary depending on the cause, but an aggressive dog may stare, lower his head, stalk, growl, bark, show his teeth, and, in the extreme, attack and bite. A mildly aggressive dog may simply jump on people or pull on his leash when walked.

Most dogs exhibit some types of aggression periodically. Aggression is one of the ways they communicate, and a certain amount of it is natural between members of the same species.

When the aggression becomes commonplace or threatens household members, including other pets, the behavior is a problem. As with all behavior problems, prevention is the best cure. Even if you live with a mild-mannered wimpy-type dog, your dog may develop aggressive tendencies that are a result of environmental factors or his physical condition as he ages. Here are some tips for dealing with an attack dog.

1. If your previously peaceable dog shows signs of aggression, have him examined by a veterinarian to make certain there is nothing physical causing him to behave aggressively. Your dog may have a medical problem that causes him to experience pain when you pet or lift him, for example.

2. Check your environment to determine if anything is causing your dog to be aggressive. For example, is anyone in the home teasing your dog? When your
dog goes outside into his fenced yard, are any neighborhood children tormenting him? If the source of your dog's aggression is environmental, eliminate the source of the problem.

3. If you've eliminated physical and environmental factors as a source of the aggressive behavior, nip the problem in the bud. Whatever training technique you use, practice it consistently and immediately. Waiting an hour after your dog has conducted himself aggressively to correct the behavior won't have any effect.

4. Punishment should never be physical - your intent is to startle your dog and disrupt his behavior.

5. Staring is threatening behavior for dogs. Avoid staring at your dog, especially if he appears defensive. When looking at or gazing at your dog, blink slowly every few seconds. Blinking allows dogs to gaze without threat.

6. Don't take chances on being hurt by an aggressive dog. If your dog is threatening, appears dangerous, and possibly injurious, consult a professional behaviorist. A behaviorist will outline a plan to correct the situation based on your dog, the type of aggression, and the source of the problem.

Dog Aggression Toward Its Owners

A dog that growls at and/or bites its owner does so for some reason, even if the behavior appears "unreasonable" to the owner. A complete medical examination, including tests for hormonal balance, neurophysiologic function and allergies, may reveal the underlying cause.

This has been especially helpful in dogs that have swings in mood. When growling or biting has erupted as a consequence of scolding or punishment for such behavior as chewing, jumping, general unruliness, or overprotection of food, these problems must be treated at the same time the program to correct aggression is initiated.

The Owner's Actions Owners must understand that their dog growls or bites at them as a result of defensive feelings. Even the dog that growls when ordered off the couch is reacting defensively, as it feels its dominance status has been threatened. If scolding and punishment provoke aggression, the dog is reacting to a perceived threat to its physical safety. In either of these situations, the owner's threatening behavior is producing negative results.
6 Reasons Why Your Dog May Be Overly Aggressive Toward Outsiders

Dogs that bite or show aggressiveness toward people outside the family group usually feel insecure about their relationship with their owners and/or their property, or have been frustrated relative to people at barriers, on leashes, etc. Some of these dogs may have been mistreated by strangers or former family members, often not known to the owners.

Pack (family) and property protection tendencies naturally begin to appear at about 6 months of age. At this time the dog may show slight signs of hostility toward outsiders who threaten the integrity of its property or group. This behavior may become extreme in the following circumstances:

1. The dog’s owners do not have a uniform leader relationship with the pet (dog is submissive to some, dominant toward others).
2. The family has very few visitors.
3. Fear, hostility or aggression is commonly shown toward outsiders by family members (often by the children).
4. At the dog’s first signs of hostility toward outsiders, the owners have encouraged the behavior.
5. The dog has been frightened or teased by outsiders.
6. The dog has been shut away from the family when guests visit (often because of other types of misbehavior).

Respect Other People’s Fear Of Dogs Through Leash Control

When dog owners have poor leash mechanics and control over walking his or her pet, their dog will invariably pull toward strangers. Some strangers are fearful when dogs approach them in this manner. Owners make the mistake of trying to comfort a person who is fearful by saying, "It's okay, my dog is friendly, she won't bite." But this is not a comforting response to someone who is fearful of dogs or just doesn't like dogs near them. You can make the person feel more comfortable by using your leash to sit your dog at your side and giving the person some space to pass. When a person sees a pulling dog and an owner being pulled off balance, the perception is lack of control.
By having your dog sit at your side, you are exhibiting to others that your dog is well trained and can be controlled. Senior citizens and parents with kids are generally more apprehensive when dogs pull too close. A pulling dog, especially if it is a big dog, can be seen as aggressive rather than friendly.

Also use this maneuver if your dog is pulling to greet a strange dog. Your dog may be friendly, but never assume a strange dog is friendly. Sometimes the consequences of a dog pulling toward a strange dog can be dangerous if the strange dog is aggressive or has a mean streak.

Be patient with yourself as you learn leash mechanics. Leash handling is like learning to drive a car or playing an instrument - it will feel a little awkward at first, but with a little practice you will improve. When puppies and dogs are out of control when out for a walk, it's because the owner has no knowledge of leash handling. Use the leash as a tool of communication as you lead your puppy on your walks.

Many owners frustrate or confuse their dogs because of poor leash mechanics. The dog will only do what you are directing him to do. If you don't know how to maneuver your dog, don't expect your dog to read your mind. You will only frustrate your dog. Frustrated dogs either become more aggressive or learn to tune you out all together.

Smart leash handling is essential in the city, particularly in tight, congested areas. By learning how to maneuver your dog on leash, you not only keep your dog safe at your side, but you also are practicing good dog owner etiquette. Your dog won't be a nuisance to other people and other dogs that you meet along the way.

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**Dealing With Dogs That Hate Either Men or Women**

Hating men or women is the most peculiar form of instability in dogs. They seem to be sweet and happy with one sex and nervous or vicious with the other. What form of neurosis causes this we don't know. What can an owner do to make a dog with this nature livable?

First, examine the owner's mind. Has he or she ever had a grudge against the opposite sex? Did an overpowering schoolteacher make the young boy's or girl's life a misery? Does he or she boast that they only get along with men or women? Alsatians are peculiar in this way and will hate men or women instinctively if thought transference comes from an owner with a similar dislike. Many women like big guard dogs, and the big guard dog thrives in this state of affairs and easily develops a dislike of the sex the owner wishes to dominate.
Corgis do the same. This has been particularly noted in these two breeds, partly because they are highly intelligent breeds and telepathy is very marked and partly because the shepherding instinct is uppermost and they have a natural suspicion of strangers. Correct them firmly when young and one gets no further trouble. Accept their suspicious natures, and you will have dogs that hate men or women, usually women.

Now how do we live with such dogs? The world being what it is, we can't mix with only one sex. Even husbands or wives are a necessity, and it is often against the one or the other that the particular hate is centered. I think the solution is either to send the dog to be boarded or trained by a person of the sex it hates, or else get friends of that sex to feed it or take it for walks. If it shows any signs of being vicious, muzzle it and send it out for a long walk with the person it dislikes. Greet joyously that person when he or she returns and praise the dog. Make the person pat the dog and praise it before saying goodbye and, if possible, give it its food.

Of course there aren't many good friends who will do this, but I think that if an advertisement was put in the local newspaper, some dog lover would respond. It might even help to employ a "dog sitter" of the hated sex when you go out so that when you are out, the only comfort the dog would get would be from the sex it dislikes.

Only by being made to tolerate people will it respond. Obviously, if a female owner has been jilted and hates all men, her dog will naturally pick up this feeling when the owner is talking to a man. In many cases, all these faults in dogs can be traced to some minor mental disturbance of the owner, although the owner may be unaware of it.

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Is Your Dog Afraid Of Men?

Dogs may be afraid of men because of past unpleasant experiences. If a dog has been traumatized in the past, the issues to be concerned with are: did the event have physical or psychological consequences? Did the dog recover from the trauma, and if so, how long did it take for him to recover from the event? Has the fear of men increased over time?

This fear might also be the result of a total lack of contact with humans during his critical socialization period. A dog shouldn't usually generalize a fear of one man to a fear of many unless the dog has had multiple traumatic events revolving around men, or the one trauma was significant enough to prevent recovery.
As with all effective processes, you must find the early triggers and begin there. When your dog sights a man, begin soliciting focus toward you. Be sure to greatly reward your dog for that focus. Many repetitions are required to produce a dog that is willing to focus on the owner when a strange man is in sight.

When you begin, the man should be a great distance away in order to achieve focus from your dog. You will be working toward getting closer and closer to the man. Before you pressure your dog with being close to the man, you want to first teach a simple behavior like "Sit." During this the man should be quiet, nonthreatening, and non-confrontational. You must require the "Sit" at the early stage of this work.

The sit position helps to settle your dog as well as create a better platform for your focus training. When your dog is ready and focusing on you, the man may approach quietly and offer your dog a treat. You should free your dog of his focus command and allow him to eat the treat from the man. If your dog is too afraid, then move farther away from the man, and then have him throw the treats from a distance. As your dog comes to expect these treats he will begin to tolerate the man's presence. Your dog will eventually look forward to the approach of men, generalizing that he will receive a reward from them.

Always be careful with a dog that is phobic. Phobic dogs may bite from the breakdown in their nerve thresholds. The humane thing to do in the case of a phobic dog is to try your best to work through the dog's problem and get your veterinarian's advice regarding possible drug intervention during the course of behavior therapy. Many dogs do very well with this treatment. If it works, keep in mind that it is a good idea to keep up the socialization or the dog can break down and resume the old behavior.

If after all your efforts, the dog is extremely unreliable despite professional help, then perhaps the dog should be placed in a situation that would not evoke the response. Containing a dog like this is possible with the help of safe indoor and outdoor enclosures.

How To Stop Your Dog's Possessive Aggression

Possessive aggression is centered around a dog's food, toys, treats, or any article that the dog may have stolen from you and this aggression should not be handled primarily with compulsion (negative reinforcement). It should be handled with positive conditioning.

The Scenario: A dog starts to growl when his owner approaches him while chewing his pig's ear. You can correct this behavior when you are prepared to
teach the dog to act in a less defensive manner around his pig's ear. The technique requires you to first offer the dog his pig's ear, then walk away. Get out one of your dog's favorite treats, making it the best it can be, so it is much more appealing than the pig's ear. Throw or drop the food directly in front of the dog and walk away. If the dog growls, however, as you approach him, walk away and leave no food. If the dog growled, you went too close to him and you should throw the treat from a distance, so as not to elicit any aggression from the dog.

You may decrease the space between you and the dog gradually. This process usually takes several weeks of slowly building the dog's trust so that he understands you are approaching him to give, and not to take away from him. Generally, these sessions should be very short, but frequent. The treat is fabulous, but each repetition should only give the dog a small amount of food so as to keep him interested in learning how to earn greater rewards. Five or six repetitions per session with about four training sessions daily will generally do.

It is wise not to leave anything for the dog to "own" while you are training him. That includes toys, chews, beds, empty food bowls, and pigs' ears. Provide the treats when you are practicing your approach conditioning. We will move along to the point where we drop the treats between his legs or have him directly take the food from your hand. We will proceed to the point where you can take his pig's ear, give him a treat, and then return his pig's ear to him to chew.

In this way you can functionally teach your dog to look forward to your approach when he has an object, and if necessary allow you to take the object with no anxiety or aggression from him. This will work only if you follow the procedure and do it slowly. After you have achieved success, continue this process intermittently forever. Also, note that a dog that knows how to drop something out of his mouth on command tends toward less possessive aggression.

It is critical that all members of your family participate in this program in order for the dog to generalize his correct behavior. Always be aware that this possessive aggression may arise again if an unforeseen incident provokes defensive actions on the part of your dog. Your dog's aggression is an action that occurs in hopes that the target of his aggression will exhibit avoidance behaviors and walk or run away, therefore allowing him to fulfill his defensive drive.

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Using Caution When Dealing With Fighting Problems

What is in the dog's mind when it attacks every dog it meets or just has one enemy around the corner? Most of it is show of strength, very often a cowardly show of strength aimed at other people's toy dogs who can't answer a bully back. Face that same bully with a big dog likely to answer back and it will disappear
into the distance, for the dog knows who will be boss even in its own race, and if it senses superiority of physique or brain, it will automatically be subservient.

That is why young dogs lie on their backs, all four feet in the air, when they meet an older or stronger dog; they know who is boss and are showing the other dog so by exposing the tummy to an enemy. That is why dog owners should know that this trick is not a nice one really and should be checked at an early age, for it is purely one of a weak animal giving in to one stronger in mind and usually an enemy at that.

Few owners would like to think their dogs look upon them as enemies, but that is the case. When a dog no longer looks upon you as a potential enemy it stops this lying on its back as protection, although many dogs in later life do it because their owners have scratched their chests, which they like, and they hope for it again. But primarily it belongs to the defense mechanism of the dog tribe. The mind of a dog that fights always has at the back of it the wish to be the boss of the tribe, and he fights other male dogs who are sexually mature to make sure there is no risk of his being questioned as "lord of all he surveys." Muzzle that dog and let him loose with the dog he has previously fought and nine times out of ten he will realize he is at a disadvantage and show no signs of aggression.

That is why dogs with fighting problems should be muzzled and then freed with trained dogs or non-fighters. They then learn to enjoy themselves in a community and the wish to fight goes away. Often, having muzzled, introduced and trained them for a short time together, formerly bad fighters are lying side by side without muzzles after a few minutes.

Your own personality needs to be strong to deal with fighters, because fighters are usually adult dogs. Few puppies fight, few females fight; therefore your mind must be stronger than that of the potential fighter so that you are the boss, not either of the dogs. If the dog is sex-mad you can do nothing but neuter it. Muzzling is only a stopgap, not a cure. Owners who won't have their fighting dogs neutered should always have them muzzled in public places.

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The Dangers Of “Protection-Training” The Family Pet

Dogs can be trained to be a dangerous threat and they can be trained to bark bite and attack. Some breeds adapt more readily to such training than others, but all dogs with vocal chords and teeth have the potential for threatening behavior.

First of all, it is not advocated to administer protection training a family pet. There have been too many unfortunate incidents involving people who have been talked into this type of training by the local guard dog trainer. Veterinarians have
encountered an endless number of dogs who had to be euthanized because they had become vicious. Not all of these dogs had been protection trained, but a great many had. Some guard dog trainers will argue that if the right dog is properly protection trained, he will never become vicious and randomly bite.

While this may be true, the bottom line is that the average family cannot handle an attack trained dog. Most people find it difficult enough to get their dog to come when called and not drag them down the street at the end of the leash. Attack-trained dogs are very useful; to the police and military, and in most cases that's where they belong. The average family certainly does not need a dog who has been conditioned to attack and bite on command.

Most dogs are instinctively protective. Rarely does a dog need protection training to be wary of intruders. This is particularly true of dogs who have been selectively bred to guard, herd, or protect. Examples of such breeds are the German shepherd, border collie, and Rottweiler. In the wild, canines naturally protect territory and fellow pack members. The protective instinct is further strengthened when the individual feels that he is an integral part of the pack. Keep in mind that your domestic dog views your family as his pack. If he lives in your home and is part of your family, chances are good that his protective instincts will emerge.

The instinct to protect territory and fellow pack members develops with age. Many people are dismayed that their five-month-old dog is not the least bit protective. It is not a puppy’s job to be protective! A well-adjusted puppy of any breed should be friendly and love everybody. It is the role of adult pack members to be protective. The puppy instinctively expects you to protect him. With most dogs, the sense of responsibility for being protective of the pack begins at around one year old, give or take a couple of months depending on the breed and the individual dog. At maturity - eighteen months to two years old - the dog should show even stronger signs of the protective instinct.

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**Training Your Dog To Rid His Possession Of Dog Bones**

Training your dog to give over or drop objects such as bones and toys can prevent him from becoming aggressive over what he perceives as his possessions. You may want to take the attitude that everything you give the dog is on loan. Out of the goodness of your heart you either share or loan the dog food, bones or toys. When you want the items back, the dog must give them up without a bite.

To train the dog to give up a really delectable bone, condition him to give up other, less desirable objects first. To begin with, attach his leash or handle so that he can’t get away. Start with a new toy, or a toy that only generates mild
interest. Offer it to him, and after he takes it, immediately command him to "give". Offer him a very tasty treat such as cheese, liver, hot dog, or steak in exchange for the toy. Most dogs will give up the toy and take the treat. If he doesn't, take the toy out of his mouth. If he growls, a good shake correction is in order. The theory is that the dog learns that a growl elicits a shake correction, and release of the object results in a treat. Practice the training frequently, gradually working up to objects of higher value for the dog, ending with the bone.

If you give the dog bones to chew on, they should only be knuckle bones. Knuckle bones do not splinter, and the large bone is too big for the dog to swallow. Other meat bones or their splinters can cause damage. Give your dog rawhides only under supervision because dogs have been known to swallow and choke on them. As the rawhide softened from chewing, your dog may try to swallow it whole, and it could get caught in his throat.

There are many shapes of rawhides to choose from and most dogs tend to only choke on the square or round chews. Most dogs seem to do much better with the rectangle shaped rawhides. Regardless, never leave your dogs unsupervised with a rawhide. Nylabones may be a good choice when no one is around to supervise the dog. These plastic bones do not break and can not be swallowed. Unfortunately, many dogs do not find the Nylabones especially tasty, although recently, the manufacturer has developed a flavored Nylabone that seems to be more appealing. You might also try to improve the flavor of a Nylabone by soaking it in meat broth.

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**Sensitive Older Dogs: Preventing Pain Or Fear Induced Aggression**

Fear induced aggression or pain induced aggression is a condition that every older dog is prone to attract. This is simply because many dog owners do not realize that the aging dog is very sensitive to the feelings of pain, surprises, and aggressiveness – even from innocent play.

Pay attention to changes in your pet's demeanor or personality as things become difficult for him. If you do, you won't be surprised by a full-blown fear of, for example, jumping up into the car to go for a ride. If your dog can't see where he's jumping, or if it hurts him to jump, it can lead to fear-induced aggression. He may strike out against you, seemingly for holding the car door open.

Aging dogs get into biting for similar reasons if they're experiencing discomfort. Pain-induced biting can be a result of forcing them to do things that they're no longer able to do. And this in turn can lead to fear-induced biting if, in their eyes, you're about to force them to do the painful activity. If it's jumping into the car,
they become afraid of your reaching for the car door handle and nip the hand you're using to hold them because of the coming pain. Creaky old hips aren't meant to propel a slightly overweight frame onto the seat of an SUV, even with the help of a push from the rear.

Sometimes children or grandchildren forget that the dog is not as young as she used to be. The smaller the children, the more reminding they will need - for their own safety as well as for the comfort of the dog. Many dogs are likely to become aggressive if they are hurt while being picked up the wrong way by an unsuspecting child. Sometimes it's necessary to set new rules in the household for the kids who come over to visit: "Sparky is not feeling well today. Please let him be by himself in the corner," or "Sparky is old, and he's feeling a little grumpy today. Maybe tomorrow he'll feel a little bit better, but let's leave him by himself today."

Similarly, if one of your younger puppies or dogs starts to get into too intense play for your older dog, redirect his activity and play toward you or toward self-play. It's up to you to intervene on behalf of your geriatric pet. If it doesn't look like she can take it any longer, she'll thank you for sure, and your relationship will grow because of it.

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**Why A Shock-Collar Or Fence Induces Aggression In Your Dog**

There are many recognized classifications of dog aggression, including dominance-related aggression; fear aggression; maternal aggression; play aggression; displaced aggression; pain aggression; and barrier/frustration aggression. Most dogs who display aggressive behavior fall into more than one of these categories.

A dog's bite was likely a result of a combination of barrier aggression and pain aggression. Dogs who are kept on chains and behind wire or electronic fences are constantly visually stimulated into a state of arousal whenever someone or something (a person, another dog, a car) passes by. They see an intruder and they bark.

What may have initially been friendly barking intensifies and they bark more aggressively as they realize that they have the power to make intruders leave. The aggressive behavior is reinforced, everyday, with each success, and the aggression escalates.

A big mistake is to add the electric shock collar and the fence. When the dog pushes the boundary limits of the fence, he gets shocked in the neck. His mind now associates the pain of the shock with the passersby, and he's really
aroused! Not only are they intruding, but now they're fighting back and hurting him. When he does finally burst through the fence or snaps his chain, he attacks the unlucky person who happens to be passing by at that moment!

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**The Danger Of A Jealous Dog**

In the case of jealousy the mind of a dog works in almost an identical way to that of a human being. It wants the full attention and love of its owner whether the jealousy occurs only when another dog enters the home or when the beloved owner talks to another dog outside, or whether the jealousy is aimed at another person in the home. The same driving force is at the root of the evil in all of these cases: the intention of the dog to reign alone and supreme in his household.

The guarding instinct so prevalent in some breeds has its roots in the same sort of thing; a desire to let no one enter the precincts of his master or mistress. Jealousy nearly always takes the form of a show of viciousness toward the dog or person the animal is jealous of. Quite often it is a mild form of jealousy and only involves its bone, toy or the piece of rug that it is fond of. It jealously guards them and woe betide anyone trying to take that object away.

This jealousy is particularly pronounced when puppies are reared and kept in the household. As the puppy reaches the age of about three months the mother will begin to feel jealous as her maternal instinct fades and the time draws near for another heat. In spite of the attempt to treat both dogs equally and always to talk to both at the same time, feeding both at the same time and exercising both together, the jealousy continues to grow.

Correction works at first and then bit by bit grows less effective. In the dog's mind a usurper has entered the scene, and, as in the wild state, it is trying to turn the young out of the nest. As she fails to get rid of the now grown up pup, her temper gets worse and worse in the effort to dislodge the now adult and unwanted member of the household. She becomes more and more thwarted as her owner attempts to make the newcomer as welcome as the old established member. Often she will turn on her owner when he is trying to make peace, as if she were trying to impress an ignorant person that it was time the youngster went out into the world to fend for itself.

If you are a really good handler your training methods will be good enough to make both dogs obey the command "Leave" when they are in your presence. The danger lies in the times you leave the dogs together on their own, for the slightest boldness on the part of the youngster in approaching the older one's
basket or toy, etc., will infuriate the older dog, and she will set on the youngster tooth and nail.

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**Newborn Babies & Your Dog: Approach This Situation Carefully**

To a dog, a new baby entering the home is simply a new member joining the pack. Instinctively, most canines are tolerant of infants, whether they are puppies or human babies. What is the best way to handle a child's arrival? Keep in mind that dogs are routine-oriented creatures. If your dog has been the center of attention for several years and suddenly has to play "second fiddle" to a new baby, the dog is likely to experience stress. Your actions and attitude can go a long way toward alleviating his anxiety.

Think about the routines you and your dog have together. If a morning walk after breakfast is a daily habit, make every effort to keep doing that after the baby arrives. Do you always play ball in the yard with your dog after work? Keep it up without fail. Even though your household routines changed dramatically when the baby arrived home, preserve as many old routines for the dog as you can. This will give him a bit of security when his world seems turned upside-down. If you have no "old" routine with your dog, establish one before the baby joins the household and stick with it.

It is advisable to socialize your dog with children before a new baby arrives. Take your dog to visit friends who have children. While supervising closely, evaluate your dog's reactions and attitudes. Make sure that the visit is an agreeable one so the dog will have positive associations with children. Play with a ball, go for a walk together, and so on. Be sure that the children are not rough with the dog. Do not permit games such as tug-of-war or wrestling. Play should not be so vigorous as to inspire nipping.

When the new baby arrives, make sure that the dog again makes positive associations with the youngster. For example, sit the baby on your lap and give the dog a few treats. Take the dog for a walk at the same time you walk the baby in the stroller. Pet the dog while you feed the infant. This assumes, of course, that the dog is not going wild and that you have some control mechanisms over him. That's why obedience training the dog is so important before you have your hands full with a newborn.

As the baby matures, the dog may become more assertive with him or her. The dog may try to maintain his position in the pecking order of the pack by growling or snapping at the youngster. An adult dog generally begins such assertive behavior when a child is about one- and-a-half to two years old.
Many people think that their dog is "jealous" of the child. I do not believe dogs are capable of feeling the emotion of jealousy. But I do know that they will compete for attention. An example of this would be the dog who is sitting by the owner's leg, craving attention. Suddenly the two-year-old child climbs into the parent's lap, and the dog growls or snaps at the child. The anthropomorphic dog owner will interpret the dog's competitiveness for attention as jealousy. Whatever it is termed, this behavior should not be tolerated. Correct your dog immediately with a firm "NHAA" and make him lie down and stay. When you are ready, release him and then give lots of attention and praise.

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**Understanding The Six Levels Of A Dog Bite**

A popular veterinarian, behaviorist, and dog trainer, Dr. Ian Dunbar has developed a six-level system of classifying bites. Below are the levels and a brief description of each:

1. **Level 1 bite** - Harassment with no skin contact. This level is also referred to as a snap. A snap is a bite from a dog with high bite-inhibition. It is a warning signal, telling us that we need to identify what causes the dog to become stressed and manage his behavior to avoid exposing him to the things that cause him excessive stress.

2. **Level 2 bite** - Tooth contact on skin but no puncture. Once again, this is a bite from a dog with high bite-inhibition and a warning that the dog is serious. You have to remove the dog's stressor at this point, before he takes it to the next level.

3. **Level 3 bite** - Skin punctures, one to four holes from a single bite. These punctures are less shallow than the length of the dog's teeth.

4. **Level 4 bite** - One to four holes, deep black bruising with punctures that are deeper than the length of the dog's teeth. In level 4 bite, the dog bit and clamped down, or slashes in both directions from the puncture (the dog bit and shook his head).

5. **Level 5 bite** - Multiple-bite attack with deep punctures.

6. **Level 6 bite** - The dog kills the victim and/or consumes the flesh.

Most dogs who inflict Level 6 bites are euthanized. Level 5 biters are also a huge risk to human safety and should probably be euthanized unless there are reasonable circumstances (for instance, the dog was being tortured or the victim was attacking the dog's family). Level 3 and 4 biters need serious behavior
modification along with immediate and significant changes in management and environment to remove any present risk. Level 1 and 2 biters can and should also be modified with relative ease and the guidance of a behavior consultant.

All dogs have the potential to bite. When he does, it's usually due to the failure of his owner to be observant and recognize his sign of stress, to properly manage behavior to shorten a dog's stressor list, and to control the environment to protect a dog from his stressors. Putting the dog to sleep is not the most effective solution to a biting dog challenge. Compassion for the victims (both human and nonhuman), knowledge and understanding of human and animal behavior, and having an open mind to explore and pursue realistic and safe alternatives can map the path to a positive and appropriate resolution.

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How To Decrease The Frequency Of Your Dog's Mouthing Habit

Once your puppy has been taught to mouth gently, it is then time to reduce the frequency of mouthing. Your pup must learn that mouthing is okay, but she must stop when requested. Why? Because it is inconvenient to drink a cup of tea or to answer the telephone with fifty pounds of wriggling pup dangling from your wrist. That's why!

It is better to first teach "Off" using food as both a distraction and a reward. The deal is this: Once I say, "Off," if you don't touch the food treat in my hand for just one second, I'll say "Take it" and you can have it. Once your pup has mastered this simple task, up the ante to two or three seconds of non-contact, and then to five, eight, twelve, twenty, and so on. Count out the seconds and praise the dog with each second: "Good Dog One, Good Dog Two, Good Dog Three," and so forth. If the pup touches the treat before you are ready to give it, simply start the count from zero again.

Your pup quickly learns that once you say, "Off," she cannot have the treat until she has not touched it, for say - eight seconds, so the quickest way to get the treat is not to touch it for the first eight seconds. In addition, regular hand-feeding during this exercise encourages your pup's soft mouth.

Once your pup understands the "Off" request, use food as a lure and a reward to teach her to let go when mouthing. Say, "Off," and waggle some food as a lure to entice your pup to let go and sit. Then praise the pup and give the food as a reward when she does so.

The main point of this exercise is to practice stopping the pup from mouthing, and so each time your puppy obediently ceases and desists, resume playing once more. Stop and start the session many times over. Also, since the puppy wants
to mouth, the best reward for stopping mouthing is to allow her to mouth again. When you decide to stop the mouthing session altogether, say, "Off," and then offer your puppy a Kong stuffed with kibble.

If ever your pup refuses to release your hand when requested, say "No Bite!" rapidly extricate your hand from her mouth, and stom out of the room mumbling, "Right. That's done it! You've ruined it! Finished! Over! No more!" and shut the door. Give the pup a couple of minutes on her own and then go back to call her to come and sit and make up before continuing the mouthing game. By the time your pup is five months old she must have a mouth as soft as a fourteen-year-old aging dog.

Once completely trained, your puppy should never initiate mouthing unless requested, she should never exert any pressure when mouthing, and she should stop mouthing and calm down immediately upon request by any family member.

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Too Much Stress Can Cause A Dog To Bite

Even the gentlest, most loving dog can be induced to bite. Dogs' teeth are important tools, and every dog is aware of their potential use as offensive or defensive weapons.

Every dog has a bite threshold (a point beyond which, if pushed, he will bite). Some dogs' bite thresholds are low; some are high. Aggression is caused by stress. Each thing that causes a dog stress is a small building block toward that dog's bite threshold. The lower a particular dog's bite threshold is and the more things that cause that dog stress, the more likely he is to bite.

The four common dog stressors are: small children under age 4; thunder; men with beards; and moderate to severe pain.

The longer a dog's list of stressors, the more likely he is to eventually bite someone. This is why early and ongoing socialization is critically important. It may be the best thing you can do to ensure that your pet lives a long and happy life.

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Identifying The Level Of Dog Snapping Within A Family Pet

If you have a dog that has a bad habit of snapping at people, especially children, then you should first understand what this behavior means and why your dog
may be doing it. Snapping is usually thought of as being a signal that dogs use to drive other dogs or people away, without biting them or inflicting serious injury. Often considered an expression of irritability, snapping is also a form of communication that females use to keep their puppies from pestering them.

It is natural to expect dogs to use snapping as a form of communication with people. Dogs will usually not snap at adults to whom they are subordinate. And with adults who are snapped at, it is usually only their hands that are at risk. With children, however, snapping can be dangerous, because a child's face is often level with the dog's head.

Centuries of selective breeding have attenuated this natural canine trait until dogs of some breeds now seem to be almost incapable of snapping, regardless of how much they are pestered. Yet however hard we try to train young children not to abuse or pester a dog until it becomes irritable, we cannot count on a child to always follow instructions. Families with a young child at risk who still find themselves wanting a dog are therefore advised to select a breed that ranks low on snapping behavior.

Regarding a dog's tendency to snap at children, the experts say: "This question deals with a dog's tolerance for being poked, pulled, and handled by children, not always as kindly as we might like. Picture the prospective dog owners who want to feel confident that their dog, once it is an adult, will not snap at children. For such a person, can you rank these breeds from least to most likely to snap at children?"

Snapping is a characteristic that differs in prevalence from males to females, at least to a minor extent. According to the experts, males are in general somewhat more predisposed to snap than females. A good family or children's pet would necessarily have to rank low when it comes to snapping habits. However, other characteristics, such as high rankings on demand for affection, playfulness, and obedience training, and a low ranking on dominance, certainly enhance the profile of a good family dog. Snapping is one component of the overall reactivity, explained at the beginning of this article, and dogs that are low on snapping will tend to be low on other traits associated with reactivity.

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Are You Encouraging Your Dog To Bite?

At no time is it okay for your dog to put her teeth on any part of a human body. Nipping and mouthing are not acceptable, not even from little puppies. Remember that puppy teeth may not hurt very much, but they'll soon fall out and be replaced with adult ones that will. So don't ever encourage your dog to nibble
or teethe on you, and don't play games that encourage her to nip at you. Teach your small children to keep their hands away from her mouth.

When you do feel doggie teeth on you, don't take it lightly; let your pup know that even if she meant no harm, this is a behavior you won't tolerate. Give her a muzzle squeeze and a harsh "Ah-ah!" For extra effect, you can grasp the fold of skin behind her neck and give her a little shake. Be sure to clasp her snout tightly, hooking your finger below her chin so that she can't pull away. When you feel her relaxing, release her slowly, and be ready to do it again if she nips again. Once her urge to nip or snap has passed, praise her for being such a sweet girl.

We're not going to say too much about more serious aggression because that's a problem that needs to be addressed one-on-one with an in-home professional trainer. An aggression problem doesn't mean that your dog is evil or that you chose her unwisely; it just means she has to understand that she's not the top dog in your home, and that she's not allowed to use her teeth to express her opinions about whom she likes and whom she doesn't.

If your dog bites, you must consult your obedience instructor or another trainer who can work with you privately, or the situation will only get worse. If you haven't had your aggressive dog spayed or neutered yet, do so immediately. In the mean-time, you've got to get tough with her and let her know in no uncertain terms that you're the boss, and you will not put up with biting or any other form of disrespect. Supervise her constantly, require her to sit for you before she gets any treats or toys, feed her a handful at a time, and - in short - don't let her call any of the shots. Aggression isn't uncommon, and it is treatable, but it will demand that you and your family turn your home into something of a military school for your pup while you're getting help from a pro.

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How To Teach Your Adult Dog Not To Bite

Once a grown dog is biting, many honest efforts at rehabilitation will end in failure. In addition, many efforts to save a biter will only get you bitten. You may hire a good dog trainer to help you straighten out your dog, or, if you know it's too late for all that, put the dog to sleep.

Below is an outline of ways to reform an adult biting dog:

1. Tighten all obedience work so that the dog does what he is told, where he is told, when he is told and for as long as he is told, no excuses! All this must hold true in the face of distractions such as strangers, children playing, normal household routine, other animals moving around, visitors, and noise other than his own.
2. Give him more exercise. Besides obedience work, make a strong effort to use up as much as possible of the dog's energy in constructive exercise. This may include jogging, swimming, and playing his favorite game.

3. Reward the dog with attention only when he has just behaved well. Giving him too much affection gives the message that he is a top dog. If your dog is biting, he knows he's a top dog. You must refrain from giving him too much attention. In fact, when he solicits attention, simply ignore him. Do not allow him to bully you into petting or play sessions.

4. Correct all signs of aggression. Discontinue making any excuses for growling, nipping, bullying, biting, territorial marking in inappropriate places, object guarding, or bratty behavior.

5. Keep correctional aids handy so that you will be able to correct your dog without getting bitten. These include lemon juice to squirt in his face, collar and leash, crate, hose or pot of water to dump on his head if necessary. If one of your problems of aggression is dog fighting, have a leash for prevention and a hose ready to hose down the dogs and stop a fight in progress. If there are loose aggressive dogs where you walk your dog, carry the lemon juice along on his walks.

6. Be clear in your corrections. Shake him by the collar, using the leash as added protection if the dog is really aggressive. Then confine the dog for one hour. If the dog tries to bite you, use a squirt of lemon juice in his mouth to make him back off. If you are afraid of the dog, hire a professional help to correct the dog and to help you build back your confidence with him.

7. Set a time limit. If you are working on your own, set a limit of, say, about three weeks. If, at the end of that time, there is no visible improvement, either hire a trainer or put the dog to sleep. It is neither wise nor safe to go on and on with a biter if he is not improving.

Some trainers make promises about stopping aggression. But in this tough area, even written guarantees do not make for cured dogs. Once an adult dog has bitten several times, he must be guarded. Though hard work may bring him around, he will never be as reliable as the dog who has never bitten anyone. There must always be some caution in dealing with a biter, even a reformed one.

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**Controlling Dog Nipping**
Your puppy has a natural instinct to put his teeth on everything he can reach. However, you need to set limits on what he can and cannot gnaw upon. First of all, he can’t gnaw on you. It’s easiest and best to be rigid here. His milk teeth are as sharp as needles, and his adult teeth have formidable clout, in some large breeds, hundreds of pounds of pressure per square inch.

Even a gentle dog can get overexcited when playing. If the dog has not been taught to keep his teeth off you, he can escalate gentle mouthing to a painful bite in no time. When your puppy nips, tell him “No!” If he nips again, tell him “No” again, stopping him physically with your hands. This means you can hold him off by his collar.

Do not hold his mouth shut. This frustrates him so much that he loses the connection between the nip and the correction in his struggle to get out of your grasp. Better than that, if he keeps at it, grasp his collar and shake him. After the shake, if he’s nipping again, put him in his crate to cool off.

Confining your dog to his crate as a punishment is effective. It will not make him hate his den. After all, when you were a kid and you were being punished, you may very well have been sent to your room for a while. Did it make you hate your room? Certainly not. Like you, dogs have a sense of fairness. If your correction is clear, your dog will accept it with calmness. If you are vague, how can the puppy understand why he is being punished? He doesn’t know what he did to deserve your wrath and he doesn’t know how to avoid it next time.

But if you are clear about what you don’t like, your correction will be understood as follows: “Listen, Laddy, I’ve asked you three times not to exercise your sharp, little teeth on my hands. But you refuse to stop. If that’s the way you’re going to be, I won’t play with you for a while. Go stay in your house and think it over!” Healthy, loved puppies are very forgiving creatures. Correct fairly and your puppy will both learn and continue to love you. He will not hate you for exercising your right to teach and lead.

You are going to use the crate not only as a den and a bedroom, but as your main tool for prevention of dog problems and one of your chief methods of correction. Using the crate lets him know that he cannot act in certain ways in your house. The crate, on the other hand, is his house. You should respect that fact, too, and let him be when he’s in it. Leave him alone when he’s there. On his own, he will use his crate when he wants peace and quiet. He’ll go in it to rest and to get away from everybody.

When he’s not in the crate, keep the door open and let his house remain accessible. Keep it clean, washing it out once in a while or vacuuming out the hair. When you clean your house, put his toys in his crate. That gives a strong, positive message that this space is yours. When you think about it, there isn’t too
much a puppy can call his own. Give your pet his own room, it will make him feel extra special.

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**Keeping Children Safe Around Dogs**

The shape and figure of a baby is larger than life in the eyes of a dog. If “Laddy” is there first, let him in on all your baby preparations in the house. When the baby arrives, let the dog sniff any item of clothing that has been on the baby before bringing her home. Then let Mom greet the dog first before introducing the new family member. Hold the baby down for the dog to see and sniff, but make sure someone’s holding the dog on lead in case of any sudden moves. Do not play, keep-away, or tease the dog with the baby, which only invites undesirable jumping up.

The dog and the baby are “family,” and for starters can be treated almost as equals. Things rapidly change, however, especially when the baby takes to creeping around on all fours on the dog’s turf or, better yet, has yummy pudding all over her face and hands! That’s when a lot of things in the dog’s and baby’s lives become more separate than equal.

Toddlers make terrible dog owners, but if you can’t avoid the combination, use patient discipline (that is, positive teaching rather than punishment), and use time-outs before you run out of patience. A dog and a baby should never be left alone together. Take the dog with you or confine him. With a baby or youngsters in the house, you’ll have plenty of use for that wonderful canine safety device called a crate!

Any dog in a house with young children will behave pretty much as the kids do, either good or bad. But even good dogs and good children can get into trouble when play becomes rowdy and active. Legs bobbing up and down, shrill voices screeching, a ball hurtling overhead, all add up to exuberant frustration for a dog who’s just trying to be part of the gang.

In a pack of puppies, any legs or toys being chased would be caught by a set of teeth, and all the pups involved would understand that is how the game is played. Kids do not understand this, nor do parents tolerate it. Bring Laddy indoors before you have the reason to regret it. This is a time-out, not a punishment.

You can explain the situation to the children and tell them they must play quieter games until the puppy learns not to grab them with his mouth. Unfortunately, you can’t explain it that easily to the dog. However, with adult supervision, they will learn how to play together.
Young children love to tease and to roughhouse. Sticking their faces or wiggling their hands or fingers in the dog's face is teasing. We can make the child stop by an explanation, but the only way a dog can stop it is with a warning growl and then with teeth. Keep in mind that roughhousing and teasing are the two major causes of children being bitten by their pets. Treat them seriously.

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**When Children Harm Dogs**

The role of children in pet dog problems deserves an entire book by itself. Children and pets are too intricately interwoven into the total family picture to allow analysis as individuals. However, it is possible to list some of the behavior children display that can cause or aggravate behavioral problems in the family dog or even with other people's pets.

About half of these child behaviorisms are quite innocent. Once parents become aware of their contribution to a problem, things are normally brought under control within a few days or weeks, depending on the severity of the problem. However, if the parents do not represent effective authority figures to the children, rehabilitation is often difficult and prolonged, sometimes requiring qualified child-parent guidance as well as canine behavioral guidance.

Cases involving deliberate, mischievous stimulation, sadistic tendencies, jealousy of the dog, and sexual experimentation or disorientation require extremely sensitive consultations that must often be preceded by private telephone consultation with the parents to ensure a neutral emotional atmosphere during the fact-finding stages. Parents should not remain passive, but should display genuine interest and understanding for the child's behavior. If the child or children believe that telling the truth may result in punishment, effective communication can be stifled.

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**Controlling Your Dog's Whining & Barking**

There are three ways to deal with your noisy dog. First, you can do nothing. In this case, the dog will keep barking whenever he feels like it and you may end up enemies with your neighbors, evicted or a victim of chronic headaches. Second, you can correct your dog whenever he goes on his noise-making marathons. You can even pretend to leave and sneak back to the house. Then, when the concert begins, you can break in on him, yelling "No, No, No, No", while shaking him by the collar.
The third possibility is that you can teach the dog to do what he is doing on command, therefore gaining control of the activity. This is because when you issue a command, the dog focuses on you, and you will readily be able to stop what you have started. Thus the dog who speaks on command shuts up on command as well. The command “Speak” is what turns him on while the command “Enough” will turn him off.

Once your dog looks at you and whines with you, you can add a word to your madness, the word “Speak.” Now, after your dog will “Speak” on command, with and without you, begin to intrude on this activity, whether you have started it or not, with the magic word “Enough.” If your dog continues to sing, grasp the collar, command “Enough” once more and then gently shake him, adding harsh eye contact to your correction.

Of course, you may have unintentionally trained your dog to whine, cry and bark by reinforcing this annoying behavior. To find out, make a checklist of what makes your dog whine and bark and how you respond when he does:

1. Your dog barks. You give him a treat to quiet him.
2. Your dog barks when you’re on the phone. You lean over and pet him to quiet him.
3. Your dog whines while you’re in bed reading a book. You let him up on the bed to quiet him.

Follow the methods above, teaching your dog to bark on command and then stopping him with “Enough,” a harsh eye contact and a shake. Never give your dog anything, including the time of day, when he’s barking, whining or crying for it. Use the long down once a day, tighten up your training and make sure the dog is quiet before you feed him, walk him, and pet him. If the dog bothers you while you are watching TV, reading, or dining, squirt him in the mouth with water or lemon juice and go on about your business.

Noise making may seem a lesser crime than biting or destructiveness, but it can have serious consequences. In fact, it may be a sign of escalation. To stop that, as well as for its pure annoyance, it should be put under control as soon as possible.

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Incessant Barking: Part 1

What does it mean when a dog barks? The bark is the dog’s word, and it can mean many things. Your dog barks when he is alerting you to an intruder, when he is afraid, when he is playful, and when he is bored. Barking is caused by the
presence of stimuli such as strange people, dogs, sights or sounds, the owner's absence, or as an attention seeking mechanism.

The easiest way to control barking is to socialize your dog to make him comfortable around people, places and things and to instill in him a strong chew toy habit so that he is mentally and physically exercised and occupied. However, just as you would not attempt to completely silence a person, you should not try to completely stop your dog from barking. Your dog just needs to learn some basic bark control such as when to bark and for how long. Regardless of the reason for your dog barking, your goal is to properly socialize him, to teach him to focus on something other than barking, and to teach him to speak and be quiet on command so you can control when and for how long he barks.

Alarm Barker: Dogs who bark at the presence of intruders can be a valuable asset. It is very ironic that barking dogs are now such a problem in our society when it is also considered as an alarm. Actually, barking is believed to be one of the main reasons we domesticated dogs in the first place and one of the reasons we live with dogs today. Usually, it is not the barking that is a problem, just that the dog is a little too enthusiastic. Most people want their dogs to let them know when someone has stepped onto the property. Barking only becomes a problem if the dog does not settle afterwards.

Teach your dog to bark and be quiet on cue; thereby having an on/off switch. To implement this training, invite three friends to come over for a speak-and-shush party, and within half an hour you will have a well-trained barker. Have your dog's treat on hand. Next, instruct your visitors to knock on the door and reward your dog by saying "thank you", followed by a treat when he barks. Your dog may look a bit shocked for a moment. After all, he is probably used to being yelled at when he barks. Then, to get him to be quiet, say "shush," and waggle a piece of treat in front of his nose. Once he sniffs the food, he will be quiet and so give him the treat as a reward. Repeat this many times, and your dog will become increasingly aware of how much fun it is to speak on request and how rewarding it is to shush on request.

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Incessant Barking: Part 2

In the wild, dogs have their own method of going about things their way. But if you want your dog to be a well-behaved pet and to live in your home with you, you must teach him the human way of living. Specifically, you have to teach your dog to redirect his normal and natural dog behaviors. Failing to learn where to relieve himself, what to chew, when to bark, when to jump up and where to dig are the top reasons why the relationship fails and people give up their dogs.
Fortunately, these techniques are so simple to teach that you and your dog are guaranteed to have a long and happy life together.

Yard Barker: Barking dogs are one of the most common complaints of urban and suburban neighbors. A dog that is left outside will alert to all the visual and auditory stimuli. Dogs are usually relegated to the yard because they are not house trained or chew toy trained. If that is the case, you need to housetrain and chew toy train your dog. Take him out from the backyard and bring him into your home! Giving your dog a few well-stuffed chew toys is the easiest and most effective solution. This way he has something to think about other than barking. A well-stuffed chew toy will keep your dog busy for a while (this means no time for barking). If you need to, put his food bowl away and only feed him from his chew toys. This way, you will keep him very busy!

Attention Seeking Barker: When you are relaxed and in a good mood, tie your dog to a secure spot in the house. Stand or sit next to your dog and ignore him. When he barks, move away. When he stops, even for just a moment, move closer. Your dog will soon realize that barking means you leave and quiet means you return. When he is quiet for 10 to 15 seconds, approach and praise him followed by a treat.

Owner-Absent Barker: What if your dog barks because he is bored and stressed when left at home alone? Unfortunately, our canine friends are often left alone for long periods of time. Being social animals, it is tough for dogs to understand why their family leaves them. However, you can teach your dog to tolerate and even enjoy your absence. First, teach your dog to spend time alone when you are home. Most dog owners make the mistake of spending all the time they are home with their dog at their side. While this may seem to be a kind and loving act, it only serves to make matters worse. Your dog will become used to constant companionship and be more likely to fall apart when you leave. Instead, teach your dog to enjoy quiet moments by himself while you are home, so he will feel more confident when you are not there. Frequently and for short periods of time, confine your dog to another room, his crate or on a tie-down and give him a well-stuffed chew toy to occupy his time.

What To Do When Your Dog Whines Like A Child

Whining is one of the earliest vocal behaviorisms of puppies. Its first significance appears to be related to the stress of social isolation, cold and hunger. When whining becomes a problem in a pet under 6 months of age, the cause is usually easily determined by defining when and where it occurs.

Why does your dog whine?
A pup whines to gain some objective. For example, the pup that is isolated in the kitchen on its first nights in a new home finds that sufficient whining gains the sympathy of the owners, who may then carry the pet into bed with them. This puppy often generalizes its whining to many other of life's frustrating stresses, and whines for relief. Another cause may be a genuine internal physical discomfort, such as gastritis or internal parasitism. If a problem whiner has not been thoroughly checked by its veterinarian for health problems, this should be done before any remedial behavioral steps are undertaken.

Certain Arctic breeds (Malamutes and Huskies) and some strains of German Shepherds are apt to emit an excruciatingly piercing whine whenever they are anxious. This type of anxiety whining is more complex and requires careful attention to the relationship between the owners and the pet involved than the simpler forms usually shown by young puppies.

**How can you stop your dog from whining?**

In the simplest type of whining, that which is goal oriented, correction is straightforward: satisfy the need. However, if isolation is the cause, the problem must be solved with the same steps applied in barking.

The owner should stop isolating the pup, or, if this is impossible, gain a strong leadership position with the pup and use some distracting stimulus to interrupt the first signs of anxiety when the pet is isolated. This type of correction requires some play acting. The owner must pretend to be going off to work even on the weekends, and start the workday an hour earlier than usual to allow enough time for the correction procedure.

When whining results from generalized anxiety, the pup involved is typically a "bossy" type. These pups whine when the owner's attentions are withdrawn. They seem generally discontent in any situation they cannot control, such as car rides, when the owners have company and try to ignore the pup, or when the owner tries to make a telephone call. In other words, these pets become the canine counterparts of human children best described as spoiled brats.

Correction in these pups involves the owner's gaining response to simple commands, such as "Come," "Sit" and "Stay." The puppy must be ignored at all other times insofar as praise, petting or other unearned social (or food) rewards are concerned. If the pup pesters for attention, it is immediately given one of the commands taught and then petted briefly. This teaches the puppy that the owners are in control of the relationship and avoids physical punishment, a step that is usually unsuccessful.
How To Prevent Destructive Chewing And Barking

When your puppy is small, you should not expect him to be perfect all the time. Neither should you overwhelm him by correcting everything at once. Instead, concentrate on the more serious behavior problems, working with them as they show up.

For instance, you will want to prevent destructive chewing by putting him in his crate when you are not home or when you can’t watch him. At the same time, when you can watch him, you can begin to let him know what he can chew and what he can’t by monitoring his behavior in a very easygoing fashion. He may even start out on his Nylabone and move, accidentally, to the molding. Simply move him back to his bone. Tap the molding he was biting with your hand, saying, "Nooo," and offer him the bone again, saying, "Ok, Good dog."

Observe him very carefully but be patient as you correct. After all, he doesn't know any better until you show him. And, in fact, he won't really know better until you show him many, many times. He really needs the repetition and consistency in order to learn. In addition, he needs to mature both physically and mentally before you can count on him to be reliably well behaved when you leave him alone.

The training can't work miracles. He will still have to grow up. Naturally, training helps things proceed in the right direction. If you simply wait for the puppy to outgrow the chewing stage, you might find yourself paying off a new couch while you wait. Training speeds the dog's understanding of what you want and what you don't want.

Maturity is what enables him to remember the training with reliability and to pocket his anxiety when he is alone. The young puppy cannot do that. So when he has to be alone, the crate is the only sensible answer.

Another puppy problem you'll want to work with early on is excessive barking. Once again, all you can do when he's really little is lay some worthwhile groundwork. Working in an appropriately low-key fashion, when your puppy overdoes it in the noise department, tell him "Enough." If that warning doesn't quiet him, repeat it once more as you give one firm tug on his collar.

In addition to this, you must give him an outlet for his voice. Your dog has a right to vocalize and you have a right to limit his right. That is, your dog needs some time and perhaps some place where it's perfectly okay for him to make noise. And you have the right not to let him do that noise making at four in the morning.

In order to give him an outlet for his voice, in addition to letting him have time to run around and bark outdoors, teach him to “Speak” on command. Once he will do this, he will focus more of his barking on you and you can play voice games.
with him outdoors or when his noise won't bother your neighbors. This will make it easier for him to respond to “Enough” when his barking is inappropriate or when it goes on for too long.

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**Destructive Behavior**

A lot of people get turned-off with their dogs, even give up on them permanently, because of destructive behavior, such as chewing, digging, shredding, and scratching. These behaviors caused some owners to have their dogs euthanized by the local vet or the humane society.

Which do you think is more cruel, the use of a dog crate as a temporary training tool or putting your dear pet to sleep? If you raise your dog with a crate, you will never have to worry about coming home to find a shredded couch. When you cannot watch the dog, crate him. As he matures and excels in training, as he proves himself capable of being left loose in your home, give him the privileges he deserves. Never give him responsibility he cannot handle. That would be like giving a five-year-old your car keys!

Besides the crate, understanding is an important tool in stopping destructive behavior. Dogs chew for a variety of reasons and these must be reviewed along with companion remedies. Your dog will chew to release pent up energy, so make sure he gets enough exercise. Your dog will chew because he is anxious. He may be left alone too long and too often.

Give him a little more consideration when making plans. Train him so that you can take him with you more often. Train him to allay his anxiety, his feeling of looseness and lack of connection. Hire someone to walk him when you are out to work.

Dogs chew when they are bored. Leave your dog something acceptable to chew. That way, he'll be less likely to chew your stuff. Dogs chew because they don't know they are not supposed to. Be clear when you correct your dog. Do not give him socks to play with and then get mad when he chews your clothes. Female dogs shred just before coming into heat. Keep your female’s cycle on a calendar and watch for signs that she is coming into heat. These include: Increased appetite, increased displays of affection, increased activity level, and generally hyper behavior. You may have to crate her just before the onset of her heat cycle or provide her with a supply of shreddables to practice her nest making on.

To summarize the above statement: Use a crate when necessary. Your dog should be reliable sometime between one and two years of age. Give him plenty
of exercise. Leave him some rawhide or other safe chew toys. Monitor his behavior when you are with him, correcting him with a “No” for starting to work on the fringe of the carpet or the arm of the sofa. Then present him with one of his toys and tell him “Ok.” But if he goes right back to your stuff, correct him again and put him in the crate for one hour. Tighten your obedience work. This reinforces you as the pack leader, someone not to be trifled with. And, if you are gone for long hours, hire a reliable person to come and walk your dog and play with him.

What about hole digging in the yard? Digging is both natural and pleasurable for dogs. Let your dog have his pleasure. Give him a small corner of your yard in which he may dig to his heart's delight. You may fence the corner, making it a pen or run. Once a week, fill in the holes and tamp them down. When the dog is in your part of the yard, correct him if he tries to dig up the lawn, eat your plant, or dash through the flower beds.

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Understanding Your Dog’s Chewing Problems

Chewing is usually a developmental phase that puppies pass through to relieve the itch and pain of cutting new teeth. The majority of dogs stop chewing everything in sight once their new teeth are fully erupted, at about 9 months old. The few dogs that do not cease chewing by age 1, either have acquired the habit of chewing from boredom, anxiety, and frustration, or have acquired an unusual gourmet appetite.

Regardless of the reason a dog chews, the behavior of chewing can be very expensive and very dangerous to the dog's physical well being. Correcting chewing, or any other behavior problem, requires that someone be present to catch the dog in the act. Showing the dog a shoe that was chewed several hours earlier and yelling at him may make you feel better, but there is little chance that he will connect the correction with the idea that chewing shoes is wrong. An unsupervised puppy left to roam the house may develop a taste for dangerous chew toys such as electrical cords, cleaning supplies, and other toxic items. The landscaped yard filled with possibly toxic plants, or rocks and wood that can obstruct the dog's intestines is a similarly dangerous environment for the unsupervised puppy. Dogs that chew and swallow rocks or other sharp objects often require costly and risky emergency surgery.

To avoid mishaps when you cannot keep a watchful eye on the dog, confine him in an area where only appropriate chew items such as dog toys, rawhides, or knuckle bones are available. You must exercise caution in which chew toys are left in the crate, because dogs have been reported to choke on some toys and rawhides. If you confine your dog to a crate during unsupervised periods, you
don't have to worry about him chewing up prized possessions and furniture, or doing himself harm. You may choose to dog proof the house by removing any prize possessions until the dog has passed through the chewing stage. Products such as Bitter Apple or Tabasco sauce may be sprayed on furniture and possessions to keep the dog from chewing, but check for staining before using them. Ninety-nine percent of the dogs find the taste of these products repulsive, but a few dogs think they are a gourmet delight.

One product that may not be attractive to any dog is ammonia. Be careful not to spray the ammonia when the dog is close by; it could damage his olfactory system and eyes. Read the instructions carefully to determine what is safe to spray on valuable possessions. Your dog should be well supplied with acceptable chew items such as old socks, safe dog toys, rawhides, chew hooves, and knuckle bones. Only knuckle bones are safe; other bones will splinter and get caught in the dog's throat or intestines. If you are worried that your dog will not discriminate between an old chewable sock and a new sock, you may want to take time to play fetch with the dog and an old sock so the item will become his favorite toy. The old sock will carry the scent of the dog, whereas the new sock has your scent. The dog quickly learns the difference between the socks when you praise him for playing with and chewing the old sock and reprimand him for chewing on socks with your scent.

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**What If My Dog Refuses To Walk On A Leash?**

Nothing will make your dog want to move away from you more than jerking the leash and dragging him. If your dog lags, be careful not to reinforce this behavior by giving him attention when he stops. Instead, stand still facing away from your dog and put gentle pressure on the leash and wait. Praise your dog if he moves even one inch to come towards you. Alternatively, go to the end of the leash and kneel down facing away from your dog and wait for your dog to come to you, praising him all the way.

It does not matter how long it takes for him to start walking, (although it should not be more than a minute or two), he eventually will. Then, walk another few feet away and repeat if he stops. If your dog is afraid of leash walking, you will need to take him out for numerous confidence building training sessions on leash. You do not want to take him with you on an errand when you may be in a hurry and get frustrated with your dog. Once you have taken the time to teach your dog to enjoy leash walking, he can come along with you on all your errands.

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**Dog Injuries Due To Leash Straining**

"Who is walking whom?" This question pops into my mind whenever I see owners being dragged down the street by their dogs. Leash pulling usually becomes a complaint only after a large dog has finally succeeding in pulling its owners off their feet, with resultant injury or embarrassment.

Most cases of leash pulling involve dogs that have accommodated to the discomfort of a choke chain, pinch collar or even a leather collar. Some of them cease pulling only long enough to cough, some even regurgitate or take a few deep breaths, then continue struggling forward.

Most dog owners have no idea that their frustrated leash-pulling dog might actually suffer physical injury during their daily tug-of-war. However, in a Swedish study by the noted behaviorist Anders Hallgren, of 400 dog owners who agreed to have their dog's spines X-rayed, 63% were found to have spinal injuries. Of the inured dogs with neck (cervical) injuries, 91% had experience harsh jerks on the leash or were serious leash strainers! Among aggressive or overactive dogs, 78% had spinal injuries.

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**Preventing Your Dog From Running Away**

Can you really keep your dog from running away? Many dog owners think that running away can be solved by property training the dog, which is teaching him to stay within boundaries of your property.

The dog is a roaming animal. The notion of property training is against his very nature. Therefore, you can property train him, but do not expect it to work 100% of the time. He may dash to the end of your lawn or land and not put a toe onto the road. You can tempt him with treats, another dog, and clapping and he won't come. But later on, the right temptation comes along, a jogger or the scent of a dog in heat and your property training is gone.

If you don't want your dog to run away, use a leash. Train him and go out with him off leash so that you can stop him with a verbal command. Install an overhead run and hook him up to that when he's out alone. But don't count on him to go against his nature and perform the impossible. After all, he's just a dog.

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**A Simple Six-Step Dog Training Method**
Training a new behavior follows a simple six-step method. Depending on the dog and other circumstances, a good trainer will vary his training method when he decides that a particular training challenge needs either a little more or less. When you have used the method enough to know it well, you can add your own personal touch as needed.

The following are six steps for teaching your dog a new behavior:

1. Get the behavior.
2. Mark the behavior.
3. Reward the behavior.
4. Repeat the behavior until it happens easily at least 90% of the time.
5. Add the verbal cue as your dog does the behavior to associate the word with the appropriate response.
6. Use the verbal cue to elicit the behavior.

You get the behavior by capturing, shaping, or luring it. You mark the behavior with the click, or some other reward marker that your dog has already learned means that the reward is coming. Reward the behavior by following the click with his favorite treat or, in some cases, with a favorite toy or other desirable reward, such as swimming or going outside.

Repeat the behavior until your pet is offering it easily before you add the verbal cue, so that he will associate the word with the correct behavior response. For instance, by saying "Sit" as he does it, you are telling him that the name of the behavior he is doing is Sit. If you ask him to do it before he's offering the behavior easily, you risk teaching him that the word sit means "stand there and look at me," or worse, "sniff the ground and pull on the leash."

After your dog has heard the word at least a half-dozen times during the behavior, depending on how quickly he seems to learn, then you can say the word first to elicit the behavior. Be sure that his attention is focused on you so that he actually hears the word, and keep your body position the same as it was when you were getting the behavior before. If you had been doing the “Sit” while you were standing and you suddenly start asking for it while you are sitting, he won't understand that it's the same thing.

Give him a few seconds to respond. When he sits, click! and reward. If he doesn't sit, use the minimum amount of assistance necessary (through body language or a lure, not through physical assistance) to get the behavior, and repeat the exercise. If you find that he will only respond if you help him, start to minimize the amount of help you give until he is sitting for the verbal cue without any help from you.
The Neurotic Dog

A neurosis may be defined as a functional nervous disorder with no sign of disease of the central nervous system. Psychoneurosis is described as an "emotional maladaptation" due to unresolved unconscious conflicts, and may also be used to describe the condition of many so-called neurotic dogs. This means, to recognize a neurotic dog, we must identify some defective nervous behavioral functions, while ruling out physical injury or disease, such as hydrocephalus, brain tumors, etc.

This can be done in some cases through neurological examinations. Urine and blood analysis can often indicate internal chemical imbalances which are of an organic cause. On the other hand, they may also indicate the presence of severe environmental stressors. Combined with behavioral information, physiologic examinations might indicate a neuroses or the basis for a psychosis. For practical purposes, a dog may be considered neurotic if he shows signs of a functional nervous disorder combined with behavior that is both abnormal and maladaptive for dogs in general.

But how is a functional nervous disorder described in behavioral terms? The following descriptions are helpful:

* The dog that fails to inhibit the orienting (alerting) response to stimuli that occurs repeatedly and are known to the animal to be neither harmful nor rewarding. These dogs are almost always in a state of anxiety.

* The dog that responds to novel objects, sounds, touches, movements and even odors with exaggerated active or passive defensive responses. These dogs often lack adequate early social experience.

* The dog that fails to retain (in some cases, even to develop) voluntary or involuntary conditioned reflexes. This cannot be applied to the dog's total behavior, but usually is pertinent to a failure to form and/or retain learned associations involving defense and social behaviorisms.

* The dog that displays hyperkinesis. Signs include excessive salivation, elevated pulse and respiration, abnormally low urine output, and increased energy metabolism revealed through excessive, sometimes stereotyped activity, especially in close confinement.

* Displays fixations on objects, exhibiting ritualized behavior, usually repetitive and with no apparent objective. "Obsessive-compulsive" is the current diagnostic label of choice. While it is often treated with drugs, careful diagnosis shows that these dogs are suffering from frustration due to a lack of function in their lives. They are "making work," and receiving internal neurochemical rewards.
The Submissive Dog

The submissive dog, like the fearful dog, will try to appear smaller, but will rarely raise his hackles. The submissive dog will either scoot along the ground in a sit position to get closer to the dominant entity or roll over on the ground to expose his belly and genitals, displaying vulnerability to the aggressor. The dog may even urinate during this display. The head of a submissive dog is held in a tipped position and his tongue will dart in and out as he tries very hard to get close to lick the dominant entity's mouth and face area for appeasement. The same licking gesture is observed when a pup approaches his dam. A submissive dog will also lean on the dominant creature, probably as a defense from attack. If the submissive animal leans on the dominant animal, the aggressor has difficulty reaching crucial body parts during an attack.

A good analogy to this concept may be the technique used to avoid injury when a horse kicks. The person who steps closer as the horse kicks will usually suffer less bodily damage than the person who is farther away and receives the full force of the strike. The submissive dog will not initiate eye contact and tries very hard to avoid any visual contact. He will even go so far as to turn his head to avoid meeting the eyes of an opponent. Do not mistake the head turning as inattention to the body language of the dominant adversary, however. The submissive dog always watches body language to determine protocol in each social situation.

The submissive dog will expose his teeth in what can be mistakenly interpreted as snarling. The difference between a submissive show of teeth and an aggressive one is the position of the head and the absence of growling. The submissive dog approaches with teeth exposed and head in a lowered, tipped position. The display of teeth in the submissive dog has been termed smiling, and as a rule, the submissive dog does not growl or make any aggressive sounds when approaching.

Behaviorists speculate that the submissive animal exposes his teeth to display his strength or lack thereof. The theory suggests that an adversary gains a serious advantage in battle if the opponent reveals his defensive strength; therefore, the submissive dog is attempting to ward off an attack by showing the perceived adversary the lack of threat by revealing the size of his teeth. In addition, the posture of his head and body, along with the showing of teeth, communicates the infantile greeting gesture. The body language of a submissive dog does not always ward off attack.

Fearful, aggressive, and submissive behaviors can sometimes be confused. The dog owner must make a distinction between these emotions to properly interact
with the dog. Should you mistake submissive behavior for aggression and correct the dog, the submissive behavior will only become more intense. Distinguishing between these behaviors may be quite difficult. Not all submissive dogs will display the entire array of classical submissive behaviors.

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**The Overly-submissive Dog**

This dog will be overly stimulated by his owner's presence and his touch will raise nervousness. As the owner tries to influence him, the dog will prostrate himself, perhaps on his back, and he will totally misinterpret the objective. Rather than doing a simple down with a focus on the food, the dog will keep his focus on the owner. In other words, the dog is defensive rather than clear in his drive; he is driven by nervousness to show submission to his owner.

Making this dog hungry is effective, not to reduce fear but to increase his focus and stamina when he's in drive. This dog is very easy to inhibit, so his owner felt that his dog's subdued behaviors were an appropriate response to his confrontational approach to dog training. However, the dog really only learned to give up his drive and become submissively nervous, rather than learn what to do with his drive. Therefore, when the dog rolls on his back, the owner should neutralize this reflex by running away and commanding the dog to jump up and make contact.

The running will relax his nerve; as he gets the urge to roll over, the owner, the object of the dog's maneuvering, is long gone. What you are doing here is converting his nervous drive into clear or calm drive. If the dog wants to focus on you, he will only get to do it by being pure in his drive activity, running after and plugging into you. Immediately after making contact, the dog is rewarded with food.

When the dog can stay focused on the food and remain resilient to a shock, he can be shocked for this nervous display of submission, and the shock will actually convert the nervousness into being poised for a drive behavior. After the dog becomes calm about staying, be sure that the shock is then followed by the pure drive activity of chasing you.

In this way, the dog can start to choose drive over nervousness. He will work to avoid the shock by self-inhibiting his nervousness. Then he will learn that the calm position of lying down in a focused manner on his owner and the food ends up causing the fun and pure drive activity of chasing you. Also, you are disassociating yourself from the nervousness, which you probably helped to create in the first place, and that will make life calmer for your dog.
Helping A Battered Dog Gain Confidence

A dog that has been over-punished lacks self-confidence. Therefore, such dogs should be allowed to succeed. This is fortunately a simple process with dogs. They are dramatically quick to learn from people when taught by nonphysical methods. Even a simple 3-part exercise, performed daily, can bring about a behavior change in a few days. All that is needed is to crouch down, say "Rover, come," and heartily praise when it responds, even if it only looks at the owner. If the pet urinates on the way, the praise must be continued. The wetting usually disappears as confidence improves. When the dog comes all the way, it should be petted, preferably on the throat and chest to eliminate fear responses that may be caused by hands over or on top of its head. Most shy dogs usually come readily to a crouching figure.

The "Sit" command is simple, once the pet comes dependably. A hand is held up over the dog's rump as the words "Rover, sit" are spoken. The dog usually looks upward, and should be praised by happily saying "Good, sit," but without bending down or petting. If this is patiently repeated a few times, most dogs will sit down. The spoken praise should be followed by petting. It is important not to bend over from the waist to pet shy dogs, as this movement often signals possible punishment. Crouching avoids bending over, and is friendly and reassuring. Pushing down on its rump, holding, or otherwise manipulating the pet must be avoided. Physical force is at the root of most submissive behavior and interferes with effective learning.

The second part of therapy requires that owners avoid punishing the pet. If other behavior problems exist, these must be resolved using nonphysical methods and as light as possible. Self-control is a major challenge to most dog owners; however, after they see the progress usually achieved in a few days, their feelings that the pet "needs to be told it has done wrong" usually crop up. Any backsliding on the owner's part is quickly reflected by regression in the dog. This feedback provides an effective control mechanism to which most owners are highly sensitive.

A third step in correction is used for dogs that respond submissively to persons outside the family. If a few friends are gathered to reinforce the owner's teachings, the dog usually responds satisfactorily. Correction in most cases requires only a few minutes on 2 or 3 occasions. Older dogs with a persistent problem may require longer training periods. This approach to correct overly submissive behavior in shy dogs assumes the pet is healthy, so that no possible organic influence interferes with the learning capabilities of the animal. Total rehabilitation can be expected in 6 weeks when the process is carried out daily.
How to Guarantee Your Dog Will NOT Come When Called

The re-call is one of the easiest commands to teach but one of the quickest to trash. Many owners ruin their dog’s desire to come when called by doing one or all of the following:

* Calling the dog when they’re angry.
* Calling the dog when they’re about to do something he doesn’t like (for example, nail clipping and bathing).
* Calling the dog to put on his leash at the dog park.
* Calling the dog to be put in confinement.
* Waiting to praise the dog until he gets to them.
* Not rewarding the dog sufficiently.
* Calling their off-leash dog to come before he is trained.

Call your dog often during off-leash play sessions. When he comes back to you, let him know how pleased you are and then tell him to go back and play again. You are accomplishing two important things here: checking to make sure your dog complies and teaching your dog that coming to you does not mean the end of play, but rather a pleasant time out for reward.

When Your Dog Runs Away

A dog that runs away from home has somewhere to go. It is quite amazing that in most cases the owners cannot tell where their dog goes. The usual answer is, "Just out in the neighborhood to see the other dogs or something." These dogs have a definite objective in mind and usually cover the same route during each journey. Why is that route or objectives more appealing than his home environment? It must be that his environment is lacking in some respect. The root of the problem usually lies with the owner. The dog is often either over-dependent or is not in a subordinate position in relation to the owner. All corrective procedures must start with the relationship between dog and owner,
except when minor external environmental adjustments are needed, such as gaining a misguided neighbor's cooperation to stop feeding the dog when he comes around.

The relationship between dog and his owner must always be considered first when solving a runaway problem. When the dog is over-dependent or too independent, he must be taught, without physical manipulation, to Come, Sit and Stay on command. The owner must make a general environmental adjustment and avoid all fondling or other stimulus-response situations that subordinate the owner to the dog's whims. For example, a dog that nudges for petting, food tidbits, or to be let outside must be given some simple command, and then told "Good dog" and petted briefly when he obeys. The pet should then be ignored while the owner continues whatever activity was interrupted by the dog's solicitation. This helps reorient the dog to his owner's control and reverses the leadership position. Combined with daily training sessions and other corrective measures, this procedure produces results within one and three weeks.

Owners who allow their dogs to roam free in the neighborhood are contributing to the runaway problem, and should be made aware of the dangers related to this practice. The pet's safety and health are at risk because of poisoning, road accidents, fighting, and diseases contracted from other animals. The animal may become lost, picked up by animal control officers or stolen. What is seldom considered also is that the owner may be subjected to civil suit or criminal charges if the wandering pet causes destruction of property, including fights with other dogs, or human injury.

If an owner cannot appreciate the folly of allowing a pet to roam, any attempt at teaching the animal to behave at home is wasted. When the dog has been taught to accept the confines of his own property, the problem of running away is solved, and such associated problems as dashing in or out of doors, jumping fences, and other escape behavior can be dealt with effectively.

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Training Your Dog Not To Beg

Begging food from the dinner table is one of the easiest things to teach a dog, and also one of the hardest habits to break. Your pet's training to beg begins when he is a young, adorable puppy. It does not take too many repetitions before he learns that he gets fed from the table by begging. Then he sits by your chair while you are eating and stares at you. Occasionally he'll get up on his hind legs and paw you, or he'll nudge your arm and remind you that he is waiting. And he drools, that's the worst part. He looks as though you never feed him.
If you don't have this problem, prevention is quite simple. Don't start giving your dog food from the table. If you must give your dog table scraps, give them in moderation and in his own dish after you have finished eating or, better yet, with his regular meal. Once you have a dog that begs, it becomes a self-perpetuating problem. Begging is rewarded with food.

Chances are, if you have this problem, you've tried to stop his begging, you've yelled at him when he begs, pushed him away, and even gotten really angry, but he just gets more persistent. So you've had to give him something to be able to eat in peace. What you have done is to reward his persistence. Each time you have tried holding out longer, but have ultimately given in, you have further trained him that no matter how far away the rainbow looks, there is a pot of gold at the end if he simply waits.

When you are tired of this behavior and want to end it, when you get to the point that you can't stand the drooling, the whining, the pawing and the sad eyes staring at you, then you have to steel yourself for the cure. Using the positive approach, give him the command "Down" and have him do a long "Down" by your chair during dinner. Be prepared for many interruptions initially, while you reinforce his “Down.” Each time he gets up, repeat the command and replace it if necessary so that he remains down during your dinner.

With a truly persistent begger, your first week of dinners may be quite a trial. Some dogs bark repeatedly and go through all manner of random actions to try to get you to feed them from the table. But once you have begun the training, stick with it. If you give in at any time, no matter how small the tidbit you sneak him, not only have you lost that battle, you may very well have lost the entire war. If you have made up your mind that you don't want begging, then it's just a matter of time before you have your dog resigned to the fact that the party is over, at least at the dinner table.

When your dog is steady enough to do the long “Down” away from your side during dinner, then establish his place where he stays while you eat. He should be put in his place every evening while you are eating, and praised when you release him at the end of the meal. It won't be too long before you will be eating dinner in the company of a well-trained, well-behaved dog lying quietly in the corner.

How To End Your Dog's Food Begging

Begging usually becomes a habit if you feed the dog from the table when he begs. He won't leave the table if he's reinforced for staying with tidbits. Command the dog to "settle" at the table and enforce it. He'll tire of staring up
and will soon fall asleep if you don't reward him for begging. If you give the dog a scrap from the table, give it only when he's in a settle position.

Some dogs are just born optimistic, and even though they have never received food from the table, they plant themselves at the table, hoping something will fall their way. Dropped food is a good beggar reinforcement, especially if you have a child who likes to make a game of dropping food on purpose. You may choose to train the dog to settle or down-stay in another room or at a distance from the table.

The dog must never bite the hand that feeds. To make sure that he doesn't, teach him the command "easy." Offer him a treat by holding the treat in your thumb and index finger keeping your palm toward your body and your knuckles facing the dog. If the dog grabs for the treat, give him a very loud and firm command by saying "Easy." After a few rounds of this practice, he will generally take the food from your hand gently.

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**Stealing Food & Your Personal Items**

Dogs steal food for obvious reasons. The problem is easily managed by keeping food items out of reach. Stealing other items, however, is a more complex problem and requires more extensive investigation before correction is attempted.

**Your Food**

Stealing food is simply eating that which is appealing. In most problem cases, the pet has been given food items in certain situations, and expected to ignore the same food at other times, or a naive dog has the opportunity to take food when the owner is not present. The simplest approach to correcting a food stealing problem is the realistic approach. This requires that the owner take special and basically sensible measures to deprive the pet of the opportunity to steal food. It also avoids the need for punishment or the more sophisticated and time consuming methods used with puppies.

The puppy training methods may be tried if the owner wants to make the sacrifice, but only in conjunction with the standard rule, "Never leave food within the dog's reach."

**Your Personal Belongings**

When various other items, such as shoes, clothing, and hairbrushes are stolen, the dog is usually displaying a lack of respect for the owner's leadership.
(particularly when stealing occurs in the owner's presence), or the dog has learned that its actions instigate an enjoyable ritual, such as a tug-o'-war. These motivations differ somewhat from those of a dog that takes the owner's articles and chews them when alone or when it feels excluded from social activities.

When a lack of leadership and/or tug-o'-war are central to the problem, the pet must be taught simple command responses without punishment so as to reestablish the owner's authority. All fondling of the pet must cease, as well as tug-o'-war and other orally stimulating interaction between owner and dog. As in the case of food stealing, any items likely to be stolen should be kept out of reach. If the dog is caught trying to steal something, the dog should be given commands to Come, Sit and Stay, and praised lavishly for its responses.

The firm "get away from that" warning also helps if followed by praise for positive response away from the item. Yet another technique is to introduce the preamble to some kind of treatment the dog finds obnoxious, such as get out the nail clippers as the dog looks at the food, quickly go and start to run the bath water, get a tissue as if preparing to clean the dog's eyes, etc.

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Is Your Puppy A Thief?

Commonly, a puppy will pick up a shoe off the floor, which provokes us to chase after him and take the forbidden object away. The dog that is frequently isolated or prohibited from exercise will learn how to ask for negative attention. Negative attention is better to the dog than no attention at all, hence his stealing articles to solicit your attention.

Pick your issues carefully when training your dog. When your dog has an object that you must retrieve, do not under any circumstances chase him. He can and will outrun you while learning how to achieve attention from you. Ignore the behavior unless the object is dangerous to your dog's health. In this case, replacing the object he is holding in his mouth usually works.

When replacement does not work, then you may need to use a can with several pennies in it to startle him into dropping. This "throw can" technique needs to be done so that your dog doesn't see you throw it. The can flew out of the sky and landed near him when he picked up the forbidden object.

Employing the commands "drop it" and "leave it" are helpful with this problem. Teaching the dog to play with only his toys is also important. Having a long line attached to his collar in the house while conditioning your dog out of this behavior eliminates the need for you to chase him to get back whatever he has picked up.
Digging Problems & Your Dog’s Desire For Garbage

To discourage garbage raiding, get a garbage can that has a locking lid. Or, simply put the garbage can in a place your dog can’t reach, like under the sink. If you attempt to correct your dog when you catch him raiding the can, chances are that all he will learn is to avoid going on a "garbage hunt" when you’re around. You'll essentially have created an owner absent garbage hound.

Your dog has lots of reasons to want to dig. Digging is fun and it relieves boredom. To prevent unwanted digging, don't let your dog spend unsupervised time in the yard. Go outside and watch him play or better yet, play with him.

If you don't want to ban digging, you can teach him that it isn't digging you hate, just digging everywhere. So, choose one spot and designate it as his digging pit. Think of it as his sandbox. Let him watch you bury a couple of tasty chew-toys. Then encourage him to dig in that spot to get them out. Your dog will learn that this is the best (and only) place for him to have his digging fun.

10 Tips To Prevent Your Dog From Giving Your Garden Trouble

Your plants, whether indoors or out, may have a special appeal to your dog. Your dog may enjoy digging up your geraniums or depositing wastes on your watermelons. Or, he may find it fun to dig the dirt from your houseplants and then deposit it on the floor for later use. To keep your dog from starting his own landscaping business in your yard, try some of these tips for turning your four-legged dirt devil into lawn lover:

1. Check at farm or garden stores for chemical products developed to repel animals from choosing your garden as a favorite place to dig or deposit wastes. Such products come in granular forms that last up to three months outside. The odor is designed to stop animals from leaving their droppings around your home.

2. Sprinkle alum powder around bushes or objects in your garden your dog likes to dig up.

3. To keep dogs from digging in your outdoor garden, sprinkle the garden with moth crystals. If you have kids, cover the moth crystals with dirt.

4. If your dog likes to dig in a certain spot, try placing upside-down mousetraps that will startle him if he disturbs them.
5. If your gardens are of the container variety or consist entirely of indoor plants, prevent your dog from digging in the pots by inserting pine or other evergreen cones in the dirt. Or, place aluminum foil over the pot.

6. Bury a cotton ball dipped in oil of cloves just below the surface of the soil in your flowerpots. Be sure it is just barely covered the soil.

7. If you use a chemical lawn treatment, insecticide, or fertilizer, make sure your dog stays off the lawn for the specified amount time (usually 24 hours), depending on the product you use.

8. If you've used a lawn flea treatment, keep your dog off the lawn until it is safe. Read the product label directions to determine how long your dog should keep off the grass.

9. The best way to keep a dog from digging in your garden and flower beds is to surround the gardens and beds with fencing. For example, use chicken wire that is high enough to prevent them from jumping over and inserted about 1 foot (30 cm) under the ground to prevent them from digging under them.

10. As a last resort, and if surrounding your garden with a real fence is impossible, try an invisible fencing system that creates a barrier that your dog won't jump over or dig under. The invisible fencing system is customized to your dog, home, and property

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**What's Wrong With My Dog, He Loves To Eat Poop!**

Children will often do crazy things because they saw their friends do them first. But once is usually enough. They won't jump out of a tree or put their fingers in a candle flame after the first painful experience. Dogs, however, will return to eating dung again and again. Most experts have had to conclude that there's more at work than simple imitation. There are times when that includes imitating their least desirable behavior - eating dung. But they do, so there has to be something about it that they like.

This isn't all that surprising. Dogs have always been scavengers. They'll eat roadkill as readily as their suppers. Old trash, pond muck, and dead sparrows on the lawn are no less appetizing. Dogs start getting hungry whenever they sniff something with a pungent smell, and dung certainly does smell.
Not all dung tastes the same, of course. Dogs seem to have different preferences. Some are attracted to the stools of deer, cows, or horses. Others will eat the stools of other dogs. And a great many dogs are attracted to cat droppings, possibly because cat foods are very high in protein and the dogs are going after undigested nutrients.

**The Attention Factor**

Dogs, no less than children, crave attention. And they do whatever it takes to get it, including things they know you hate. This probably explains why some dogs only eat dung when their owners are around to watch. It's probably the equivalent of a 6-year-old saying a dirty word and then watching for his parents' reaction. "Look at me," the dog is saying.

Boredom has something to do with it too. Dogs entertain themselves by putting things in their mouths. When not much is happening, they often nose around the yard, picking up sticks and putting them down, even mouthing rocks on occasion. Since they aren't offended by the smell or taste of dung, it's just another thing for them to pick up, play with, and explore.

Dogs occasionally eat so much dung that they get sick to their stomachs. For the most part, however, it's not likely to make them sick - although they may get worms from eating the stools of an infected animal. Their digestive tracts are very forgiving.

The people who live with dogs, however, are less forgiving. For one thing, it's an ugly sight that no one wants to watch. There's also the fact that dogs who eat dung have heart-stopping bad breath. It takes some serious devotion to get past that!

**Dung-Eating Tip:** Veterinarians sometimes recommend adding garlic, canned pumpkin, or Accent meat tenderizer to a dung-eating dog's food. Assuming that it's his own dung that he's attracted do, these ingredients may give it a taste he dislikes - although it's hard to imagine that anything could make it taste worse than it already does. This isn't a perfect solution, but it does work for some dogs.

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**Stop Your Dog From Eating Poop!**

While you would not want to break the spirit of your goofy little puppy or have him behave like a robot, still you can see the value of not letting things get out of hand.
Your best weapon is to be a firm pack leader. In the face of a strong, intelligent leadership, less problems will crop up. Your very attitude will prevent most of them. Understanding the puppy's inability to behave as an adult, yet curbing excessive flack even while he's learning.

Knowing that you have the right and duty to be in charge is a good beginning when it comes to dog problem prevention. Your puppy is built to look to a strong, loving leader for direction and guidance. You just have to step into his shoes and continue on - loving, protecting, making rules and setting limits.

One type of behavior problem that needs to be stopped is the unpleasant habit of stool eating. Some puppies indulge in this habit out of boredom. Some get the habit after being punished for a housebreaking accident. They seem to be trying to get rid of the evidence of wrongdoing. And while most people find this habit unnatural, it isn't really.

When your dog was a little puppy, his mother kept the den clean by ingesting the feces of all her puppies. Still, when you pick up your little puppy to kiss him, you'd prefer his breath to smell like milk. In addition, by ingesting feces, he can reinfest himself with the very parasites you have been battling to get rid of. If he does this with the stools of other dogs, he can infest himself with whatever worms they might have.

The only way to break this habit is to clean up immediately after your dog evacuates. When he's outside, keep him on leash and do not let him sniff the droppings of other dogs. This habit may take a few weeks to break, especially if your puppy is using papers while you are out to work. But by keeping things as clean as possible, you will end the habit soon enough. Try not to freak out when your pup "cleans up" by himself. This too shall pass.

In all training, particularly in problem prevention and correction, it's important to examine the activity from the dog's side, too. Sometimes you will feel that what your dog wants is not acceptable, as in the case with biting. Other times you'll feel that what he wants to do would be fine if you had some control over it, as in the case with barking. By pausing to look at life momentarily through dog-colored glasses you will see which activities you should stop cold and which you can redirect. That is the intelligent and humane way to train you dog.

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**How To Keep Dogs From Rolling Around In The Dirtiest Of Things**

Dogs have been rolling in dirty things for as long as they have been dogs. It is as much a part of who they are as their barks and wagging tails. They are not going
to quit doing it just because people want them to. All that you can hope to achieve is keeping them away from temptation or knocking down the odor enough that they are bearable to be around.

Baths are fine for eliminating a little bit of doggy smell, but they will not do a thing for a dog who has rolled on an old catfish. If anything, washing them seems to raise the scent. A better choice may be an odor neutralizer. Available in pet supply stores and online catalogs, these contain ingredients that break down bad odors chemically.

Beat them to it. It is not a glamorous job, but some people have resigned themselves to doing a treasure hunt every few days, looking for things in the yard that their dogs are likely to be attracted to such as dead mice and rotten bird eggs.

Take some goodies with you when you are out for a walk. It is not easy to convince dogs to ignore their natural urge to roll, but food is always a reliable distraction.

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How To Banish Your Dog's Destructive Scratching

Destructive scratching is related to escape chewing, digging and jumping out of windows. This is a behavior that the dog normally undertakes when he has been confined and wants to escape.

To discover the causes of this destructive behavior, you must determine when and where the scratching takes place. Obvious causes of this behavior is when the female dog next door is in heat, or confinement because the dog is a social problem or is being punished, which are the usual causes relate to confinement alone.

One exception is the dog that scratches on the seats or cushions of furniture or through bedding or mattresses. These excavators are usually digging a hole for themselves to curl up in or are scratching in frustration at their owner's anal and/or genital scents. When pillows and clothing are the target, the dog may be attempting to masturbate with them.

Scratching in order to escape can occur in dominant or overdependent dogs. In either case, correction involves the same methods as for destructive chewing. The owner must teach at least the “Come,” “Sit,” and “Stay” commands without the use of force. These commands should be used whenever the dog nudges for attention. The dog should be praised for desirable responses. If punishment has
If the cause of destructive scratching is known, that cause should be eliminated, if possible. If a confined male dog is scratching because a neighborhood female dog is in heat, the use of some medication for the female dog in heat has proved to be successful, providing her owners are willing. If not, and if the problem is recurrent with a male that is not to be bred, castration has proven helpful if combined with the other steps outlined here. If the dog is unruly or shut away as punishment for some other behavior, the basic behavior problem should be corrected.

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**Is Your Dog A Door-Dasher?**

About half of dogs that dash out of doors do so because they are frustrated by captivity. The others are often leader types and either trying to get into the house to socialize with their owners or to continue their social contact by attempting to leave with the owner. Whatever the basic motivation, the act can be both financially and emotionally costly. Such door-dashing has seriously injured children and elderly people, caused premature birth in pregnant women, resulted in injury and death of the dog and, in many cases, causes an automobile accident when a motorist swerves to miss the dog.

When the problem involves a dog that dashes merely to get out there to run about the neighborhood, avoiding its owners' pleas to return, the pet is usually unruly in other circumstances as well. These cases often involve an independent, self-oriented (spoiled) dog. Other factors may involve an early history of unrestricted outdoor activity, followed by restriction because of some problem that has arisen outside (fighting, car chasing, etc.).

Some cases involve continuous frustration relative to neighborhood activities, such as the dog's "fretting" behind a gate or at a window. Depending on the
excitability of the animal, it may develop the same type of stereotyped behavior seen in fence-running dogs. Simple freedom-dashing may be tension relieving in itself, or the escaped dog may have a frustration target, such as passing cars, playing children, mail carrier or other animals.

Correcting The Problem

1. Approach the door or gate. (Of course, the door-dasher will be close by.)
2. Given an inward-opening door, abruptly open it no more than 2 inches and abruptly close it. An outward-opening door should be opened no more than an inch and then closed very quickly, or the dog may push through or get a pinched snout.
3. As the door is closed, the owner must abruptly move away from it at least 8 feet and praise the dog for following, after which the owner should be encouraged to remain still for at least a minute. If the dog remains at the door, steps 1, 2 and 3 must be repeated until the dog retreats along with the owner.
4. Step 3 must be repeated until the dog stays away from the door when the owner approaches it and when the door is opened. When this occurs, the door should be opened a full foot. If the pet dashes, the door should again be slammed shut and Step 3 applied with this larger opening.
5. Step 4 is repeated until the door can be opened to its normal exit width, with the dog staying at least 8 feet away from it. When this is accomplished the owner must stay inside, close the door, return to the dog and praise it quietly. Then the owner should remain in the house, going about some other activity for at least half an hour before repeating the procedure.
6. When the dog stays away from the door on the initial approach, the owner should then proceed outside, close the door and stay away for at least 15 minutes, after which she should return as nonchalantly as possible.

If this method is applied daily for a few days, most dogs begin to ignore the comings and goings of their owners. Dogs that are extremely tenacious in their efforts to dash through a door ahead of people often have a long history of frustration about barriers, or are highly motivated by a strong stimulus on the other side of the door.

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**Why City-Living Can Be Dangerous For Your Dog**

For dogs that are living in the city with you, you should be weary of a few setbacks. For example, noise pollution is actually more of a problem to dogs than air pollution. Honking horns, sirens, airplanes, sonic booms, and crowd noises all take their toll on the city dog. Use the same precautions for your dog you would take for yourself. Avoid walking past construction projects if you can avoid it,
because loud sudden machinery noises can make even the best-trained dog break heel and dart away.

Narrow, thin alleys, or precarious, temporary construction crossings can be a problem. Remember, not all dogs are of the caliber of Seeing Eye dogs, which are able to cope with city stress because they are genetically and educationally prepared. When you must traverse an area where noise is deafening, hold the dog near to you on the leash, and cup one hand around the dog's neck until the noise dies down or you pass out of its range. This comforting body contact can help the dog cope with the noise more easily.

Dogs should not be allowed to run free in city parks unless they are completely controllable. In some cities the law may forbid off-lead dogs altogether. Even city parks can be a stress for the dog and can provoke strange behavioral reactions. For instance, never allow the dog to run free with strange children. Don't allow noisy children to crowd around your dog. Groups of screaming children have often triggered biting incidents or encouraged playful dogs to jump up. A child who is jumped on in play, and then falls and screams, can be perceived as prey by a dog, with occasionally tragic results.

The city dog needs to be able to deal with an incredible array of strangers each day. Many humans in cities simply go on "automatic pilot" and pass strangers without seeing particular faces. This ability to screen out distractions is more difficult for dogs to acquire. The dog remains interested, in a positive or negative way, in practically every human and dog it passes. Pedestrians may react in a variety of ways, from fear, to over-effusive affection, to outright disdain or hostility. There is simply no way to predict the variety of reactions, so the best approach is to expose your dog to all possibilities in a structured training session.

Accustom your dog to being approached, petted, and also possibly rebuffed. A leadership role by the master, and heeling practice, can help rivet the dog to its owner, but remember that heeling is always more difficult in the city. There are simply more distractions, more opportunities to lag behind and investigate or to lunge ahead. If you follow proper heeling methods and are sure to train your dog to heel by using distractions in your training sessions (traffic, other dogs, working in crowds), your dog should be controllable and able to meet any situation on the street.

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Is Your Puppy Charging After The Door When Someone Knocks?

One very annoying habit of many dogs is that of charging the door when someone knocks. Since the dog is likely to run faster than the resident human,
the dog thinks it's out of your range and hence only under voice control. Now having your dog thoroughly under voice control is a situation to be striven for, but it does not come overnight. In the meantime, how to cope?

I first used one of those chain collars that is supposed to be keyed so it would assault the dog's ears when it was jangled, for I had an adult, incorrigible door charger, Heidi. One day when Heidi was charging the door, I couldn't immediately find the sound collar, so I just grabbed a regular chain choker and threw it, hitting the door at the same moment that my voice hit her ears with the NO. The effect was the same: She backed off. Thus I learned that one does not need any special equipment; the jangle of any choke chain suddenly landing out of thin air is upsetting enough to cause your dog to heed your NO command. Repeated regularly, this combination of the thrown chain and the NO command resulted in the dog not charging doors anymore—in fact, she charged them a lot less, and finally not at all. I've used the technique since on other dogs who learned the lesson in just two or three sessions.

Do not worry about what the person at the door is going to think when you go through your correctional antics. People do not think kind thoughts when they are knocked down or jumped on by a dog that answers the door, so they're likely to appreciate your efforts to keep their entry safe. Besides using the thrown object indoors to aid training, thrown objects are useful outdoors, too. Put some pebbles into an empty plastic bottle and use it as an outdoor training aid.

The puppy who does not heed your voice command is startled by the rattle the bottle makes landing nearby and is quickly convinced that it is not safe to ignore you. A clod of dirt or a handful of pebbles will do in a pinch. Do not use anything that would hurt your pup if it hit. The object here is to get Puppy's attention, not to touch him. The combination of the thrown object and your command gets the pup's attention and improves compliance. Be sneaky about throwing things; you don't want Puppy to see you doing the throwing, for that could make the pup afraid of you.

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How To Control Your “Chase Me Please” Attention-Seeking Dog

Does your dog drive you and your family crazy by picking up a knick-knack and running crazy around the house with it, encouraging everyone to join him in a wild and crazy game of chase? The solution is simple: let him wear his leash around the house, and when he steals something, it will be easy to catch him and take it away. No game, no fun, no more stealing. Try this on your pup if she's become a thief; just be sure you're watching her so that her leash doesn't get caught on anything.
Next, to remove an object or a piece of food from your dog's mouth, act fast, before she's had a chance to enjoy it: grab her snout from the top with one hand and squeeze inward on the sides (pressing on her upper gums and teeth), and with the other hand reach in and extract the goods. Use the word "Out" or "Give," then praise her when she releases her grip. If she's really tenacious, hold her head still and blow very quickly and sharply in her ear; she'll unclench her jaws for a moment, and you can snatch away her prize.

Should Face Licking Be Encouraged?

Dog caresses and shows affection by licking; it is his way of showing love and appreciation for the person he does it to. But face licking should be encouraged and needs to be stopped. If he is stopped from doing this as a small puppy, he will learn to lay his face against his owner's cheek without the licking.

Licking, after all, can be a cause of infection to owners in rare cases, and not all dogs live a completely clean life. Most of them drink water from the toilet, eat manure, and lick their behinds which not only their own but those of other dogs that might not be as healthy as yours. Therefore you should train your dogs the command "No Lick" to be followed by a kiss behind their ears and then have their chests very slowly and gently scratched.

So many dog owners rub their dogs when praising them, which makes most dogs bad-tempered. Rubbing the hair the wrong way is particularly obnoxious to a dog, whereas the gentle smoothing of the hair on the chest or on the rump is particularly pleasing to them. They love being scratched on top of the tail because it is an area of pleasure. In addition, there are other areas of pleasure; behind the ears, under the lower jaw, on the ribs behind the front legs, on the tummy and especially between the front legs. Dog owners must find out which pleases each individual dog best and keep that pleasure for a reward, as well as to please the dog.

If you notice that your dog is excessively licking their bodies, this could a sign that may indicate an allergy, constipation or a skin disease. Some people think that dogs wash themselves like cats; well, they do not. Sometimes when dogs get their paws wet, you will see them licking that area to dry, just as a female dog licks her puppies to clean and dry them. Dogs should be allowed to lick the hand because hands can easily be washed before touching food. However, generally speaking, licking should be avoided and stopped at an early age.
Stop Jumping!

There are lots of good reasons to teach your dog not to jump up. Any dog can learn to deliver tons of affection from the floor and to forgo scaring people, knocking over little kids, tearing and messing up clothing, and acting like a mad dog just because you brought in the mail.

So what do you do? First, you should not make a presentation of your coming and going. When you come home, greet your dog warmly but casually, then ask him to sit. Next, holding onto his collar to prevent an unexpected jump, pet him while he is seated. Then go about your business.

When your dog jumps up on you, slip your hand into his collar and pull him off to the side, firmly placing his feet back on the ground. Praise immediately. When you see your dog getting ready to fly at someone else, tell him “No jumping, Sit, Good Dog.” If that is not enough to stop him, leash him.

As he begins to jump, jerk back hard saying “No jumping, Sit, Good Dog.” The training will take about a month if you are consistent and will not get done at all if you give in and let the dog jump up to kiss you when you are in the mood.

Puppy Jumping And How To Prevent It

Puppy training can be taught in many various different forms, and it is especially important to be clear on your vocal training commands. Your little pup may become confused if told the same things that may have different meanings to you. For a great example, let's refer to the command words “OFF!” and “DOWN!”

It is important to learn the difference between "OFF!" and "DOWN!." When you get into obedience work, you will use the command "DOWN!" to mean that the pup will lie down. Therefore, while you're working on the problem of jumping up on or at you, don't use the wrong command. Tell Puppy "OFF!" And what if she doesn't? Let's examine why a puppy jumps before we try to eradicate jumping.

Have you ever greeted someone you love and been able to see only that person's ankles? Don't you want to look into the face of your beloved? So does your puppy, so, being very short, it jumps up to see you. The first thing you can do to begin to eradicate the unacceptable jumping is bending or squatting down to greet your puppy. You bend and your puppy doesn't have to jump up to see your face. That's an important beginning. Second, every time the puppy jumps up on you, take his/her front paws, put him off you firmly, and while you're doing this, say "OFF!" loudly and firmly. If you do this, coupled with the bend-over greeting,
while the puppy is still young, you have no need for rougher methods. Remember to pat him and say "Good Puppy" as soon as all four feet are on the floor.

Praise must always follow any attempt by the pup to do what you've demanded, even if the attempt is a pretty casual version of what you have in mind as ideal compliance. Your praise is your puppy's reward for good behavior. However, maybe you have a year-old stubborn-minded dog who has been running your life his way before you read this. You don't need me to tell you that you have a problem! You're going to have to get rougher than the behavior described above if you want results. I suggest a knee-jerk reaction. When you see your dog coming at you to jump, bring your knee up fast against his chest. At the same time, shout "NO. OFF!" Do this every time. You may even shove with your knee. Knocking the dog down once or twice may be beneficial to it in getting the message across; certainly it'll be beneficial to you in working off some frustrations.

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**Fence Jumping: Why Do Dogs Do It?**

Most dogs jump fences when their owners are absent. This leads us to ask just why the pet is shut out of the house when the owners go away. Destructive behavior in the house is often the underlying complaint. A solution to the destructiveness is more pertinent than an effort to correct fence jumping. If the dog is jumping out at a location where the fence or gate is only 3 feet high, a simple physical adjustment may entail raising the level of the barrier.

Fence jumping usually involves social factors. The dog is often seeking the company of other dogs or people. The social aspect is most evident in dogs that are shut out of their homes and jump even when the family is present. These dogs generally wind up scratching at the front door to get back into the family group. Installation of a dog door may clear this up quickly.

The cause of goal-oriented fence jumping usually relates to the animal's ultimate activity when he is free of the yard. For instance, a dog may jump the fence only on Monday mornings. Many dogs were allowed to roam free in the neighborhood, and tended to meet on Monday morning, which happened to be garbage collection time. The normally content pet needed only the extra stimulus of the weekly dog pack to sufficiently motivate him to jump a 6-foot block wall. The solution to this problem is to keep the dog in the house on Monday mornings for a few weeks to break the pattern.

The sexually motivated jumper is more difficult to correct, especially if his behavior has been rewarded. The simplest way to correct this is to keep the male or female dog indoors until the season is over.
Dogs that are permitted to roam or are regularly walked in the neighborhood and allowed to urinate freely may jump fences for the purpose of re-marking their territory and/or fighting with other neighborhood dogs. When these elements are present, the walks must be stopped as part of the correction.

Urine marking can develop into a habitual pattern. Urban pet owners believe this activity is necessary for the happiness of their dogs, especially male animals. It may appear to be rewarding, but it is actually an idiosyncrasy of city dogs rarely noted in their rural cousins. The primary reason for this behavior is that owners allow it to occur. If all owners prevented their pets from urinating around the neighborhood, a major cause of fence jumping would be eliminated.

Frustration with confinement is also responsible for a good deal of jumping. A dog that is isolated and does not receive enough social interaction will often try to escape. Freedom then becomes a goal in itself, no matter the consequences in terms of later punishment or further confinement.

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**A Few Reasons Why Your Dog Is Jumping Out Of Windows**

The most common cause for dogs jumping through windows is social isolation. Most cases generally involve dogs that do not accept being left alone in the house and escape to seek some social contact in the neighborhood. Some escape and remain on the front porch to await the return of their owners.

Most of these dogs have experienced some sort of highly gratifying social interaction when outside. Males or females in heat may escape to obtain sexual satisfaction. Others have been fed by neighbors or otherwise welcomed into their homes. Some have been generally allowed to run loose when their owners are at home, but are confined when the owner is away.

A less common cause is genuine fear of confinement inside the house or in the yard, causing the animal to jump out of the yard and/or into the house. In these cases, there has usually been some sort of experience involving the area in which the dog is confined. Such traumatic events may include severe physical punishment, extreme hunger, pain from BB shots or rocks thrown at the dog, and firecrackers or other explosions nearby or in the yard. Such distress has caused some dogs to jump out of windows as well.

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**Dog Pheromones**

Pheromones are chemical substances secreted by an animal that influence the behavior of other animals of the same species. Unlike other hormones, pheromones are secreted externally and influence other animals, typically by smell. In this case, pheromones may play a very important role in animal behavior. In dogs, pheromones probably influence group integration and are a factor in fighting and general aggressiveness. Some theories suggest that dogs release pheromones in urine and feces, and perhaps through exhaled breath, subcutaneous glands at the base of the tail and the foot pads. This would tend to explain why aggressive, fighting dogs are often compulsive urine sniffers and urine markers, and why they become less aggressive when sniffing and urine marking are not allowed by their owners.

Pheromones may act as a trigger or primer for certain types of behavior. This case is typical of many wherein a dog appears to sense, by smell, another dog that may be perceived as a threat. Also typical among some vicious biting dogs is the need to brand a strange territory with their own pheromones before launching an attack. Some take place even when the biting dogs were on their home territory. Remedial programs include restricting urination of the problem dog to a single area of his own yard. This tends to lower the aggressiveness, as well as reduce the incidence of household urination.

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**Sexual Mounting**

Some puppies begin sexual mounting behavior at the tender age of 6 or 7 weeks, though it usually begins at about 12 weeks of age. It is self-rewarding behavior, in that it "feels good" to the pup. The problem rarely persists if the object of its attentions is made inaccessible. Unfortunately, many owners think that the behavior will disappear if they just let it run its course. They may allow the pup to mount until it reaches sexual climax. This, of course, makes the owner a subordinate sexual partner for the pet and can later develop into severe problems involving overprotection and biting.

Correction Mounting should be discouraged by withdrawing the target (leg, arm, clothing) in as startling a manner as possible, as the pup starts the mounting rather than when it is under way. Sexual experimentation seems to be a normal part of maturation in mammals. Therefore, in cases involving owners who allow the pup to persist in mounting, all family members should be brought into consultation to explain the possible side effects of the problem.

In extreme cases, the owner must establish a leadership position with the pup or dog, preferably away from their home ground at first. This can be accomplished
through standard obedience programs in some cases. However, a nonphysical approach to teaching is usually quicker, even if the dog is taught only to sit and stay on command. Along with this regimen, the aggressive 'Romeo' must be distracted effectively before the overt mounting starts, with some strong intervening stimulus that takes its mind off the sex act. A food distraction is a poor substitute in most cases. Better is an invitation to play ball or otherwise engage in some strenuous physical activity that is enjoyed by the pet.

All unearned petting and praise must be stopped in cases of persistent mounting, even with very young offenders. If the pup pesters for attention, the owner should give it one of the simple commands until it obeys, then gently and briefly pet the animal and go on about some other business. After a few days to weeks of this type of correction, the puppy usually stops mounting and becomes oriented to the more typical play activity as a displacement mechanism. This type of problem pup may persist in mounting inanimate objects, such as the owner's clothing, pillows or bedclothes, in the absence of its living sex object. However, this behavior usually fades away after a few weeks. One helpful corrective aid is to remove things that stimulate the behavior when the owner must be absent.

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Why Do Dogs Hump Everything?

No one would mind if their dogs only humped other dogs at the appropriate mating times. It's how they reproduce, and if their level of discretion leaves something to be desired, well, dogs will be dogs. But some dogs aren't very selective about the objects of their affections. They'll try to hump arms, legs, teddy bears, sometimes even cats.

This type of indiscriminate humping isn't about mating. Even a dog who is frenzied by hormones knows the difference between a receptive partner and someone's leg. It's not even about pleasure, although that may play a role. Dogs mainly hump because they're trying to assert themselves. The longer they get away with it, the more powerful they feel.

Humping usually starts during a dog's adolescence - between 6 months old and 2 years old - depending on the breed. This is the time when reproductive hormones are starting to reach adult levels, and some dogs go a little bit crazy. And dogs are always trying to prove that they're tougher than the next guy. Some do it by humping. Others do it by putting their feet on another dog's back. They reach sexual maturity before they reach emotional maturity.

Humping is not strictly a male behavior, although males are the worst offenders. Unlike females, whose hormones ebb and flow with their reproductive cycles,
males maintain fairly steady hormone levels all the time. The hormones themselves don't cause humping, but they make dogs more likely to do it. That's why neutering or spaying is the best way to reduce or eliminate this unpleasant behavior.

There's another reason that males are more likely than females to latch on to human legs, one that has nothing to do with reproductive urges. Males are just more competitive. They're always trying to prove (to people as well as to other dogs) how big and tough and independent they are. Humping is just one way in which they push the boundaries and assert their dominance within a family.

Watch a litter of puppies at play, and you'll see that they spend quite a bit of time climbing on top of each other. The more assertive dogs may take advantage of their position and throw in a little humping. It's their way of saying that they are, quite literally, top dogs. They hump to show their dominance more than for any other reason.

Once dogs are out of the litter and living with people, the same instinct remains. Human legs don't have special appeal, but they're accessible and easy to wrap paws around. In the wild, dogs never mount dogs who are higher in rank than they are. The only time that a dog tries this with people is when there's some confusion in his mind about who's in charge and who isn't.

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**The Energetic Dog**

The expected energy level of a dog breed is a very important consideration in deciding whether to live with that breed. Unfortunately, what you expect may not always be what you get. The St. Bernard that you expect to spend most of his life on the couch may have other ideas, and the exuberant Springer Spaniel that you think will bounce off the walls may find watching the paint peel off them the best way to pass time. Most of the time, however, dogs bred for activity, such as the Irish Setter or Boxer, will fulfill the owner's expectation. Although high activity or even reactivity may be a desired trait in some breeds, that activity level must be manageable for the family living with the dog.

Activity in the field may be very appropriate, whereas pacing or charging through the house at all hours of the day and night is very annoying to most owners. Your emotional state easily transfers to the dog. The excitable dog will become more reactive if you use a high-pitched, fast, excited voice and are also reactive, nervous, and excitable. You must handle the energetic or reactive dog with calm, firm, purposeful movements and speak to him in a normal, firm-toned voice.
The deliberate, calm handling will help the dog stay calm. If you battle him to attach a lead to his collar, he will fidget and jump around even more fiercely. If the dog is hyperactive, take a firm grip on his handle and command him to sit in a slow, firm voice. If he doesn’t sit, firmly and slowly grip the handle and place him into a sit. Hold him in place quietly, without anger or any unnecessary hand movements, until he ceases the battle and remains in position. When he settles down, quietly, calmly, verbally praise him. Praise an excited dog only verbally, because physical contact will tend to excite him even more. Try again to attach the lead. If he goes out of control again, repeat the forced sit, and when he relaxes, praise him. Repeat the process until the dog sits quietly. Do not attempt to put a lead on an excited dog.

Obedience training, with its one-on-one interaction between you and your dog, is an effective outlet for the energetic dog. Obedience not only teaches the dog to sit quietly but also requires him to concentrate, and thus, uses up brain power and energy. Obedience training will also permit you to control his activity in the house. The "settle" command is very effective and important for controlling excitement in the house. When the dog becomes overly excited or active in the house, place him in a settle. The settle should be at least ten minutes long, and he will usually fall asleep or at least relax by that time.

When he gets up, he is usually calmer. If every time the dog gets overly excited you demand a settle of him, he will soon learn that the house is not the play yard. Unfortunately, you can’t place the energetic or nervous dog in a settle for the rest of his life; therefore, he should have appropriate outlets to release energy. Be conscientious in evaluating your own dog's energy level and adjust his lifestyle and routine exercise accordingly. If he is overly energetic the first recommendation a pet owner receives is to fence in a large backyard for the dog to use in running off energy. The pet owner, who may have had other ideas for the yard than making it a huge exercise run for the dog, creates a yard for the dog, only to realize he still exhibits an annoying overabundance of energy in the house. A large yard is useless if the dog does not use the area to run around.

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Hyperkinesis In Dogs

Anyone who has worked extensively with dogs has occasionally been confronted by an over-active, sometimes raging, vicious kind of dog, the handling of which has required a heavy duty tranquilizer and several helpers. In many cases, such behavior cannot be explained by improper handling or cruelty and neglect by their owners. When it seems that nothing can be done to correct the problem, then he is written off as "just a plain vicious dog" and relegated to the end of a chain or destroyed as a menace to the neighborhood. Since the early 1970s,
such excitable and mean behavior has been identified in some dogs as hyperkinesis.

Hyperkinesis is a behavioral condition that is described as "a hyper behavior that is treatable with stimulants." by Bonnie V. Beaver, in The Veterinarian's Encyclopedia of Animal Behavior. Lack of accurate information from dog owners exists regarding this condition, probably because it has recently been given a new label which is "attention deficit disorder." While ADD, as it is termed, may describe certain aspects of the readily observable behavior of a hyperkinetic dog, it lacks the physiologic symptoms which can be described and measured.

Signs associated with hyperkinesis in dogs are usually displayed when the dog is stressed by close confinement and/or social isolation. Signs include rapid heart rate and respiration, excessive salivation, a high metabolic rate, and reduced urine output. The major difficulty in identifying the syndrome, however, is that there is no apparent cause. Clinical signs may be evident in dogs that are normal in other circumstances. In addition, dogs identified as hyperkinetic do not always exhibit the same behavior patterns or physical symptoms.

Initial symptoms of this problem falls into the following categories: the dog cannot sit still, even for a minute; he never becomes accustomed to everyday situations; he cannot be taught anything (often an obedience school failure); and he salivates constantly and always seems very excited or very nervous. Many experienced, gentle dog owners were bitten, and some of these dogs will viciously attacked other dogs without hesitation, even friendly and docile animals.

In studies designed to evaluate responses to stress, some dogs did not respond to positive reinforcement, and tranquilization were all tried, but did not work. Typically, such dogs would be eliminated from the study, but because the researchers were interested in the interaction of genetics and psychological environment, they were curious about dogs that appeared unwilling to be studied. Eventually the researchers decided they were dealing with the equivalent of hyperkinetic children.

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**Hyperkinesis: A Case Study Of Drug Treatment**

The first controlled studies of hyperkinesis in dogs were an outgrowth of a long-term attempt to develop animal models of psychopathology. Dogs were chosen for these studies for several reasons, primarily because there were many carefully bred animals available. This allowed an evaluation of genetic strains in certain breeds. Also, dogs are the only domestic animal with a variety of emotional responses comparable to those seen in people: they worry about things not essential to their survival.
In studies designed to evaluate responses to stress, some dogs did not respond to Pavlovian conditioning. Positive reinforcement, negative reinforcement and tranquilizers were all tried, but nothing worked. Typically such dogs would be eliminated from the study, but because the researchers were interested in the interaction of genetics and psychological environment, they were curious about dogs that appeared unwilling to be studied. Eventually the researcher decided they were dealing with the equivalent of a hyperkinetic children. On that basis, amphetamines were given, and the tentative diagnosis proved correct.

The first model of hyperkinesis in a dog was Jackson, a Cocker-Beagle mix whose usual response to any approach was to snap, snarl, growl or, if possible, bite. Many experienced, gentle dog handlers were bitten, until eventually laboratory personnel refused to approach the dog. Jackson responded the same to other dogs. He viciously attacked any dog without hesitation, even friendly and docile animals. He refused to submit to Pavlovian conditioning, and destroyed laboratory equipment in his rages.

Because depressants were not effective against Jackson's abnormally hyperactive and vicious behavior, it was suspected that hyperkinesis may have been involved. On this assumption, the dog was given amphetamine orally. Within 2 hours, Jackson's personality changed to complete docility. He whimpered as if he wanted to be petted. When petting was stopped, he begged for more. He became nonviolent, even submissive, toward the same dog he had attacked earlier. Jackson appeared to be perplexed and unsure of what to do.

When placed in the Pavlovian experimental stand after medication, Jackson responded normally and learned rapidly, indicating that his previous failure was not a result of mental retardation, but rather a secondary effect of his behavior problem. After 6 weeks of drug-facilitated psychosocial therapy, medication could be withdrawn without reappearance of aggression, but hyperkinesis reappeared in low-threat situations. Aggression was apparently trained out by the drug-facilitated social interaction and conditioning experiments, indicating that what is learned under the influence of amphetamines is retained later.

After 2 more months of psycho-social therapy using amphetamines, Jackson's non-medicated hyperkinesis was also reduced. Because he was between 1 1/2 and 2 years old at the time of the experiments, maturation could have been associated with the cure; however, 6 older hyperkinetic dogs did not outgrow their abnormal behavior patterns.

Hyperkinesis: Understanding The Over-Reactive Dog
Anyone who has worked extensively with dogs has occasionally been confronted by an over active, sometimes raging, vicious beast, the handling of which has required a heavy-duty tranquilizer and several assistants. In many instances, such behavior cannot be explained by improper handling or cruelty and neglect by owners. When it seems that nothing can be done, the dog is written off as "just plain mean" and relegated to the end of a chain or destroyed as a menace to the neighborhood. Since the early 1970s, such excitable and vicious behavior has been identified in some dogs as "hyperkinesis", which in children has been under study for 40 years, and which can be effectively treated medically.

Hyperkinesis information and cases need as much exposure today as ever. "Hyperkinesis," as a diagnostic entity, is described as: A hyper behavior that is treatable with stimulants. A great deal of public ignorance abounds regarding hyperkinesis, probably because it has recently been given a new label, i.e. 'attention deficit disorder.' While ADD, as it is termed, may describe certain aspects of the readily observable behavior of a hyperkinetic dog, it lacks the physiologic symptoms which can be described and measured.

Signs associated with hyperkinesis in dogs are usually displayed when the dog is stressed by close confinement and/or social isolation. Signs include rapid heart rate and respiration, excessive salivation, a high metabolic rate and reduced urine output. The major difficulty in identifying the syndrome, however, is that there is no apparent cause. Clinical signs may be evident in dogs that are normal in other circumstances. Moreover, dogs identified as hyperkinetic do not always exhibit the same behavior patterns or physical symptoms.

The Diagnosis: Despite variations, clinical signs can give the veterinarian diagnostic clues in distinguishing the hyper-reactive from the hyperkinetic pet. Initial clues may come from the pet owner. Complaints fall into the following categories:

1. The dog cannot sit still, even for a minute.
2. The dog never becomes accustomed to everyday situations.
3. He cannot be taught anything (often an obedience school failure).
4. The dog salivates constantly and always seems excited or nervous.

Many dogs living in stressful environments may be stimulated toward hyper-reactivity. An amphetamine response test can differentiate hyper-reactivity from hyperkinesis. The seemingly paradoxical calming effect of amphetamines and methylphenidate (Ritalin) on hyperkinetic and even violent children and adults has been put to use for many years. In veterinary cases, amphetamines have resulted in about 75% positive results.
Myth: “If Your Dog Is Dragging Himself On His Rear, Then He Has Worms”

Actually, this one has a little truth to it and is not entirely a myth. A dog scoots on his rear in an attempt to relieve irritation - and worms can be one source of that discomfort. They aren't the only potential problem, however. Impacted or infected anal sacs can be a problem, too, and so can a piece of something a dog has chewed that hasn't been completely expelled in the stool. For long haired dogs, fecal material can cause a nasty, itchy, and oh-so-smelly mess that needs to be cut out prior to bathing.

You need to keep an eye on this area, whether or not your pet is scooting. Express the anal sacs when you bathe your dog and keep the hair clipped short and clean around the anus. (Your groomer or veterinarian can take care of the job for you if you'd rather leave this task to someone else.) Be observant for signs of worms on your pet's rear, such as the squirming segments of a live tapeworm or the rice-like appearance of dried segments.

If you think your pet has intestinal worms - because you've seen them on his rump or in his stools - have your veterinarian confirm your guess and prescribe appropriate treatment. Be on alert, too, for swollen areas on either side of the base of your dog's tail, which indicates infected anal glands, a condition that also demands your veterinarian's attention.

Controlling Your Dog's Disorder

1. The first step in treating a compulsive disorder is to identify the cause and eliminate it. For example, if your dog is crated for a large portion of the day, allow him outside the confined space to help get him on the road to recovery.

2. Don't reinforce the behavior by paying attention to him while he is engaged in it. Providing good quality time on a set schedule is preferable and more effective than petting, stroking, or verbally consoling your dog in the midst of repetitive activity.

3. Do not reinforce the behavior by punishing your dog for the compulsive behavior or for other inappropriate activities. It may make the problem worse.
4. Spray household objects your dog likes to chew with cayenne pepper, essential oils in citrus, cinnamon, or eucalyptus scents, spray deodorant, or perfume that is not your own.

5. Spray favorite chewables with a pet repellent to deter your dog from sticking non-food objects in his mouth.

6. Keep dangerous objects such as yarn or string out of your dog’s reach to prevent him from chewing and swallowing them.

7. If your dog is chewing his hair, he may have an allergy. Discuss the problem with your veterinarian before embarking on a behavior modification program.

8. As a last resort to solve a compulsive eating disorder, discuss drug therapy with your veterinarian. Drugs that increase serotonin levels, like Prozac and some antidepressants, are used for treating compulsive disorders, including compulsive eating.

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**Tips To Help Prevent “Pica”: Which Is When Your Dog Has A Compulsive Disorder**

With some dogs, meals aren't the only source of oral intake they have. Wool and other fibers, non-digestible plant material, rubber, plastic, wood, and even their own hair are just some of the things a dog may choose to ingest. Called pica - the drive to consume material that is not generally considered food - is what animal behaviorists call a compulsive disorder.

In a human, a compulsive disorder may be repetitive, such as frequent hand washing or pulling one's hair out. In dogs, these disorders can include excessive licking and spinning in circles. Compulsive disorders are competitive, nonfunctional, nonbeneficial behaviors. Although the exact cause of compulsive disorders is unknown, animal behaviorists feel that they are often caused by stress brought on by environmental conflicts such as competition with other pets, changes in the home, constant punishment, or confinement to small areas such as cages or crates.

Lack of socialization or too much attention may bring about a compulsive behavior as well. A nutritional imbalance can also lead to pica. A dog with a compulsive disorder loses control over his ability to initiate and stop these negative, repetitive actions. Often the compulsive behaviors are oral in nature, causing the dog to eat things he shouldn't.
Car Chasing

Although very dangerous behavior, car chasing is very rewarding for the dog. Dogs love to chase anything that runs, and the faster it runs, the better. To extinguish the behavior, you must negate the reward of the chase. Car chasing is most often done by dogs that have the run of the property and are not exposed to many cars.

Expose the dog to traffic by making a point to walk on busy streets occasionally. Command him to remain in a sit-stay as cars pass, and snap the collar back if he attempts to move. You can set the dog up for a car chasing correction by having a friend armed with several cans filled with rocks, for noise effect, drive up to or past the area where the dog starts chasing. Instruct the helper to put on the brakes as fast and noisily as possible when the dog is at a full chase. When the car comes to a screeching halt, have the helper jump out of the car and create enormous noise and chaos by throwing the cans near the dog.

If the dog is not likely to bite, have the helper aggressively chase him home, throwing cans behind him. Repeat the setup with different cars, and if possible, different people, until the dog refrains from chasing cars. You can also use the corrections for car chasing when a dog acquires the nasty, dangerous habit of chasing bikers, joggers, and horseback riders.

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How To Help Your Dog's Storm Phobias

Many dogs that fear storm activity also fear other sharp percussive noises, such as gunfire, exploding balloons, or low frequency sounds from a sound system capable of rattling the windows. Because storm noises originate outdoors, any attempts to simulate storm noises or other loud sounds should originate there. These can be tested and used with a routine which involves a single hand clap, followed immediately by praise and introduction of some toy or other stimulus the dog associated with happiness.

These staged performances should be repeated until the dog acts happy in response to loud noises, without use of the above routine. After this stage, it is still advisable to follow the same steps required for dogs that do not respond to staged percussion. If gunfire is to be used in these sessions, the shells used must be hand-loaded, low-powder blanks. The gun should be fired outdoors into thick, soft material, such as an old pillow. Only adults experienced with firearms should be involved. Also, neighbors should be forewarned of training sessions.

If the dog does not respond to attempts at recreating storm sounds, the solution becomes more difficult, as one cannot conjure up storms at will. However, one
can watch the weather forecasts carefully and make preparations at least 3-4 hours before a storm is due. This long lead time is necessary because many phobic dogs begin to show anxiety as falling barometric pressure indicates impending storms. In these situations, the training routine must be applied at the first sign of anxiety in the dog, and then reapplied until the dog shows upbeat behavior instead of the former anxiety, without any need for the routine.

Sedatives: If the owner cannot be present to apply these procedures before and during storms, sedatives and tranquilizers may be used to reduce the dog’s anxiety. However, without behavioral therapy, such drugs have not been effective over the long term.

Desensitizing With Sound and Light: Though several authorities have recommended playing low-level thunder recordings and gradually increasing the volume as the dog accommodates to it, others in this field have not been successful with this technique. For years trainers have tried using recordings of thunder, coupled with flashing strobe lights, without success. This is probably because of 2 factors unique to storms. First is the lack of barometric pressure changes. Second is lack of the intense (to the dog) percussive effects of low-volume thunder recordings.

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**Is Carsickness A Problem For Your Dog?**

Some puppies get carsick just the same as many small children do. If you depend on a car for most of your transportation, you will want to help your puppy overcome carsickness as quickly and easily as possible. You can do a number of things to help your puppy avoid or overcome carsickness.

From the start, help your puppy form a positive association with the car. Without starting the engine, sit in the car with your puppy on your lap for a few minutes every day. Praise and pet your pup. After a week of this, start the motor. Place your pup on the seat next to you. Pet and praise him, making the experience agreeable. After a week of repeating this once a day, get a friend or relative to go in the car with you for a daily ride. Be sure that your puppy has an empty stomach and has had the chance to eliminate before getting into the car. Have your helper sit the dog on his or her lap. The helper must not allow the pup to squirm and wiggle around.

Take a short ride around the block. Each week increase slightly the distance that you travel. (One-week intervals for each of these steps are not cast in stone. Shorten or lengthen the time depending on your pup’s reaction.) Be sure that when you ride with your puppy, you have someone in the car to help control him. If that’s not possible, put the puppy in a crate in the car.
Do not let your puppy ride on the driver's lap or crawl under his or her legs. This can become a bad habit and is very dangerous. Once your puppy begins obedience training and understands to lie down and stay, employ this exercise in the car when traveling. Associate trips in the car with fun. Every car ride should not end up at the veterinarian, groomer, or boarding kennel. Use the car to take your dog to the beach, park, or woods.

Most puppies, like most children, outgrow carsickness. In the interim, doing the right things can minimize messes, limit nervousness, and shorten the time it takes for your dog to learn that car rides can be a lot of fun. If none of the above steps seems to help, contact your veterinarian. He or she can provide medical solutions, such as mild tranquilizers, that will help avert sickness when the dog must travel in the car.

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**Dog Carsickness**

While car sickness is not considered a behavioral problem, it sure is something that is just as important to deal with as any type of other issue with your dog. Having to clean up your dog's mess with every car ride is not fun at all.

A dog that gets carsick is a genuine victim of motion sickness (rare in dogs), a leader-type animal that becomes ill as a psychosomatic response to its inability to control its circumstances, or one that has experienced traumatic reinforcement in a car or at the journey's end. A prime example of a trauma victim is a dog that always gets ill on the way to the veterinarian, but seldom on the way home. In several cases, this predictable reaction was used in correction. The dogs were driven away from home, in the opposite direction from the clinic, then back toward home and thence on to the doctor. No illness occurred. Different routes were used on later trips.

Most carsickness cases are not so easily corrected. Where no emotional basis is found for the problem, administration of motion sickness medication has proved helpful. If excessive salivation accompanies vomiting, atropine sulfate (by veterinary prescription) may alleviate the problem. In cases involving behavioral relationships, a combination of general environmental and leadership adjustments succeeds.

Most of the carsickness cases encountered by professionals involve a leader-type dog. Therefore, the first step toward correction is for the owner to gain a dominant leader position. Together with teaching a few simple commands, all general petting of the dog must cease. Any solicitation for attention by the dog
must be countered by a command, with a few seconds of petting and praise if the dog responds appropriately.

This regimen impresses on the dog that the owner is in control of the general tenor of life. In addition to command training, the dog should be taken for an upbeat car ride around the block at least twice daily. The owner should act jolly toward the dog throughout the ride, reinforcing happy behavior. These trips may then be extended in time and distance over a 6-week period, after which permanent correction is usually achieved.

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Dealing With Chronic Housebreaking Problems

A dog over six months old who is still having accidents is a problem. Unless he is having accidents because he is ill or neglected, you should come down hard on him and get the job of housebreaking over and done with. This includes the dog who is busy marking his territory off within your home.

You need to get a crate! Put the dog on a schedule, just as if you had a tiny puppy, and crate him in between walks. For the first week, treat him exactly as if he were a puppy, keeping him in the crate much of the time. That will get his attention. Then begin to keep him out when you know he'll be good. Watch him carefully.

Crate him when you are not home. Make sure he does what he's supposed to do on his walks and praise him for doing so. By using the crate, a schedule, the eyes of an eagle, you can housebreak any dog. Keep the crate clean and keep using it until the job is done.

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How To Recognize Stress In Your Dog

Stress is the body's response to any physical or mental demand. The response prepares the body to either fight or flee. It increases blood pressure, heart rate, breathing and metabolism, and there is a marked increase in the blood supply to the arms and legs. It is a physiological, genetically predetermined reaction over which the individual, whether a dog or a person, has no control.

When your dog is stressed, his body becomes chemically unbalanced. To deal with this imbalance, the body releases chemicals into the bloodstream in an attempt to rebalance itself. The reserve of these chemicals is limited. You can dip into it only so many times before it runs dry and the body loses its ability to
rebalance. Prolonged periods of imbalance result in neurotic behavior and the inability to function.

Your dog experiences stress during training, whether you are teaching him a new exercise or practicing a familiar one. You should be able to recognize the signs of stress and what you can do to manage the stress your dog may experience. Only then can you prevent stress from adversely affecting your dog’s performance during training.

Stress is characterized as "positive" (manifesting itself in increased activity) and "negative" (manifesting itself in decreased activity). Picture yourself returning home after a hard day at work. You are welcomed by a mess on your new, white rug. What is your response? Do you explode, scream at your dog, your children and then storm through the house slamming doors? Or, do you look at the mess in horror, shake your head in resignation, feel drained of energy, ignore the dog and the children and then go to your room? In the first example, your body was energized by the chemicals released into the bloodstream. In the second example, your body was debilitated.

Dogs react in a similar manner, and stress triggers either the fight or flight response. Positive stress manifests itself in hyperactivity, such as running around, bouncing up and down or jumping on you, whining, barking, mouthing, getting in front of you or anticipating commands. You may think your dog is just being silly and tiresome, but for the dog, those are coping behaviors. Negative stress manifests itself by lethargy, such as freezing, slinking behind you, running away or responding slowly to a command. In new situations, he seems tired and wants to lie down, or sluggish and disinterested. These are not signs of relaxation, but are the coping behaviors for negative stress.

Signs of either form of stress in dogs are muscle tremors, excessive panting or drooling, sweaty feet that leave tracks on dry, hard surfaces, dilated pupils and, in extreme cases, urination or defecation, usually in the form of diarrhea and self-mutilation. Behaviors such as pushing into you or going in front of or behind you during distraction training are stress related.

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**Canine Hypochondriacs**

What makes human hypochondriacs so odd and disturbing is that they really do believe that they are suffering from an illness in spite of all evidence to the contrary. Canine hypochondriacs are in many ways far more innocent. They have simply learned that certain actions are rewarded, and behave accordingly. Given the inventive repertoire of behavior that dogs are capable of thanks to their
playful propensities, and given how strong a drive social attention is for a dog, they are adept at forming such associations in their minds and sticking with them.

Dogs that have been genuinely sick and who get a lot of attention as a result are the prime candidates for the "sick pet syndrome." They can quickly discover that when sitting quietly or acting normally they are ignored, but if they suffer a sudden relapse of an alarming symptom, their owner immediately rushes over, pets them, makes concerned cooing sounds, and so on. Dogs that suffer gastric upheavals, as all dogs do, often get extra attention and sometimes special food. It doesn't take long for certain dogs to learn that bouts of vomiting and diarrhea are rewarded with hamburger and rice dinners, while behaving normally results in the same old dry dog food. Dogs have acquired such imaginary ailments as lameness, paralysis, muscle twitches, and runny noses, among others.

The surefire test for whether a dog is faking an illness is to leave the house and then sneak back and peek through a window to watch what the dog does when no one is around to provide the immediate reward of attention. Many alarmed owners, concerned that their pets are suffering from some horrible disease, who refuse to believe that it could just be an act, quickly become converted when they see their lame or paralyzed dogs get up and prance around the house when they think no one is there.

The solution, once it is clear that it is an act rather than a true illness, is simply to ignore the dog whenever he is performing his routine, and to pet him and give him extra attention and food treats whenever he is acting normally, or even just lying quietly. This exactly reverses the previous reinforcement schedule, under which the dog was rewarded for acting goofy and ignored for being normal.

It might seem that a dog that can put on an act only when it has an audience must have some ability to understand the mental state of its audience, a conclusion that seems at odds with the experimental evidence that dogs lack a "theory of mind" and an ability to imagine what others are thinking, perceiving, and feeling. But most likely the dogs in these cases have learned a fairly simple association.

Dogs that seek attention seek that attention from a human, so the presence of a human is the stimulus for its learned behavior. This is no different from a dog that learns to jump up on a bag of dog food - it is the simple presence of an object associated with a reward that is the trigger for the behavior. A dog does not have to grasp the idea that another being is watching and interpreting his actions; all he has to learn is that taking such an action when a person is present results in a reward - and doing it when no one is present does not.

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Behavioral Problems Associated With Parasitic Disease

Some of the problem behaviors in dogs are a result of an infection from parasite. These include internal parasites such as roundworm and tapeworm, flea infestation, ear mites, and Hypermetria.

Many dog owners are not aware that most parasite infection such as roundworm infestation is a condition that requires immediate veterinary attention. The fact is that it is important for all puppies to be dewormed as well as vaccinated against distemper and hepatitis. Most problems related to internal parasitism involve owners who do not know about the adverse effects of digestive malfunction, but still expect a young dog to control his loose stools, be able to housetrain successfully, and learn all the more complicated lessons of being an ideal household pet. When the puppy does not respond well to the training, the owner sometimes reacts by isolating, punishing or rejecting the pet socially. The resulting confusion and mismanagement of the pet often produce a wide spectrum of behavioral maladjustments.

The following problems are often shown in dogs with internal parasites: Chewing; Digging; Barking; Whining; Unruliness (due to being isolated as punishment); and Stool eating which is possibly due to a fecal fixation resulting from excessive punishment associated with stools.

Flea infestation has led to rejection by some dog owners. Most of them will only try to get rid of fleas on the dog. They buy a flea collar or flea spray, but usually do nothing about the fleas infesting the dog's regular sleeping and resting areas. The result of this is that the dog continues to be infested and is eventually moved to the yard. The problems associated with such social isolation then may evolve.

Ear mite infestation led to isolation-based problems involving destructive chewing. Often, the dog’s constant scratching drives his owner crazy and will eventually result from the dog being shut away. Some dog owners neglect the rather obvious ear odor commonly associated with ear mites, and refuse to handle the behavioral problem until the ear problem clears up. Consult your vet when you notice a foul odor coming from your dog's ear. Your vet will prescribe treatment for the scratching problem which in turn will lead to subsequent behavioral corrections.

It is amazing that most animals displaying signs of hypometria had histories of heavy roundworm or tapeworm infections as puppies. In cases of Hypometria, the dogs tend to bump into objects, usually submerge their noses when drinking, and display an exaggerated fore-throw of the front limbs when walking. Some cases of dogs suffering from this condition are abnormally hostile and seemed to be devoid of long-term memory. These dogs had to be re-taught simple lessons every day.