

MY NEW DOG:

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HOUSETRAINING YOUR PUPPY

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Housetraining a puppy requires time, vigilance, patience and commitment. Following the procedures outlined below, you can minimize house soiling incidents, but virtually every puppy will have an accident in the house (more likely several). It's part of raising a puppy. The more consistent you are in following the basic housetraining procedures, the faster your puppy will learn acceptable behavior. It may take several weeks to housetrain your puppy, and with some of the smaller breeds, it may take longer. But for most pets, once they are physically able, understand what you are asking, and once they view your home (or some designated portion of your home) as their home, they will learn this lesson.

Establish a Routine

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

Supervise, Supervise, Supervise

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

Confinement

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

Oops!

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

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

It's extremely important that you use the supervision and confinement procedures outlined above to minimize the number of accidents. If you allow your puppy to eliminate frequently in the house, he'll get confused about where he's supposed to eliminate which will prolong the housetraining process. For example, do not expect him to be confined in the basement and eliminate there but not upstairs in other areas.

Paper Training

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

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

Other Types of House-Soiling Problems

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

- **Medical Problems:** House soiling can often be caused by physical problems such as a urinary tract infection or a parasite infection. Check with your veterinarian to rule out any possibility of disease or illness.

Territorial Urine-Marking: Dogs sometimes deposit urine or feces, usually in small amounts, to scent-mark their territory. Both male and female dogs do this, and it most often occurs when they believe their territory has been invaded (see our information sheet: Territorial Marking Behavior in Dogs and Cats").

HOUSETRAINING PUPPY (CONTINUED)

- **Submissive/Excitement Urination:** Some dogs, especially young ones, temporarily lose control of their bladders when they become excited or feel threatened. This usually occurs during greetings, intense play or when they believe they about to be punished. To minimize this response keep greetings calm, or ignore the pup when you first enter, monitor play so that the puppy is not a part of raucous playing (human children don't always understand the limitations of playing with a new pet, you will have to guide them in learning how much is *too* much.) and do NOT punish a puppy. They will only learn to be fearful and submissive urination can become a serious problem. Puppies will be glad to do as you ask if you offer praise when they get it right! Positive reinforcement will be a much more effective learning tool.

- **Separation Anxiety:** Dogs that become anxious when they're left alone may house soil as a result. Usually, there are other symptoms, such as destructive behavior or vocalization (see our information sheet: "Separation Anxiety").
- **Fears or Phobias:** When animals become frightened, they may lose control of their bladder and/or bowels. If your puppy is afraid of loud noises, such as thunderstorms or fireworks, he may house soil when he's exposed to these sounds (see our information sheet: "Helping Your Dog Overcome the Fear of Thunder and Other Startling Noises").

A reminder - patience, praise and perseverance will be your best teaching tools as you allow your puppy to begin the process of learning to become housetrained.

RE-HOUSETRAINING YOUR ADULT DOG

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

For the first few weeks after you bring him/her home, just assume your new dog isn't housetrained and start from scratch. If he was housetrained in his previous home, the re-training process should go quickly. Learning each other's signals will happen more quickly if you take steps to prevent accidents. With patience, remind your new friend of this new choice for the "right spot" to eliminate.

Establish a Routine

- Take your dog out on a schedule every day. Most adult dogs will be able to shift to 6-8 hour intervals between elimination opportunities. For some dogs, first thing in the morning upon awakening, when you arrive home from work, and before you go to bed may be enough. Initially it is better to go more often by including after the morning feeding and after the evening meal.
- Praise your dog lavishly every time he/she eliminates outdoors. You can even give a treat immediately after your dog is successful. Praise and give the treat as soon as he/she is finished. Do not wait until coming back inside the house, the dog will associate the reward with coming in the house not the action. This step is vital, because rewarding your dog for eliminating outdoors is the only way your pet will truly learn what you want.
- Choose a location not too far from the door to be the bathroom spot. While you are retraining, always take your dog, on leash, directly to the bathroom spot. Take him for a walk or play with him only after he's eliminated. If you clean up an accident in the house, leave the soiled rags or paper towels in the bathroom spot. The smell will help your dog recognize the area as the place where he's supposed to eliminate.
- While your dog is eliminating, use a word or phrase like "go potty" or "find a spot", for example, that you can eventually use before he eliminates to remind him of what he's supposed to be doing.
- Feeding your dog on a set schedule, once or twice a day, will help make and keep his elimination schedule more regular. This, in turn, will allow you to know when your pet is not feeling well, because elimination behavior will change.

Supervise, Supervise, Supervise

Don't give your dog an opportunity to soil in the house. For the first few weeks he/she should be watched at all times when indoors. You might consider tethering him/her to you with a six-foot leash, or use baby gates, to keep him/her close. Watch for signs that your pet needs to eliminate, like sniffing around or circling. If you see these signs, immediately take him/her outside, on a leash, to the bathroom spot. Praise lavishly and reward with a treat if your dog eliminates.

Confinement

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

Oops!

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

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

Other Types Of House-Soiling Problems

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

- **Medical Problems:** House soiling can often be caused by physical problems such as a urinary tract infection or a parasite infection. Check with your veterinarian to rule out any possibility of disease or illness.
- **Submissive/Excitement Urination:** Some dogs, especially young ones, temporarily lose control of their bladders when they become excited or feel threatened. This usually occurs during greetings, intense play or when they're about to be punished (see our handout: "Submissive and Excitement Urination").
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A reminder - patience, praise and perseverance will be your best teaching tools as you allow your dog to begin the process of relearning the importance of becoming housetrained.

CRATE TRAINING YOUR DOG

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Crate training your dog may take some time and effort, but it is very useful in a variety of situations. If you have a new dog or puppy, you can use the crate to limit his/her access to the house until the family rules have become easy for your pup to remember. Brief introductions into rooms and situations, with a loving return to the crate, will encourage good behavior and allow your pet a chance to rest, away from human foot traffic and confusion. A crate is also a safe way to transport your dog in the car, as well as a way to take your pet to places where he may not be welcome to run freely. If you properly train your dog to use the crate, he/she will think of it as a safe place. A crate, used properly, allows your pet to have a very special place all their own.

Selecting a Crate

Crates may be plastic (often called “flight kennels”) or collapsible, “fence like” metal pens. They come in different sizes and can be purchased at most pet supply stores. Your dog’s crate should be large enough for him/her to stand up and turn around. If you seek to buy only one crate or two crates to accommodate the growth of your pet, your first crate should be of medium size. As you house train and crate train your pup, place a cardboard box in the back of the crate to take up space. You must have a supply of these boxes to replace after the inevitable “accidents” as your puppy learns to become housetrained.

The Crate Training Process

Crate training may take days or weeks depending on your dog’s age, temperament and past experience. The crate must always be associated with something pleasant. You will not have success if you use the crate when angry or for punishment. Safe placement and security are fine reasons to temporarily crate a pet, but the training must be positive and accomplished in small steps.

Step 1

Introducing Your Dog to the Crate

- Place your crate in an area of your house where the family spends a lot of time, such as the family room. Put a soft blanket or towel in the crate. Bring your dog over to the crate and talk to him in a happy tone of voice. Make sure the crate door is securely fastened and open so it won’t hit your dog and frighten him/her.
- To encourage your dog to enter the crate, drop some small food treats near it, then just inside the door, and finally, all the way inside the crate. If he/she refuses to go all the way in at first, don’t force your pet to enter. Continue tossing treats into the crate until your dog will walk calmly all the way into the crate to get the food. If he/she isn’t interested in treats, try tossing a favorite toy in the crate. This step may take a few minutes or as long as several days. Be patient and repeat the process cheerfully.

CRATE TRAINING (CONTINUED)

Step 2

Feeding Your Dog Meals in the Crate

- After introducing your dog to the crate, begin feeding him/her regular meals near the crate. This will create a pleasant association with the crate. If your dog is willing to enter the crate when you begin Step 2, put the food dish all the way at the back of the crate. If your dog is still reluctant to enter the crate, put the dish only as far inside as he will readily go without becoming fearful or anxious. Each time you feed him, place the dish just a little farther back into the crate.

Once your dog is standing comfortably in the crate to eat his meal, you can close the door while he's eating. At first, open the door as soon as he finishes his meal. With each successive feeding, leave the door closed a few minutes longer, until he/she is staying in the crate for ten minutes or so after eating. If your dog begins to whine to be let out, you may have increased the length of time too quickly. Try leaving him in the crate for a shorter time period. If he does whine or cry in the crate, do not let him out until he is quiet. He/she doesn't have to be quiet for long, but don't open the door while a cry is in process. Once he/she has become quiet, let them out and praise them. Your dog wants to please you and will remember a lesson learned with praise much better than something said with angry sounds. Remember, to aid in housebreaking puppies, they should go out before their meal, and then again, about 10-15 minutes after finishing. Older dogs may wait to go out for about 15-20 minutes after finishing a meal. Eating encourages elimination and this becomes a routine process that reinforces eliminating outside, not in the crate, nor in the house. But YOU are responsible for setting the schedule and taking your pet outside.

Step 3

Conditioning Your Dog to the Crate for Longer Time Periods

- After your dog is eating regular meals in the crate, with no sign of fear or anxiety, you may confine him/her there for short time periods while you're home. Call him/her over to the crate and give him a treat. Give a command to enter such as, "kennel up". Encourage your pet by pointing to the inside of the crate with a treat in your hand. After your dog enters the crate, praise him, give him the treat and close the door. Sit quietly near the crate for a few minutes and then go into another room for a few minutes. Return, sit quietly again for a short time, then open the crate door. Repeat this process several times a day. With each repetition, gradually increase the length of time you leave him in the crate and length of time you're out of his sight. Once your dog will stay quietly in the crate for about 30 minutes, with you out of sight the majority of the time, you will be at a point that will allow you to leave him/her crated when you're gone for short time periods and/or letting your dog sleep there at night. This may take several days or several weeks.

For "night criers", and very young puppies, you may want to consider placing the crate in your bedroom, just as you might place a small baby in a bassinet for the first few weeks. It will allow you to hear cries that may indicate a need to go outside, and increase your chances for successful housebreaking. You may gradually move your pup to another comfortable room where the crate is a part of family time. Again, each pup or dog is an individual and some are more in need of social contact or have smaller bladders than others.

CRATE TRAINING (CONTINUED)

Step 4

Part A - Crating Your Dog When Left Alone

- After your dog is spending about 30 minutes in the crate without becoming anxious or afraid, you may begin leaving him/her crated for **short** periods when you leave the house. Place your pet in the crate using your regular command and a treat. You might also want to leave a few safe toys in the crate, such as a Nylabone for chewing, or a latex rubber toy. You'll want to vary at what point in your "getting ready to leave" routine you put your dog in the crate. No longer than 5-15 minutes prior to leaving. Keep your departures and your returns calm and unemotional. Praise your dog briefly, give him/her a treat for entering the crate and then leave quietly. When you return home, don't reward your dog for excited behavior. Keep arrivals low key. Continue to crate your dog for short periods from time to time when you're home so he doesn't always associate crating with being left alone. If you plan to crate during your work day, consider coming home for lunch and letting your dog out. Do not crate your pet at night if you crate during the day. Leave the crate door open. They may choose to rest there while you sleep.

Part B - Too Much Time in the Crate

- A crate isn't a magical solution. If not used correctly, a dog may feel trapped and frustrated. Do not crate your dog all day while you're at work and then crate again all night. Other arrangements should be made to accommodate his/her physical and emotional needs. Also, remember that puppies under six months of age shouldn't stay in a crate for more than three or four hours at a time. They can't control their bladders and bowels for longer periods.

Whining

If your dog whines or cries while in the crate at night, it may be difficult to decide whether he's whining to be let out of the crate, or whether he needs to be let outside to eliminate. If you followed the training procedures outlined above, your dog has not been rewarded for whining in the past by being released from his crate. Try to ignore the whining. If your dog is just testing you, he'll probably stop whining soon. **Yelling at your dog or pounding on the crate will only make things worse.** If the whining continues after you've ignored him/her for several minutes, use the phrase you have associated with going outside to eliminate. If he/she responds and becomes excited, take your pet outside. This should be a trip with a purpose, not play time. Return your pet to the crate after accompanying him/her outside. If whining begins again, the best response is to ignore him/her until he stops whining. Don't give in. You will teach your dog to whine to get what he/she wants. If crying continues, consider a trip to your veterinarian to be sure your pet is in good health. Progress **gradually** through the training steps. Don't try too much too fast. You'll be less likely to encounter a problem with crating and have to start again if you are patient and progress slowly.

A Note on Separation Anxiety-

Attempting to use the crate as a remedy for separation anxiety will not solve the problem. A crate may prevent your dog from being destructive, but he/she may cause themselves injury in an attempt to escape from the crate. Separation anxiety problems can only be resolved with counter-conditioning and desensitization procedures. Your veterinarian or an animal behaviorist may be able to help. (see our information sheet on "Separation Anxiety").

HOW TO USE A HEAD HALTER

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A head halter is a special kind of collar/halter combination with a strap that goes around your dog's nose with an additional strap that goes around his neck, just behind his/her ears. The leash fastens to the halter under his chin to a ring that's also attached to the nose strap. When your dog begins to pull, the design of the head halter causes the dog's nose to be turned back toward you which makes it physically difficult for him to continue pulling. The head halter, when properly fitted, is completely humane, and works much better to prevent a dog from pulling than a choke chain or prong collar. Brand names for head halters include "Gentle Leader," "Promise Collar" and "Halti."

How does it fit?

The head halter **must** be properly fitted to be effective, comfortable, and safe for your dog. The neck strap should be as high up on your dog's neck as you can get it, just behind his ears. The strap should be just tight enough for you to fit one finger between it and your dog's neck. The nosepiece should be adjusted so that when your dog's mouth is closed, it can slide down as far as the beginning of the skin on his nose, but not so loose that it can slide off the end of his nose. The nosepiece will sit naturally, just below your dog's eyes. Be sure that the metal ring to which the leash attaches is underneath his/her chin. Take the time to get the correct fit and you will be rewarded with a terrific teaching opportunity for you and your pet. This all takes practice!

How will your dog react?

Many dogs begin by resisting a head halter. The amount of resistance varies for each dog. When you first put the head halter in place, your dog may try to get it off by pawing at his nose or rubbing his nose on the ground, on you or on anything he/she can get close to. The best strategy to help acclimate your pet is to keep his/her head up and keep your pet moving by using positive verbal reinforcement and treats. Most dogs eventually accept head halters. When your dog associates the halter with good times like going for a walk, he'll begin to react positively. Soon, both you and your dog will truly enjoy taking walks together!

Things to remember:

- A head halter is NOT a muzzle. A dog wearing a head halter can still eat, drink, pant, bark and bite, if he/she chooses.
- **Never** use a hard jerk with the head halter. You will do serious physical injury to your dog.
- Don't use the head halter with a retractable lead. If your dog runs quickly to the end of the lead, it may give itself a hard jerk and do physical harm.
- Make sure the head halter is correctly fitted. It should be snug around your dog's neck and high behind his ears, but loose enough around his nose so that the nose strap is able to slide easily down to the fleshy part of his nose.
- Your dog should wear his head halter **only** during walks with you on a secure lead.
- If your dog wears the head halter around the house, he'll have plenty of time to work at getting it off, and will eventually succeed but may injure himself and/or your property in the process.
- Read the information sheet that comes with your head halter.

SUCCESSFUL CLEANING TO REMOVE PET ODORS AND STAINS

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“Accidents”, illness and behavior problems may cause cleaning challenges. Has your pet left “scent marks” of urination and/or defecation on your floor or furniture? Or had cause to “throw-up” indoors? To successfully re-train your pet to avoid those areas, follow these basic steps:

- Find all soiled areas using your nose and your eyes. A black-light bulb will usually show even old urine stains. Turn out all lights in the room; use the black-light to identify soiled areas and lightly outline the areas with plain white chalk.
- Clean the soiled areas appropriately to remove the odors (see below). Check with your veterinarian or local shelter for brand names of cleaners in your area. These folks have dealt with the problem many times before.
- Make the areas unattractive and/or unavailable (we can help you learn about humane methods for dogs and cats).
- Make the appropriate “bathroom” area attractive (we can make some suggestions that will work with your lifestyle).
- Teach your pet the appropriate place to eliminate by using positive reinforcement. Praise is a wonderful tool and easy to use. Just be sure to offer it at a time when your pet will associate your enthusiasm with proper bathroom habits.

These steps work as a team! In order for your efforts to be successful, you need to follow them *all*.

Cleaning

If you fail to completely clean the area, your other re-training efforts will not succeed. As long as your pet can smell that personal scent, he/she will continue to return to the “accidental zone”. Even if *you* can’t smell traces of urine, your pet can. You must remove (neutralize) that odor.

Methods to Avoid

Avoid using steam cleaners as your *first* response to clean urine odors from carpet or upholstery. The heat will permanently set the odor and the stain by bonding the protein into any man-made fibers. Do not use cleaning chemicals with strong odors, such as ammonia or vinegar. From your pet’s perspective, these don’t effectively eliminate or cover the urine odor and may actually encourage competition to mark and reinforce the urine scent mark in that area.

To Clean Washable Items

- Machine wash as usual, adding a small box of baking soda to your regular detergent. If possible, it’s best to air dry these items.
- If you can still see the stain or smell the urine, machine wash the item again and add an enzymatic cleaner (ie Biz). Be sure to follow the directions carefully.
- During the re-training period, a good way to discourage your pet from using the bedding is to cover the bed with a vinyl flannel backed tablecloth. They’re machine washable, inexpensive and unattractive to your pet.

To Clean Carpeted Areas and Upholstery

- Soak up as much of the urine as possible with paper towels. Do not use newspaper directly on the spot as the newsprint may come off onto the floor surface. If you are able to remove most of the urine before it dries, your clean up is much easier. Place a thick layer of paper towels on the wet spot and cover that with a thick layer of newspaper. Stand on this padding for about a minute. Wipe the bottom of your shoe, otherwise you are simply moving the smell with you! Remove the padding and repeat the process until the area is barely damp.

CLEANING (CONTINUED)

- If possible, and if your pet is present, take the fresh, urine soaked paper towel to the area where it belongs – your dog’s designated outdoor “bathroom area” or your cat’s litterbox – and let your pet see you do it. Don’t act or sound angry when you do this, but try to project a positive attitude to your dog/cat. This will help to remind your pet that eliminating isn’t a “bad” behavior as long as it’s done in the right place.
- Rinse the “accident zone” thoroughly with clean, cool water. After rinsing, remove as much of the water as possible by blotting or by using a “wet-vac”, “shop-vac” or “extractor”.
- If you’ve previously used cleaners or chemicals of any kind on the area, then neutralizing cleaners won’t be effective until you’ve rinsed every trace of the old cleaner from the carpet. The cleaner will use up its “energy” on the old cleaners instead of on the protein stains you want removed.
- To remove all traces of old chemicals and clean old or heavy stains in carpeting, consider renting an “extractor” or “wet-vac” from a local hardware store. This machine operates much like a vacuum cleaner and is efficient and economical. Extracting/wet-vac machines do the best job of forcing clean water through your carpet and then forcing the dirty water back out again. When using these machines or cleaners, be sure to follow the instructions carefully. Don’t use any chemicals with these machines – they work much more effectively with plain water.
- Once the area is really clean you should use a high-quality pet odor neutralizer available at pet supply stores. Test the affected surface and read and follow the instructions.
- If the area still looks stained after it’s completely dry from extracting and neutralizing, try any good carpet stain remover.
- Make the “accident zone” unattractive, the appropriate “bathroom” area attractive, and teach your pet where you want him/her to eliminate. Don’t forget a trip to your veterinarian to rule out any physical cause for the problem!
- The re-training period may take a week or more. Remember, it took time to build the bad habit, and it will take time to replace that with a new, more acceptable behavior. Treat your pet with patience and give him/her a lot of encouragement!

To Clean Floors and Walls

If the wood on your furniture, walls, baseboard or floor is discolored, the varnish or paint has been affected by the acid in the urine. You may need to remove and replace the layer of varnish or paint. Employees at your local hardware or building supply store can help you identify and match your needs with appropriate removers and replacements. Washable enamel paints and some washable wallpapers, may respond favorably to enzymatic cleaners. Read the instructions carefully before using these products and test them in an invisible area.

DEALING WITH NORMAL PUPPY BEHAVIOR: HOW TO RESPOND TO TROUBLESOME CHEWING

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Similar to infants and toddlers, puppies explore their world by putting things in their mouths. In addition, puppies are teething until they're about six months old, which usually creates some discomfort. Chewing not only facilitates teething, but also makes sore gums feel better. Although it's perfectly normal for a puppy to chew on furniture, shoes, shrubbery and assorted odd items, these behaviors can be a problem for you and don't encourage good manners in the adult dog you would like to train your pup to become. A puppy won't magically "outgrow" these behaviors as he matures. You must gently shape your puppy's behaviors and teach him which actions are acceptable in your family and which actions are not acceptable.

Discouraging Unacceptable Behavior

It's virtually inevitable that your puppy will, at some point, chew up something you value. This is part of raising a puppy! You can, however, prevent most problems by taking the following precautions:

- Minimize chewing problems by puppy-proofing your house. Put the trash out of reach, inside a cabinet or outside on a porch, or buy containers with locking lids. Encourage children to pick up their toys and don't leave socks, shoes, eyeglasses, briefcases or TV remote controls lying around within your puppy's reach.
- If, and only if, you catch your puppy chewing on something he shouldn't--interrupt the behavior with a loud noise. After he/she is distracted offer an acceptable chew toy instead and praise your pup lavishly when he takes the toy in his mouth.
- Make unacceptable chew items unpleasant to your puppy. Furniture and other items can be coated with "Bitter Apple" to make them unappealing. There are many home remedies and manufactured products which are said to discourage chewing. Pay attention to the recipe or label. Pets have been poisoned while owners were trying to do the right thing in training.
- Don't give your puppy objects to play with such as old socks, old shoes or old children's toys unless you plan to allow them to play with new ones! Puppies can't tell the difference!
- Closely supervise your puppy. Don't give him the chance to go off by himself and get into trouble. Use baby gates, close doors or tether him to you with a six-foot leash so you can keep an eye on him. Dogs and toddlers have much in common.
- When you must be gone from the house, confine your puppy to a small, safe area such as a laundry room. You may also begin to crate train your puppy (see our handout: "Crate Training Your Dog"). Puppies under five months of age shouldn't be crated for longer than four hours at a time, as their body systems are not mature enough to control bladder and bowels.
- Make sure your puppy is getting adequate physical activity. Puppies left alone in a yard don't play by themselves. Take your puppy for walks and/or play a game of fetch with him as often as possible.
- Give your puppy plenty of "people time." He can only learn the rules of your house when he's with you.

What Not To Do

Never discipline or punish your puppy after the fact. If you discover a chewed item, even minutes after he/she has chewed it, it is too late to administer a correction. Animals associate punishment with what they're doing at the immediate time they're being punished. A puppy cannot understand reasoning such as, "I tore up those shoes an hour ago and that's why I'm being scolded now." Some people believe this is what a puppy is thinking because he runs and hides or because he "looks guilty." This is not the case. "Guilty looks" are canine submissive postures that dogs show when they're threatened. When you're angry and upset, the puppy feels threatened by your tone of voice, body postures and/or facial expressions, so he may hide or show submissive postures. Punishment, after the action has taken place, will not only fail to eliminate the undesirable behavior, but could provoke other undesirable behaviors used to express stress in dogs.

Encouraging Acceptable Chewing Behavior

- Provide your puppy with lots of appropriate chew toys. Do not give puppies rawhide or beef bones as these can choke immature mouths, damage young teeth and gums and injure throats. Latex toys and Nylabones and Kong toys with a treat tucked in are great choices.

- Rotate your puppy's toys. Puppies, like babies, are often more interested in unfamiliar or novel objects. Put out four or five toys for a few days, then pick those up and put out four or five different ones.
- Experiment with different kinds of toys. When you introduce a new toy to your puppy, watch his/her behavior to check on safety. It can be fatal if he/she ingests a toy torn to pieces.
- If your puppy is teething. Try freezing a Kong toy or Nylabone for him to chew on.

Other Reasons for Destructive Behavior

In most cases, destructive chewing by puppies is nothing more than normal puppy teething or play behavior. Adult dogs, however, can exhibit destructive behaviors for a variety of reasons, which may also, occasionally, be the cause of chewing problems in puppies. Examples include separation anxiety, fear-related behaviors and attention-getting behavior. For help with these problems, contact our Adoption Counseling staff for assistance.

DEALING WITH NORMAL PUPPY BEHAVIOR: HOW TO RESPOND TO “NIPPING AND ROUGH PLAY”

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Like all babies, puppies respond first to the world with their mouths. When these young animals play with each other, their paws are busy balancing their bodies so they learn to use their mouths. Puppies work with what they know so...they usually want to bite or “mouth” hands during play or when being petted. With puppies, this is rarely aggressive behavior in which the intent is to do harm. Because puppies are highly motivated to exhibit this type of behavior, attempts to suppress it or stop it are unlikely to be successful unless you give your puppy an alternative behavior. You will have the highest rate of success in guiding this normal puppy behavior when you direct your puppy’s desire to put something in her mouth to acceptable chew toys. Then you may also teach her to be gentle when a hand is in her mouth.

Encourage Acceptable Mouth Behavior

Redirect your puppy’s chewing onto acceptable objects by offering a small type of chew toy whenever you pet her. Suggested toys are those made of latex, not vinyl (they last longer) and Nylabones (they are sturdy and pets respond well to chewing them as puppies and adults. You can make them much more appealing by dragging them across a rough surface such as your concrete sidewalk or driveway so the surface gets a little ragged and interesting for chewing.) This technique can be especially effective when children want to pet your puppy. As you or the child reach *under* the puppy’s chin with one hand to scratch a little chest or tummy, offer the chew bone with the other. This will not only help your puppy learn that people and petting are wonderful, but will also keep her mouth busy while she’s being petted. Alternate which hand does the petting and which one has the chew bone. And remember to reach from the side, never over her head, if you would like to give a comforting scratch behind puppy ears. At first, you may need to pet or scratch your puppy for short periods of time, since the longer she’s petted; the more likely she is to get excited by the fun and start to use her mouth to play. Puppy teeth are sharp to help protect a small creature, but they can be painful to humans. All babies need time to rest, puppies will be glad to nap, but don’t surprise them or wake them suddenly. It is frightening to them.

Discourage Unacceptable Mouth Behavior

- You must also teach your puppy to be gentle with hands, and that nipping results in unpleasant consequences for her. Teach your puppy that nipping “turns off” any attention and social interaction with you. After a nip, look your puppy right in the eye, and yell “Ouch” as though you’ve been mortally wounded, then ignore her. Leave the room if you must, but ignore him/her until she’s calm, then try the chew bone and petting method again. It’s even better if you can coax your puppy into a sitting position using food. It may take *many* repetitions for him/her to understand what’s expected. Nipping and mouthing hands can also be discouraged by loosely holding your puppy’s lower jaw between your thumb and forefinger after she’s taken your hand in her mouth. Don’t hurt him by squeezing too hard, just gently hang on so that wherever his mouth goes, your hand hangs on. This will quickly become tiresome and he will eventually pull away. After several seconds, release his jaw, and move your hand away. If he licks or ignores it, praise, pet and offer a tidbit. If he/she closes her mouth on your hand again, repeat the procedure.
- A third alternative is to wear cotton gloves coated with a substance with an unpleasant taste such as “Bitter Apple.” In this way, your puppy will learn that “hands in mouth taste bad.” For this method to work, every time she nips your hand she must experience this bad taste. The possible disadvantage to this method is that your puppy may learn “hands with gloves taste bad and those without gloves don’t”.
- Remember that any of these three methods will probably not be effective unless you work hard to teach your puppy the right behavior by offering her an acceptable chew toy.

DEALING WITH PUPPY BEHAVIOR (CONTINUED)

Never play “tug-of-war” or wrestling games with your puppy if you’re having a nipping problem. These types of games encourage out-of-control behavior, grabbing, lunging and competition with you. These aren’t behaviors you want him/her to learn.

Discourage Jumping Up

When your puppy jumps up on you, she wants attention. Whether you push her away with your hands, gently knee her in the chest or tap a step on her hind legs, she’s being rewarded for jumping up (it may be *negative* attention, but it is still attention).

When your puppy jumps up:

- Fold your arms in front of you, turn away from her and say “off.”
- Continue to turn away from her until all four of her feet are on the ground, then quietly praise her and give her a treat. If she knows the “sit” command, give the command when all four of her feet are on the ground, then quietly praise her and give her a treat while she is sitting.
- When you begin to praise her, if she begins to jump up again, simply turn away and repeat step two, above. Remember to keep your praise low-key and calm.

When your puppy realizes that she cannot get attention from you while she’s jumping up, but does get attention when she stops jumping up and sits, she’ll stop jumping up. Remember, once you’ve taught her to come and sit quietly for attention, you **must** reward her behavior. Be Careful not to ignore her when she comes and sits politely, waiting for your attention.

What Not To Do

Attempts to tap, slap or hit your puppy in the face for nipping or jumping up are almost guaranteed to backfire. Several things may happen, depending on your puppy’s temperament and the severity of the correction:

- He/She could become “hand-shy” and cringe or cower whenever a hand comes toward her face.
- He/She could become afraid of you and refuse to come to you or approach you at all.
- He/She could respond in a defensive manner and attempt to bite you to defend herself.
- He/She could interpret a mild slap as an invitation to play, causing her to become more excited and even more likely to nip.

A REMINDER ABOUT CHILDREN AND PUPPIES/DOGS: It’s very difficult for children under eight or nine years old to practice the behavior modification outlined here. A child’s first reaction to being nipped or mouthed by a puppy is to push the puppy away with their hands and arms, or to kick out at the pet. This will be interpreted by the puppy as play and will probably cause the puppy to nip and mouth even more. Dogs should never be left alone with children under ten and **parents should monitor closely all interaction between their children and dogs.**

DOG TOYS AND HOW TO USE THEM

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

Be Cautious

The things that are usually the most attractive to dogs are often the very things that are the most dangerous. Be sure that items you select for "toys" for your pet are able to be distinguished from "non-toy" items. Size and texture may be used to tell the difference between pet toys and human clothing or personal items. Dog-proof your home by checking for: string, ribbon, rubber bands, pens and pencils, twist ties, children's toys, pantyhose and anything else that could be ingested.

Toys should be appropriate for your dog's *current* size. Balls and other toys that are too small can easily be swallowed or become lodged in your dog's mouth or throat. Toys that are too large can be physically difficult to maneuver and cause your pet to lose interest in playing.

Avoid or alter any toys that aren't "dog-proof" by removing ribbons, strings, eyes or other parts that could be chewed and/or digested. Avoid any toy that starts to break into pieces or has pieces torn off. You should also avoid "tug-of-war" toys, unless they'll be used between dogs, not between people and dogs. Never reinforce competitive games between pet and human.

Ask your veterinarian about which rawhide toys are safe and which are not. Unless your veterinarian says otherwise, "chewies" like hooves, pig's ears and rawhides, should not be given regularly and must only be given when you are present. Choking, vomiting and chemical reactions are quite common with these items. Very hard rubber toys, or Nylabones roughened on their surface by a little scuffing on your sidewalk or driveway, are safer and last longer.

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

Check labels for child safety, as a stuffed toy that's labeled as safe for children under three years old, doesn't contain dangerous fillings. Problem fillings include things like nutshells and polystyrene beads, however, even a "safe" stuffing isn't truly digestible. Dogs are not able to distinguish between their own soft toy and a child's doll or a pillow. Before you introduce soft toys to your pet be sure you want them to be able to play with something so challenging to separate from other soft items.

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

Toys We Recommend

Active Toys:

- Very hard rubber toys, like Nylabone-type products and Kong-type products. These are available in a variety of shapes and sizes and are fun for chewing and for carrying around.
- "Rope" toys that are usually available in a "bone" shape with knotted ends.
- Tennis balls make great dog toys, but keep an eye out for any that could be chewed through or have the "fuzz" coming off, and discard them.

DOG TOYS AND SAFETY (CONTINUED)

Distraction Toys:

- Kong-type toys, especially when filled with broken-up treats or, even better, a mixture of broken-up treats and peanut butter. The right size Kong can keep a puppy or dog busy for hours. Only by chewing diligently can your dog access the treats, and then only in small bits – very rewarding! Double-check with your veterinarian about the best treats for YOUR pet.
- “Busy-box” toys are large rubber cubes with hiding places for treats. Only by moving the cube around with his nose, mouth or paws, can your dog access the goodies.

Comfort Toys:

- Soft stuffed toys are good for several purposes, but aren’t appropriate for all dogs. For some dogs, the stuffed toy should be small enough to carry around. For dogs that want to shake or “kill” the toy, it should be the size that “prey” would be for that size pet (mouse-size, rabbit-size or duck-size).
- Dirty laundry, like an old t-shirt, pillowcase, towel or blanket, can be very comforting to a dog, especially if it smells like you! Be forewarned that the item could be destroyed by industrious fluffing, carrying and nosing. And your pet may not notice whether a shirt is the new one you just bought or the old one you just gave to them.

Get The Most Out Of Toys!

- Rotate your dog’s toys every two weeks or so. Make only four or five toys available at a time. Keep a variety of types easily accessible. If your dog has a huge favorite, like a soft “baby”, you should probably leave it out all the time. Your pet uses that toy for safety and security much as a small child might.
- Provide toys that offer a variety of uses – at least one toy to carry, one to “kill”, one to roll and one to “baby”.
- “Hide and Seek” is a fun game for dogs to play. “Found” toys are often much more attractive than a toy which is obviously introduced. Making an interactive game out of finding toys or treats is a good “rainy-day” activity for your dog, using up energy, in limited space.
- Many of your dog’s toys should be interactive. Interactive play is very important for your dog because he needs active “people time”. By focusing on a specific task, like repeatedly returning a ball, Kong or Frisbee, or playing “hide-and-seek” with treats or toys, your dog can “use up” mental and physical energy in a limited amount of time and space. This greatly reduces stress due to confinement, isolation and/or boredom. For young, high-energy and untrained dogs, interactive play also offers an opportunity for socialization and helps them learn about appropriate and inappropriate behavior with people and with other animals, like jumping up or being “mouthy”.

NOTHING IN LIFE IS FREE

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“Nothing in life is free” is a way of living with the family dog that will help everyone understand good manners in your home. It will create better behavior and better understanding of what you expect from your family pet and your family when dealing with the pet. This approach works to build trust and acceptance from a pet while allowing that pet a feeling of safety that you will be a fair and humane leader. A trusting dog is confident because it knows its place in your family.

Most families do not accept a dog who gets on the furniture and refuses to get off. Nudges your hand, insisting on playing or being petted. Refuses to come when called. Defends the food bowl or pet toys.

First, using positive reinforcement tactics, practice teaching your dog a few tricks and/or commands. “Sit,” “Down” and “Stay” and “Off” are *useful* commands and “Speak,” “Shake” and “Rollover” are *fun* tricks to teach your dog. Use the same hand movement and phrase each time you make one of these requests of your pet. Reward them when they respond correctly. Teach one command at a time and be patient. Allow your older puppy/dog time to learn. Some dogs need a few days, some need a few weeks. Repetition helps everyone learn. Allow your children to watch and then practice with you. Guide your pet. Do NOT punish them. Punishment creates fear and other behavioral problems can grow from fear.

A few hints-

Obedience classes are very helpful for learning basic commands. The time and investment given early in your time with your pet will pay off many times over in the enjoyment you share through the years.

NEVER physically strike your pet for failing to obey a command.

If you choose not to take advantage of obedience classes, invest in a good and humane training book with clear illustrations or photos of the presentation of lessons. APA or MO staff members will be happy to make some recommendations.

Once your dog knows a few commands, you can begin to practice “nothing in life is free.” Before you give your dog anything (food, a treat, a walk, a pat on the head) be sure to request one of the commands it has learned. For example:

Put your dog’s leash on to go for a walk and request “Sit.”

Play a game of fetch after work and request “Come.”

Rub your dog’s belly while watching TV and request “Rollover.”

Make sure your dog knows the command well and understands what you want before you begin practicing “nothing in life is free.”

Once you’ve given a command, don’t give your dog what it wants until he/she does what you want. If your pet refuses to perform the command, walk away, come back a few minutes later and start again. If your dog refuses to obey the command, be patient and remember that eventually it will have to obey your command in order to get what it wants.

NOTHING IN LIFE IS FREE (CONTINUED)

Remember, this is not a punishment approach. It is a simple way to help your pet learn how to get what he/she wants and do it in a way that works with your family guidelines.

The benefits of this technique:

- Most dogs assume a neutral or submissive role toward people, but some dogs challenge their owners for dominance. Requiring a dominant dog to work for everything it wants is a safe and non-confrontational way to establish control.
- Dogs who may never display aggressive behavior such as growling, snapping, or snarling, may still manage to manipulate you. These dogs may display affectionate, though “pushy” behavior, such as nudging your hand to be petted or “worming” its way on to the furniture in order to be close to you. This technique gently reminds the “pushy” dog that it must abide by your rules.
- Obeying commands helps build a fearful dog’s confidence; having a strong leader and knowing its place in the hierarchy helps to make the submissive dog feel more secure.

Why this technique works:

Animals that live in groups, like dogs, establish a social structure within the group called a dominance hierarchy. This dominance hierarchy serves to maintain order, reduce conflict and promote cooperation among pack members. In order for your home to be a happy and safe place for everyone, it’s best that the humans in the household assume the highest positions in the dominance hierarchy. Practicing “nothing in life is free” effectively and gently communicates to your dog that its position in the hierarchy is subordinate to yours. From your dog’s point of view, children also have a place in this hierarchy. Because children are small and can get down on the dog’s level to play, dogs often consider them to be playmates, rather than superiors. With the supervision of an adult, it’s a good idea to encourage children in the household (age eight and over) to also practice “nothing in life is free” with your dog.

THE EDUCATED DOG

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When you feel frustrated with your dog's behavior, remember that someone must **teach** a dog what is acceptable behavior and what is not. A dog that hasn't been given any instructions, training or boundaries can't possibly know what you expect of him/her. By teaching your dog how you want them to behave you will have a healthier and happier dog. They want to do the right thing. It is up to you to teach them what is "right" for your family.

An Educated Dog:

- Allows you to handle every part of his body, to check for injury or illness and to give him medication. Foot and/or mouth sensitivity are common and your pet may be gently trained to tolerate them. Time and patience are required.
- Has good manners, so he/she can spend most of the time indoors with you. This allows more supervision, less boredom and fewer opportunities for dangerous mischief. The more time you spend with your dog, the more likely you will be to notice when something is wrong. By recognizing a cough or limp or lack of appetite you can seek medical attention immediately and prevent more serious problems.
- Wants to stay near you, listening for instructions (and praise). This pet is truly a "best friend" and will be safe and out of harms way.
- Will walk or run beside you on a leash without pulling, dragging or strangling, so you and your dog can exercise and enjoy being outdoors together.
- Knows that "drop it" and "leave it alone" are phrases that mean business. He/she will have fewer opportunities to swallow dangerous objects. He also can be taught what things and places are out of bounds, like hot stoves, heaters or anxious cats. However, you'll still need to limit access to dangerous places when you cannot supervise or instruct your pet.
- Will "sit" immediately upon you command. No matter what danger may be imminent, a dog that is suddenly still is suddenly safe. A dog that will "stay" in that position is even safer.
- Understand his boundaries, knows what's expected of him and has fewer anxieties. Less stress means a healthier dog.

By training your dog, you can help prevent tragedy and develop a better relationship with him. Keep in mind, however, that even an educated dog needs supervision, instruction and boundaries – sometimes even physical boundaries. Allowing your dog, no matter how educated he may be, to walk, run or roam outside of a fenced area or off a leash is putting him in danger.

Selecting a Class

Here are some tips to help you select an obedience class that's right for you:

- Good obedience instructors are knowledgeable about many different types of training methods and use techniques that neither the dog nor their owner find consistently unpleasant.
- Good training methods focus primarily on reinforcing good behavior and use punishment sparingly, appropriately and humanely. Excessive use of choke chains or pinch collars or using collars to lift dogs off the ground ("stringing them up") are **not appropriate** or humane training methods. *Physical pain teaches fear and defensive behavior not obedience.*

EDUCATED DOG (CONTINUED)

- Good obedience instructors communicate well with people and with dogs. Remember, they are instructing you about how to train your dog.
- Specific problems you may have with your dog may not be addressed in a basic obedience course. If you need help with house soiling, barking, aggression or separation anxiety, ask the course provider if these issues will be covered– don't assume they will.
- Ask the instructor what training methods are used and how they (the instructor and staff) were trained. You are entitled to that information. Also, request a chance to observe a class before you commit to one. If you're refused an observation, or if your observation results in anything that makes you uncomfortable, look elsewhere.
- Avoid anyone who: guarantees their work; whose primary methods focus on punishment; or who wants to take your dog and train him for you (effective training must include you and the environment in which you and your dog interact).

SOLVING PET PROBLEMS: SHAPING BEHAVIOR

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“Positive reinforcement” is the presentation of something pleasant or rewarding immediately following a behavior. It makes that behavior more likely to occur in the future, and is one of the most powerful tools for shaping or changing your pet’s behavior.

Timing makes a very real difference in the success of “positive reinforcement”. The reward must occur immediately, or your pet may not associate it with the proper action. For example, if you have your dog “sit”, but reward him after this has happened and he is on all four feet again, he will think he’s being rewarded for “standing”.

Consistency is also essential. Everyone in the family must use the same commands. It might be helpful to post these where everyone can become familiar with them. The most commonly used commands for dogs are “watch me”, “sit”, “stay”, “down” (means lie down), “off” (means off me or off the furniture), “stand” “come”, “heel”, (or “let’s go” or “with me”), “leave it” and “settle”. Consistency means *always* rewarding the desired behavior and *never* rewarding undesired behavior.

“Positive reinforcement” may include food treats, praise, petting or a favorite toy or game. Food treats work especially well for training your dog. A treat should be irresistible to your pet. It may be a very small, soft, piece of food, easily taken from your flat extended hand. That will allow your pet to immediately gulp it down and look to you for more. If you give him something he has to chew or that breaks into bits and falls on the floor, he will be looking around the floor, not at you. Small pieces of soft commercial treats, hot dogs, cheese, cooked chicken or beef, or miniature marshmallows have all proven successful. Your pet will let you know his favorite! Carry the treats in a plastic zip bag in your pocket or a special fanny pack on the front of your belt. There are even special treat packs available in many pet stores. Each time you use a food reward, you should couple it with a verbal reward (praise). Say something like, “Good boy” in a positive, happy tone of voice. Our companion animals are very sensitive to how we sound.

Note: Some pets may not be interested in food treats. For those pets, the reward could be a toy or a brief chance to play.

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

“Intermittent reinforcement” may be used once your pet has reliably learned the behavior. At first, you may reward him with the treat three times out of four, then about half the time, then about a third of the time and so forth, until you’re only rewarding him occasionally with the treat. Continue to praise him every time, although once he’s learned the behavior, the praise

SHAPING PET BEHAVIOR (CONTINUED)

may be more gentle – a quiet, but positive, “Good boy”. Use a variable schedule of reinforcement, so he doesn’t catch on that he only has to respond every other time. Your pet will learn that if he keeps responding, eventually he’ll get what he wants. If you have a dog who barks until you reward him by paying attention to him, (either in a disapproving tone or some other way) you know the power of intermittent reinforcement.

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

“Punishment”, including verbal threats and angry body actions present something unpleasant immediately following a behavior. In some approaches this may make it less likely that the behavior will occur again. To be effective, “punishment” must be delivered while your pet is engaged in the undesirable behavior, in other words, “caught in the act”. If the punishment is delivered too late, your pet will feel attacked. From his point of view, the punishment is totally unpredictable, and he’s likely to become fearful, distrusting and/or aggressive. This will only lead to more behavior problems. What we humans interpret as “guilty” looks, are actually submissive postures by our pets. Animals don’t have our moral sense of right and wrong, but they want to please and know when you are unhappy with them.

“Punishment” is not a very successful technique for teaching humans or pets. Physical punishment usually involves some level of discomfort or even pain, which is likely to cause your pet to bite, as that is the only way he knows to defend himself. Scruff shakes and “alpha rolls” are likely to result in bites, especially if the dog doesn’t perceive you to be his superior. Also punishment might be associated with other stimuli, including people, that are present at the time the punishment occurs. For example, a pet that’s punished for getting too close to a small child may become fearful of or aggressive to that child. “Positive Reinforcement” teaches without dangerous side effects and creates a more enjoyable relationship for everyone.

TERRITORIAL MARKING BEHAVIOR IN DOGS

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Dogs and cats are territorial animals. This means that they “stake out a claim” to a particular space, area or object. They let other people and animals know about their claim by marking it with a variety of methods and at many levels of intensity. For example, a dog may bark to drive away what he perceives as intruders to his territory (the postman, door to door solicitors, etc.). A cat may mark a valued object by rubbing it with his/her face.

Some pets may go to the extreme of urinating or defecating to mark a particular area as their own. Urine-marking is not a house soiling problem, but is a territorial behavior.

House Soiling or Urine-Marking? How to Tell the Difference!

Your pet may be urine-marking if:

- The problem is primarily urination. Dogs and cats rarely mark with feces.
- The amount of urine is small and is found primarily on vertical surfaces. Dogs and cats do sometimes mark on horizontal surfaces. Leg-lifting and spraying are dominant versions of urine-marking, but even if your pet doesn't assume these postures, he may still be urine-marking.
- Any pet in your home is not spayed or neutered. Both intact males and females are more likely to urine-mark than are spayed or neutered animals. However, even spayed or neutered animals may mark in response to other intact animals in the home.
- Your pet urinates on new objects in the environment (a shopping bag, a visitor's purse!), on objects that have unfamiliar smells, or on objects that have another animal's scent.
- Your pet has conflicts with other animals in your home. When there's instability in the pack hierarchy, a dog may feel a need to establish his dominance by urine-marking his territory. If one cat is intimidating another cat, the bullied cat may express his anxiety by urine-marking.
- Your pet has contact with other animals outside your home. A cat that's allowed outdoors may come home and mark after having an encounter with another cat outside. If your pet sees another animal through a door or window, he may feel a need to mark his territory.
- Your dog marks frequently on neighborhood walks.

What you **can** do:

- Spay or neuter your pet as soon as possible. All animals adopted from the APA of MO are spayed or neutered before being allowed to leave. Spaying or neutering your pet may stop urine-marking altogether; however, if he has been urine-marking over a long period of time, a pattern may already be established.
- Resolve conflicts between animals in your home (see our handouts: “Canine Rivalry” and “Feline Social Behavior and Aggression between Family Cats”).
- Restrict your pet's access to doors and windows through which they can observe animals outside. If this isn't possible, discourage the presence of other animals near your house (see our handout: “Discouraging Roaming Cats”).
- Keep your cat indoors. He'll be safer, will live longer, and will feel less need to mark his territory.
- Clean soiled areas thoroughly and make previously soiled areas inaccessible or unattractive (see our handout: “Successful Cleaning to Remove Pet Odors and Stains”).
- If making soiled areas inaccessible or unattractive isn't possible, try to change the significance of those areas. Feed, treat and play with your pet in the areas he is inclined to mark. Pets will rarely use the same space for food, fun and marking.
- Keep objects likely to cause marking out of reach. Guests' belongings, new purchases and so forth, should be placed in a closet or cabinet.
- If your pet is marking in response to a new resident in your home (a new baby, roommate or spouse), have the new resident make friends with your pet by feeding, grooming and playing with your pet. Make sure

good things happen to your pet when the new baby is around (see our handout: “Preparing Your Pet for Baby’s Arrival”).

- For dogs: watch your dog at all times when he is indoors for signs that he is thinking about urinating. When he begins to urinate, interrupt him with a loud noise and take him outside, then praise him and give him a treat if he urinates outside. When you’re unable to watch him, put your dog in confinement (a crate or small room where he has never marked).
- For cats: try to monitor your cat’s movements. If he even sniffs in an area he has previously marked, make a loud noise or squirt him with water. It is best if you can do this without him seeing you, then he’ll associate the unpleasantness with his intent to mark, rather than with you.
- Practice “Nothing in Life is Free” with your dog (see our handout: “Nothing In Life Is Free”). This is a safe, non-confrontational way to establish your leadership and requires your dog to work for everything he wants from you. Have your dog obey at least one command (such as “sit”) before you pet him, give him dinner, put on his leash or throw a toy for him. Establishing yourself as a strong leader can help stabilize the hierarchy and thus diminish your dog’s need to mark his territory.

What **NOT** to do:

Don’t punish your pet after the fact. Punishment administered even a minute after the event is ineffective because your pet won’t understand why he/she is being punished.

Pets Are Not People

Dogs and cats don’t urinate or defecate out of spite or jealousy. If your dog urinates on your baby’s diaper bag, it is **not** because he is jealous of, or dislikes your baby. The unfamiliar scents and sounds of a new baby in the house are simply causing him to reaffirm his claim on his territory. Likewise, if your cat urinates on your new boyfriend’s backpack, this is not his opinion of your taste in men. Instead, he has perceived the presence of an “intruder” and is letting the intruder know that this territory belongs to him.

Dominance or Anxiety?

Urine-marking is usually associated with dominance behavior. While this may be the case, some pets mark when they feel anxious or upset. For example, a new baby in the home brings new sounds, smells and people, as well as changes in routine. Your dog or cat probably isn’t getting as much attention as he was used to getting. All of these changes cause him to feel anxious, which may cause him to mark. Likewise, a pet that is generally anxious may become more so by the presence of roaming neighborhood animals in your yard, or by the introduction of a new cat or dog into your household. If your pet is feeling anxious, you might consider talking to your veterinarian about medications to reduce his anxiety while you work on behavior modification.

BARK! BARK! BARK!

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Some canine behavior problems affect only a dog and its immediate family. However, problems such as escaping and excessive barking may result in neighborhood disputes and violations of animal control ordinances. Barking dogs can create “people problems”. If your dog’s barking has created neighborhood tension, it might be a good idea to discuss the problem with your neighbors. It’s perfectly normal and reasonable for dogs to bark from time to time, just as children make noise when they play outside. However, continual barking for long periods of time is a sign that your dog has a problem that needs to be addressed.

The first thing you need to do is determine when and for how long your dog barks, and what’s causing him/her to bark. You may need to do some detective work to obtain this information, especially if the barking occurs when you’re not home. Ask your neighbors, drive or walk around the block and watch and listen for a while, or start a tape recorder or video camera when you leave for work. You may then be able to discover which of the common problems discussed below is the cause of your dog’s barking.

Social Isolation/Frustration/Attention-Seeking

Your dog may be barking because he’s bored and lonely if:

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

Recommendations:

Expand your dog’s world and increase his “people time” in the following ways:

- Walk your dog daily – it is good exercise, both mental and physical, for you and your pet.
- Teach your dog to fetch a ball or Frisbee and practice with him as often as possible.
- Teach your dog a few commands and/or tricks and practice them every day for five to ten minutes.
- Take an obedience class with your dog.
- Provide interesting toys to keep your dog busy when you’re not home (Kong-type toys filled with treats or busy-box toys). Rotating the toys makes them seem new and interesting (see our information sheet “Dog Toys and How to Use Them”).
- If your dog is barking to get your attention, make sure he has sufficient time with you on a daily basis (petting, grooming, playing, exercising) so he doesn’t have to resort to misbehaving to get your attention.
- Keep your dog inside when you’re unable to supervise him.
- Let your neighbors know that you’re actively working on the problem.
- Take your dog to work with you every now and then, if possible.
- When you have to leave your dog for extended periods of time, take him/her to a “doggie day care” or have a friend or neighbor walk and/or play with him for an hour.

Territorial/Protective Behavior

Your dog may be barking to guard his territory if:

- The barking occurs in the presence of “intruders”, which may include the mail carrier, children walking to school and other dogs or neighbors in the adjacent yards.
- Your dog’s posture while he’s barking appears threatening – tail held high and ears up and forward.
- You’ve encouraged your dog to be responsive to people and noises outside.

BARK, BARK, BARK (CONTINUED)

Recommendations:

- Teach your dog a “quiet” command. When he begins to bark at a passer-by, allow two or three barks, then say “quiet” and interrupt his barking by shaking a can filled with pennies or squirting water at his mouth with a spray bottle or squirt gun. This will cause him to stop barking momentarily. While he’s quiet, say “good quiet” and pop a tasty treat into his mouth. Remember, the loud noise or squirt isn’t meant to punish him, rather it’s to startle him into being quiet so you can reward him. If your dog is frightened by the noise or squirt bottle, find an alternative method of interrupting his barking (throw a toy or ball toward him). The teaching technique is about distraction not punishment.
- Desensitize your dog to the stimulus that triggers the barking. Teach him that the people he views as intruders are actually friends. Ask someone to walk by your yard, starting far enough away so that your dog isn’t barking, then reward him with a very special treat such as meat or cheese for quiet behavior as he obeys a “sit” or “down” command. It may take several sessions before the person can come close without your dog barking. When the person can come very close without your dog barking, have them feed him a treat or throw a toy for him.
- If your dog barks while inside the house when you’re home, call him to you, have him obey a command, such as “sit” or “down”, and reward him with praise and a treat.
- Don’t inadvertently encourage this type of barking by enticing your dog to bark at things he hears or sees outside.
- Have your dog neutered (or spayed if you dog is a female) to decrease territorial behavior.

Fears and Phobias

Your dog’s barking may be a response to something he’s afraid of if:

- The barking occurs when he’s exposed to loud noises, such as thunderstorms, firecrackers or construction equipment.
- Your dog’s posture indicates fear – ears back, tail held low.

Recommendations:

- Identify what’s frightening your dog and desensitize him to it (see our information sheet: “Helping Your Dog Overcome the Fear of Thunder and Other Startling Noises”). You may need professional help with the desensitization process. Check with your veterinarian about anti-anxiety medication while you work on behavior modification.
- Mute noise from outside by leaving your dog in a basement or windowless bathroom and leave on a television, radio or loud fan. Block off your dog’s access to outdoor views that might be causing a fear response, by closing curtains or doors to certain rooms.

Separation Anxiety

Your dog may be barking due to separation anxiety if:

The barking occurs only when you are gone and starts as soon as, or shortly after, you leave.

Your dog displays other behaviors that reflect a strong attachment to you, such as always following you from room to room, frantic greeting or reacting anxiously to your preparations to leave.

- Your dog has recently experienced: a change in the family’s schedule that results in his being left alone more often; a move to a new house; the death or loss of a family member or another family pet; or a period at an animal shelter or boarding kennel.

BARK, BARK, BARK (CONTINUED)

Recommendations:

- Separation anxiety takes time and patience but may be resolved using counter-conditioning and desensitization techniques (see our information sheet: “Separation Anxiety”).

Bark Collars

Bark collars are specially designed to deliver an aversive, negative response, whenever your dog barks. There are several different kinds of bark collars.

- **Citronella Collar:** This collar contains a reservoir of citronella solution that sprays into your dog's face every time he barks. A citronella collar is considered humane and a recent study reported an 88% rate of success with the use of this collar. One possible drawback is that the collar contains a microphone, so the aversive is delivered in response to the sound of the bark. Therefore, other noises may set off the collar, causing your dog to be sprayed even if he hasn't barked. Also, some dogs can tell when the citronella reservoir is empty and will resume barking.
- **Aversive Sound Collar:** This collar emits a high-frequency sound when your dog barks. Some are activated by the noise of the bark, while others are hand-held and activated by a handler. The rate of success for this type of collar is reportedly rather low.
- **Electric Shock Collar:** We don't recommend an electric shock collar to control your dog's barking. The electric shock is painful to your dog and many dogs will choose to endure the pain and continue barking. The success rate of this type of collar is less than 50%.

The main drawback of any bark collar is that it doesn't address the underlying cause of the barking. You may be able to eliminate the barking, but symptom substitution may occur and your dog may begin digging, escaping, or become destructive or even aggressive. The use of a bark collar must be in conjunction with behavior modification based on the *reason* for the barking, as outlined above. You should never use a bark collar on your dog if his barking is due to separation anxiety, fears or phobias, because punishment always makes fear and anxiety behaviors worse.

SEPARATION ANXIETY

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Dogs suffering with “separation anxiety” exhibit behavior problems when they are left alone. Typically, they will have a dramatic anxiety response within a short time (5-45 minutes) after their owners leave them. The most common of these behaviors are-

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

Why Do Dogs Suffer From Separation Anxiety?

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

How Do I Know If My Dog Has Separation Anxiety?

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

- The behavior occurs exclusively or primarily when he's left alone.
- He follows you from room to room whenever you're home.
- He displays effusive, frantic greeting behaviors.
- The behavior *always* occurs when he's left alone, whether for a short or long period of time.
- He reacts with excitement, depression or anxiety to your preparations to leave the house.
- He dislikes spending even a short time outdoors by himself. No dog wants to be without company for long periods of time.

Separation Anxiety *Sometimes* Occurs When:

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

What to Do If Your Dog Has Separation Anxiety

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

- Keep arrivals and departures low-key. For example, when you arrive home, ignore your dog for the first few minutes, then calmly pet him/her.
- Leave your dog with an article of clothing that smells like you, an old tee shirt that you've slept in recently, might be a choice.
- Establish a “safety-cue” – a word or action that you use *every* time you leave that tells your dog you'll be back. Dogs usually learn to associate certain cues with short absences by their owners. For example, when you take out the garbage, your dog knows you come right back and doesn't become anxious. Therefore, it's helpful to associate a safety cue with practice departures and short-duration absences. Remember, like all lessons, repetition is very helpful. Practice departures must be repeated and eventually occur at different times of day.

SEPARATION ANXIETY (CONTINUED)

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

Desensitization Techniques for More Severe Cases of Separation Anxiety

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

- Begin by engaging in your normal departure activities (getting your keys, putting on your coat), then sit back down. Repeat this step until your dog shows no distress in response to your activities.
- Next, engage in your normal departure activities *and* go to the door and open it, then sit back down.
- Next, step outside the door, leaving the door open, then return.
- Finally, step outside, close the door, then immediately return. Slowly get your dog accustomed to being alone with the door closed between you for several seconds.
- Proceed very gradually from step to step, repeating each step until your dog shows no signs of distress (the number of repetitions will vary depending on the severity of the problem). If, at any time in this process, your actions produce an anxiety response in your dog, you've proceeded too fast. Return to an earlier step in the process and practice this step until the dog shows no distress response, then proceed to the next step.
- When your dog has learned to tolerate you being on the other side of the door for several seconds, begin short-duration absences. This step involves giving the dog a verbal cue (for example, "I'll be back"), leaving and then returning within a minute. Your return must be low-key: either ignore your dog or greet him/her quietly and calmly. If there are no signs of distress, repeat the exercise. If your dog appears anxious, wait until he/she relaxes to repeat the exercise. Gradually increase the length of time you're gone. For example: start with 30 seconds and move to 60 seconds, then 90 seconds and so on.
- Practice as many absences as possible that last less than ten minutes. You can do many departures within one session if your dog relaxes sufficiently between departures. Scatter practice departures and short-duration absences throughout the day.
- Once your dog can handle short absences (30 to 90 minutes), he will usually be able to handle longer intervals alone. Eventually you will not need to work up to all-day absences minute by minute. The most difficult training is at the beginning, but learning to trust in your return gets easier for your pet as time progresses. Go slowly at first. How long it takes to condition your dog to being alone depends on the severity of the problem and your patience with the beginning steps.

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

While working with door practice sessions you may add another important conditioning and training exercise. Practice "sit-stay" or "down-stay" exercises using positive reinforcement, hand signals and tone of voice. **Never** punish your dog during these training sessions. Gradually increase the distance you move away from your dog. Your goal is to be able to move briefly out of your dog's sight while he remains in the "stay" position. The point is to teach him/her that it is safe and desirable to remain calm and stay happily in one place while you go to another location. As you progress, you may do this during the course of your normal daily activities. For example, if you're watching television with your dog by your side, when you get up for a snack, tell your pet to "stay" and leave the room. When you come back, calmly give him a treat or quietly praise him. Pets like to see what we are doing so you need not strive for this every time you leave the room, but key the behavior to the message "stay". If you ask for that, be prepared to help your dog learn what that means.

SEPARATION ANXIETY (CONTINUED)

Interim Solutions

The training and treatments we have described may take time for your pet to understand. A dog with separation anxiety can do serious damage to himself and/or your home in the interim. Some of the following suggestions may be helpful in dealing with the problem while your dog is in the process of discovering how to cope:

- Consult your veterinarian about the possibility of drug therapy. A good anti-anxiety drug should not sedate your dog, but simply reduce his anxiety while you're gone. Such medication is a temporary measure and should be used in conjunction with behavior modification techniques.
Take your dog to a dog day care facility or boarding kennel for company. If your pet's response is too anxious, then this is NOT the procedure to use. A good facility will share the details of your pet's behavior with you. Good pet day care or boarding facilities will not try to attach additional expenses or disciplinary training to this effort of providing socialization, but they will work with "sit-stay" or "down-stay" instructions. Remember your pet's anxiety is not about a need for *just anyone's* company...your dog is worried about when YOU will return to be with him/her.
- Leave your dog with a known friend, family member or neighbor. A pet may be more accepting of someone they see often as an additional person to trust.
- Take your dog to work with you even for half a day, if possible, or come home for lunch.

What Won't Help a Separation Anxiety Problem?

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

Dogs who suffer from separation anxiety have special needs. It is not some attitude they use to express their anger at being left alone. They are afraid to lose the one person or the family members that they have come to see as their guardian against unknown danger. Your job is to help them learn confidence and to reassure them that you and/or the family will always come home. Don't "baby" your pet, don't punish your pet, love them enough to give them the training and the tools to live successfully in your family. You will be rewarded with a true friend for life.

HOW TO SOLVE THE DIGGING PROBLEM

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Digging is a normal behavior for most dogs, but may occur for widely varying reasons. Your dog may be looking for:

- 🐾 Entertainment
- 🐾 Prey
- 🐾 Comfort or Protection
- 🐾 Attention
- 🐾 Escape

It is important to remember-dogs do **not** dig out of spite, revenge or a desire to destroy your yard.

Making the area where your dog has chosen to dig unappealing may be only temporarily effective. It's likely that he/she will simply begin digging in another location or substitute another unacceptable behavior, such as chewing or barking. A more effective approach to solving the digging problem is to address the cause of the digging.

Seeking Entertainment

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

He's left alone in the yard for long periods of time without opportunities for interaction with you or other human companions.

His environment is relatively empty, without playmates or toys.

She's a puppy or adolescent (under three years old) and doesn't have other planned outlets for his energy

He's the breed or mix of breeds (i.e. terrier, beagle, or dachshund) that is bred to dig as part of his "job"

He's a particularly active type of dog (like the herding or sporting breeds) who needs an active job to be happy

She's recently seen you "playing" in the dirt (gardening or working in the yard) and believes it is something the whole family can enjoy

Entertainment Recommendations:

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

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

HOW TO SOLVE THE DIGGING PROBLEM (CONTINUED)

Seeking Prey

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

The digging is in a very specific area, usually not at the boundaries of the yard.

The digging is at the roots of trees or shrubs.

The digging is in a “path” layout.

Prey Recommendations:

We recommend that you approach this problem by:

- Searching for possible pests and then eliminating them from your yard. Read labels and learn proper techniques. Avoid methods that could be toxic or dangerous to your pets.

Seeking Comfort or Protection

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

The areas are near foundations of buildings, large shade trees or possible water.

There is no shelter or your pet’s shelter is exposed to the hot sun or cold winds

You find evidence that your dog is lying in the holes he digs.

Comfort Recommendations:

- We recommend that you provide your dog with other sources for the comfort or protection he seeks.
- Provide an insulated doghouse. Make sure it affords protection from wind and sun.
- Your dog may still prefer a hole in the ground, in which case you can try the “approved digging area” recommendation described above. Make sure the allowed digging area is in a protected spot.
- Provide plenty of fresh water in a bowl that can’t be tipped over.

Seeking Attention

Any behavior can become attention-getting behavior if you respond to your pet when they engage in that activity. (Remember: even punishment is a form of attention). Your dog may be digging to get attention if:

He/she digs in your presence

His other opportunities for interaction with you are limited or none at all. Do you pay attention when he/she is doing the CORRECT behavior?

Attention Recommendations:

- We recommend that you ignore the behavior.
- Make sure your dog has sufficient time with you on a daily basis, so he/she doesn’t have to resort to misbehaving to get your attention.

Seeking Escape

Dogs may escape to get to some **thing**, to get some **where** or to get **away** from some **thing**. Your dog may be digging to escape if:

He/she digs along a fence line.

He/she digs under the fence.

HOW TO SOLVE THE DIGGING PROBLEM (CONTINUED)

Escape Recommendations:

We recommend the following in order to keep your dog in the yard while you work on behavior modification:

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

We NEVER Recommend the following:

⊗ Punishment after the fact. Not only does this not address the cause of the behavior, any digging that's motivated by fear or anxiety, will be made worse. Punishment may also cause anxiety in dogs that are not currently fearful and create additional problems.

⊗ Staking a dog out near a hole he's dug or filling the hole with water. These techniques don't address the cause of the behavior, or the act of digging.

THE CANINE ESCAPE ARTIST

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Escaping is a serious problem for both you and your dog. If your dog runs loose, he/she is in danger of being hit by a car, being injured in a fight with another dog, or being hurt in any number of other ways. Be aware that you are liable for any damage or injury your dog may cause and you may be required to pay a fine if your pet is picked up by an animal control agency. In order to resolve the problem of running away, you must determine not only *how* your dog is getting out, but also *why* he/she is escaping.

Why Dogs Escape

Social Isolation/Frustration

Your dog may be running because of boredom and/or loneliness:

- Is he/she left alone for long periods of time without opportunities for interaction with you?
- Is the living space for your pet relatively empty of playmates or toys?
- Is he/she a puppy or adolescent (under three years old) without other opportunities for play to release his/her energy?
- Do you have a particularly active type of dog (like the herding or sporting breeds) who needs a physically interesting “job” in order to be happy?
- Does the place your pet visits when he/she runs away have people or pets or other fun things to do? (For example, a neighbor’s dog to play with or children at a local school yard?)

Recommendations:

Try to expand your dog’s world and increase his/her “people time”:

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

Sexual Roaming

Dogs may become sexually mature at around six months of age. An intact male dog is motivated by a strong, natural drive to seek out female dogs. It can be very difficult to prevent an intact dog from escaping, because his motivation to do so is very high. Be aware that an estimated 85% of dogs killed on roadways are unneutered males.

Recommendations:

- Have your male dog neutered. Studies show that neutering will decrease sexual roaming in about 90% of the cases. However, if an intact male has established a pattern of escaping, he may continue to do so even after he’s neutered, so it’s important to have him neutered as soon as possible. No pet leaves the APA of MO unneutered/spayed. No exceptions.
- Have your female dog spayed. If your intact female dog escapes your yard while she’s in heat, she will probably get pregnant. Millions of unwanted pets are euthanized every year. Please don’t contribute to the pet overpopulation problem by allowing your female dog to breed indiscriminately.

ESCAPING (CONTINUED)

Fears and Phobias

Your dog may be escaping in response to something he/she finds frightening such as thunderstorms, firecrackers or construction sounds.

Recommendations:

- Identify what is frightening your dog and desensitize him to it (see our handout: “Helping Your Dog Overcome the Fear of Thunder and Other Startling Noises”). You may need professional help with the desensitization process. Check with your veterinarian about giving your dog an anti-anxiety medication while you work on behavior modification.
- Leave your dog indoors when he is likely to encounter the fear stimulus. Muffle the exterior noise by leaving him/her in a basement or windowless bathroom and leave on a television, radio or loud fan.
- Provide a “safe place” for your dog. Observe where he/she likes to go when he feels anxious, then allow access to that space, or create a similar space for him/her to use when the fear stimulus is present.

Separation Anxiety

Your dog may be escaping due to separation anxiety if:

- He/she escapes as soon as, or shortly after, you leave.
- Your pet displays other behaviors that reflect a strong attachment to you, such as always following you around, frantic greetings or reacting anxiously to your preparations to leave.
- He remains near your home after he’s escaped.

Factors that can precipitate a separation anxiety problem include:

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

Recommendations:

Separation anxiety can be resolved using counter-conditioning and desensitization techniques (see our information sheet: “Separation Anxiety”).

How Dogs Escape

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

Recommendations for Preventing Escape

For climbing/jumping dogs: Add an extension to your fence that tilts in toward the yard. The extension doesn’t necessarily need to make the fence much higher, as long as it tilts inward at about a 45 degree angle.

For digging dogs: bury chicken wire at the base of your fence (with the sharp edges rolled inward), place large rocks at the base, or lay chain-link fencing on the ground.

ESCAPING (CONTINUED)

Punishment

- Never punish your dog after he/she is already out of the yard. Dogs associate punishment with what they're doing at the time they're punished. Punishing your dog after the fact won't eliminate the escaping behavior, but will only make him afraid to come to you.
- Never punish your dog if the escape is a fear-related problem or is due to separation anxiety. Punishing fear-motivated behaviors will only make your dog more afraid, and thus make the problem worse.
- Punishment is only effective if administered at the moment your dog is escaping and if he doesn't associate the correction with you. If you can squirt him with a hose or make a loud noise as he is going over, under through the fence, it might be unpleasant enough that he won't want to do it again.
- Chaining your dog is not a humane choice. Chaining your dog does not resolve the "why" of running.

INSIDE OR OUTSIDE? MAKE YOUR DOG A MEMBER OF YOUR FAMILY

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Some dog owners believe that dogs, especially large ones, should be “outdoor only” pets. The Animal Protective Association of MO knows that dogs of all sizes are happier, healthier and safer when they can be indoors with their people most of the time. Dogs are, by heritage, social animals who truly need to be with those who care for them. They want and need companionship, just like humans. Here are some answers to questions you may have about sharing space with your dog:

What about Exercise?

Some people believe that dogs need to be outside so they can get plenty of exercise. The truth is that most dogs don't exercise when they are in a yard by themselves; they spend most of their time lying by the back door, waiting for “their people” to either let them in or come out and play with them. However, dogs do need exercise every day, so we recommend walking your dog or engaging him/her in a regular game of fetch. Tennis balls, Frisbees, or other inexpensive throw toys provide fun for human and animal!

What About Bad Behavior?

Dogs need to spend time with “their people” in order to learn the rules and how to get along with their human family. Dogs that spend most of their time alone, or only in the company of other dogs, may demonstrate fearful, aggressive or overactive behavior toward family members or strangers because they've never learned good manners with people. Dogs left alone in the yard for long periods of time often get bored, lonely and frustrated. As a result, they may dig or bark excessively. Most cities have noise ordinances that penalize owners of barking dogs. If a dog escapes the yard in search of interesting things to do, not only is he at risk of being injured by a car, but his owner is liable for any damage or harm that he might do.

Are They Safe Outside?

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

What About Guarding the Family?

Dogs that spend time with their owners and feel attached to them are more likely to be protective of “their family.” Dogs that spend most of their time outdoors may be friendly to any stranger who pets or feeds them. Alternatively, some yard dogs may become overly territorial and feel the need to protect their territory even from family and friends. If a dog is rarely allowed to come indoors, it will be difficult for him to distinguish between family, friends and uninvited “guests.” and he/she will learn to care more about guarding their own space because that is how they spend their time. If dogs aren't adequately socialized when they're young, they're likely to become fearful or aggressive toward people, and possibly other animals because they have not had the opportunity to learn what to expect from friendly or unfriendly animals and people. They must always guess and are operating from fear and protection.

What about the Mess of Puppies?

People who are away from home for eight to ten hours a day may be inclined to leave their new puppy in the yard because he/she can't control his bowels and bladder for that length of time. It is true that puppies need to eliminate more frequently than adult dogs. It is also very important for puppies to receive adequate “people time” at this formative stage of their lives. If pups miss out on being adequately socialized when they're young, they're likely to become fearful or aggressive toward the unknown and very often that unknown may be human. Puppies are also more vulnerable to extreme weather conditions than adult dogs. If you must be away from home for more than four or five hours at a time every day, this may not be the right time for you to adopt a puppy. But you may want to consider coming home from work for your lunch hour, or asking a senior citizen in your neighborhood or a family member that is home and able to handle responsibility, to help you with the special job of allowing the dog outside once during your work time. Remember, if you are someone who likes to go out directly after work and stay out past suppertime, you might not be in a position to offer a pet a good home right now. Pets want and deserve your time and attention.

INSIDE OR OUTSIDE (CONTINUED)

Is My Dog Safe and Sound in the Garage?

While dogs **may** be safer in the garage than in the yard, that is not always the case. Do you keep your car oil, antifreeze, household cleaners, gardening chemicals or other possible poisons in your garage? Where are your tools and lawn and leaf tools kept? You won't be there to watch your pet. And unless people spend time with the dog in the garage, the pet will still suffer from isolation and, as a result, may develop any of the behavior problems previously mentioned. Most garages are very hot during the summer months and cold during the winter. These extreme temperatures are hard on a pet's immune system. Unidentified sounds outside become more important and agitating to an enclosed pet. If the garage has an automatic door opener, the dog may run out into the street when the door is opened.

We Kept Our Dog Outside When I was Young?

Some of us may have fond childhood memories of a family dog that lived outside, but times have changed. More mothers used to stay at home, children used to spend more time outdoors and the family dog had company while mom hung laundry or gardened and the children played outside. With the advent of two-income families, television and computer games, the outdoor dog is more likely to spend most of his time alone. Really consider your family schedule and the time you are willing to give to a pet. Children may be loving companions but no child should be totally responsible for a pet. Legally the parent or guardian is always responsible, and no child can manage the medical care and support necessary for a companion animal.

I Must Leave My Pet Outside Sometimes?

If you **must** leave your dog outdoors, unsupervised, for extended periods of time, please provide him/her with the following:

- An **insulated** shelter with a wind-proof opening. Some very short-coated breeds like *greyhounds*, *beagles* and *Labrador retrievers*, may not be able to tolerate extreme cold, **even with a shelter**. Just because they are hunting breeds or breed mixes does not mean they have the physical ability to maintain adequate body heat for outdoor endurance.
- Shade in the summertime. All dogs need shade, but remember that heavy-coated dogs, such as *Huskies* and *Chow Chows*, are more susceptible to the heat. **DO NOT** shave these breeds in a misguided attempt to provide some cooling. It does **NOT** help. Dogs do not perspire through their skin as humans do. If you shave these breeds, you have simply taken away their ability to fight off bites from bugs and pests. You have also diminished the coat they need to insulate them from heat as well as cold.
- *Fresh food and water every day*. In the winter, you'll need a heated water bowl to keep the water from freezing. In summer, you'll need a tip-proof bowl so your dog won't tip the bowl over in an effort to get cool. You might sink a gallon bucket into the ground to within a few inches of the rim to provide a safe and clean source of water. Fresh food and water daily are not only humane requirements; they are required under federal, state and local laws as well.
- Daily interactive **play time**.
- A daily walk.
- **An escape-proof fence with a locked gate**.
- Active toys.

Most dogs do enjoy spending time outdoors, but the time spent alone must be balanced by quality time with "their people." With a little time and training, dogs can learn to be well-behaved around people and will learn the house rules. B When they know the rules they can be left inside alone without cause for worry and be trusted companions and members of the family. For even more information, please investigate "Crate Training."

SUBMISSIVE AND EXCITEMENT URINATION

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Submissive Urination

Submissive urination occurs when a dog feels threatened. It may occur when he's being punished or verbally scolded, or when he's approached by someone he perceives to be threatening to him. It's important to remember that this response is based on the dog's perception of a threat, not the person's actual intention. Submissive urination may resolve as your dog gains confidence, but you can help build his confidence by teaching him commands and rewarding him for obeying. You should also gradually expose him to new people and new situations and try to make sure all of his new experiences are positive and happy.

Your dog may be submissively urinating if:

- Urination occurs when he's being scolded.
- Urination occurs when he's being greeted.
- Urination occurs when someone approaches him.
- He is a somewhat shy, anxious or timid dog.
- He has a history of rough treatment or punishment after the fact.
- The urination is accompanied by submissive postures such as crouching or rolling over to expose his belly.

What to do if your dog has a submissive urination problem:

- Take your dog to the vet to rule out medical reasons for the behavior.
- Keep greetings low key.
- Encourage and reward confident postures from him.
- Give him an alternative to behaving submissively. For example, if he knows a few commands, have him "sit" or "shake" as you approach, and reward him for obeying.
- Avoid approaching him with postures that he reads as dominant, for example:
 - Avoid direct eye contact. Look at his back or tail instead.
 - Get down on his level by bending at the knees rather than leaning over from the waist and ask others to approach him in the same way.
 - Pet him under the chin rather than on top of the head.
 - As you approach, present the side of your body to him, rather than your full front, and avert your gaze.
 - Don't punish or scold him. This will only make the problem worse.
 - Until the problem resolves, you might want to protect your carpet by placing a plastic drop cloth or an absorbent material in the entry way where accidents are most likely to occur. Alternatively, you can purchase "doggie diapers" at your local pet supply store.

Excitement Urination

Excitement urination occurs most often during greetings and playtime and is not accompanied by submissive posturing. Excitement urination usually resolves on its own as a dog matures, as long as it isn't made worse by punishment or inadvertent reinforcement.

Your dog may have an excitement urination problem if:

- Urination occurs when your dog is excited; for example, during greeting or during playtime.
- Your dog is less than 1 year old.

What to do if your dog has an excitement urination problem:

- Keep greetings low key.
- Don't punish or scold him.
- To avoid accidents, play and greet outdoors until the problem is resolved.
- Take your dog to the veterinarian to rule out medical reasons for the behavior.
- Until the problem resolves, you might want to protect your carpet by placing a plastic drop cloth or an absorbent material in the entryway where accidents are most likely to occur. Alternatively you can purchase "doggie diapers" at your local pet supply store.
- Ignore him until he's calm.

UNUSUAL EATING HABITS IN DOGS AND CATS

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Definitions

Dogs and cats will sometimes eat socks, rocks or other objects. Such a dangerous diet may result in a variety of problems for both you and your pet. Not only can your possessions be destroyed or damaged, but objects such as clothing and rocks can produce life-threatening blockages in your pet's intestines. Eating non-food items is called **pica**. A specific type of pica is stool eating (either their own or that of another animal) and, while not necessarily dangerous to the animal, this may be unacceptable to you and can cause illness in your pet. Stool-eating is called **coprophagy**.

The causes of pica and coprophagy are not known. Many ideas have been proposed by various experts, but none have been proved or disproved. Such behaviors may sometimes be attention-getting behaviors. If engaging in one of these behaviors results in some type of social interaction between the animal and his owner (even a verbal scolding) then the behavior may be reinforced and occur more frequently. These behaviors may be attempts to obtain a necessary nutrient lacking in the diet, although no nutritional studies have ever substantiated this idea. They may also stem from frustration or anxiety. It's possible the behaviors begin as play, as the animal investigates and chews on the objects, then subsequently begins to eat or ingest them.

It has been suggested that coprophagy is carried over from the normal parental behavior of ingesting the waste of young offspring. Some experts believe coprophagy occurs more often in animals that live in relatively barren environments, are frequently confined to small areas and/or receive limited attention from their owner. Coprophagy is fairly common in dogs, but is rarely seen in cats and is seen more often in dogs who tend to be highly food-motivated. It's also possible that dogs learn this behavior from other dogs.

Because pica and coprophagy are behaviors that are not well understood, stopping them may require assistance from an animal behavior professional who works individually with owners and their pets. A variety of specialized behavior modification techniques may be necessary to resolve these problems.

Coprophagy

Suggested Solutions:

Because the cause of coprophagy isn't known, there are no techniques or solutions that are consistently successful. The following techniques may, or may not be, effective in resolving the problem.

- Treat your pet's food with something that causes his stool to have an aversive taste. A commercial product called "4-BID" is available through your veterinarian, or the same result may be achieved by using the food additive, "MSG". Based on owners' reports, both of these products appear to work in some cases, but not always. Before using either of these products, please check with your veterinarian.

UNUSUAL EATING HABITS (CONTINUED)

- Any time your pet goes outside, he must be on a leash with you. If you see him about to ingest some stool, interrupt him by using a squirt bottle or shake can (only for pets who are *not* afraid of loud noises), then substitute a toy to capture his interest. Praise for playing with the toy.

- Treat your pet's stools directly with an aversive taste by sprinkling them with cayenne pepper or a commercial product, such as "Bitter Apple". For this method to be effective, every stool your pet has access to must be treated in order for him to learn that eating stools results in unpleasant consequences. Otherwise, he may discriminate by odors which stools have been treated and which have not.
- The simplest solution may be to clean your yard daily in order to minimize your pet's opportunity to eat his stools. Your neighbors may also appreciate it.
- To stop a dog from eating cat feces from a litter box, install a baby gate in front of the litter box area. Your cat shouldn't have any trouble jumping over it, while most dogs won't make the attempt. Or, you could place the box in a closet or room where the door can be wedged open from both sides, so your cat has access, but your dog doesn't. Any type of environmental "booby trap" to stop a dog from eating cat feces from a litterbox must be attempted with caution because *if it frightens your dog, it's likely to frighten your cat.*

What Doesn't Work:

- Interactive punishment (punishment that comes directly from you, such as verbal scolding) is usually not effective because it may be interpreted by your pet as attention. With interactive punishment, many animals learn to refrain from the behavior when their owner is present, but still engage in the problem behavior when their owner is absent.
- Punishment after the fact is **never** helpful. Animals don't understand that they're being punished for something they did hours, minutes or even seconds before. This approach won't resolve the problem and is likely to produce either fearful or aggressive responses from your pet.

Health Risks:

If your pet is parasite-free and is eating only his own stools, he can't be infected with parasites by doing so. If your pet is eating the stools of another animal that has parasites, it may be possible, although still unlikely, for your pet to become infected. Some parasites, such as giardia, cause diarrhea, and most coprophagic dogs ingest only formed stools. There is also a delay period before the parasites in the stools can re-infect another animal.

Most parasites require intermediate hosts (they must pass through the body of another species, such as a flea) before they can re-infect another dog or cat. Thus, your pet is much more likely to become infected with parasites through fleas or by eating birds and rodents than by coprophagy. Most parasites are also species-specific, meaning that dogs cannot be infected by eating cat stool. Health risks to humans from being licked in the face by a coprophagic animal are minimal. There is still no getting around that it is unappealing! For more information, please contact your veterinarian.

Pica

Pica can be a serious problem because items such as rubber bands, socks, rocks and string can severely damage or block an animal's intestines. In some instances, the items must be

UNUSUAL EATING HABITS (CONTINUED)

surgically removed. Because pica can be potentially life-threatening, it's advisable to consult both your veterinarian and an animal behavior professional for help.

Suggested Solutions:

- Make the objects your pet is eating taste unpleasant with some of the substances mentioned above.
- Prevent your pet's access to these items.
- If your pet is food-oriented, it may be possible to change to a low-calorie or high-fiber diet to allow him to more food, more often, which may decrease the behavior. Check with your veterinarian before changing your pet's diet.
- If you suspect that anxiety of frustration is the reason for pica, the cause of the anxiety of frustration must be identified and the behavior changed by using behavior modification techniques.

- Sometimes pica is an attention-getting behavior. If this is the case, try to startle your pet with a loud noise or a spray of water when you catch him ingesting the items. If possible, avoid letting him know that the startling noise or spray came from you, and be sure to praise him when he leaves the items alone. Try to set aside 10-15 minutes twice a day to spend with your pet, so that he doesn't need to resort to pica to get your attention.
- If pica is a play behavior, keep plenty of toys around for your pet to play with. Cats, especially, tend to play with string, rubber bands and tinsel, and ultimately ingest them. Keep these items out of reach and provide a selection of appropriate toys.

What Doesn't Work:

- Interactive punishment (punishment that comes directly from you, such as verbal scolding) is usually not effective because it may be interpreted by your pet as attention. With interactive punishment, many animals learn to refrain from the behavior when their owner is present, but still engage in the problem behavior when their owner is absent.
- Punishment after the fact is NEVER helpful. Animals don't understand that they're being punished for something they did hours, minutes or even seconds before. This approach won't resolve the problem and is likely to produce either fearful or aggressive responses from your pet.

HELPING YOUR DOG OVERCOME FEAR OF THUNDER AND OTHER STARTLING NOISES

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Many dogs are frightened by the clap of thunder, the boom of firecrackers or other loud sounds. These fears may develop whether or not your pet has had traumatic experiences associated with sound. The good news is that many fear related problems can be successfully resolved. However, if left untreated, your dog's fearful behavior is likely to become a bigger problem.

The most common behavior problems associated with fear of loud noises are **destruction** and **escaping**. Did you know that most animal shelters and animal control facilities see a large increase in "stray" pets on July 5th? Fireworks, the confusion of party sounds and open doors and fence gates, provide a dangerous combination for a frightened pet. When your dog becomes frightened, he/she tries to reduce her fear. She may try to escape to a place where the sounds of thunder or firecrackers are less intense. If, by leaving the yard or going into a certain room or area of the house, the noise is diminished or she feels less afraid, the escape or destructive behavior seems to be successful to your pet because it lessens her fear. For some dogs, just the activity or physical exertion associated with one of these behaviors may be an outlet for the frantic energy associated with anxiety.

Unfortunately, escape and/or destructive behavior can be a problem for you and could also result in physical injury to your dog.

A pet who is afraid of loud noises may begin to become afraid of things that he/she may associate with that startling sound. Over time, he/she may become afraid of other things in the environment that she associates with the noise that frightens her. For example, dogs that are afraid of thunder may later become afraid of the wind, dark clouds and flashes of light that often precede the sound of thunder. Dogs that are afraid of firecrackers may become afraid of the children who have the firecrackers or may become afraid to go in the backyard, if that is where they usually hear the noise.

What You Can Do To Help

- **Create a safe place:** Remember, this must be a safe location from your pet's perspective, not yours. Notice where she goes, or tries to go, when she's frightened, and if at all possible, give her access to that place. If she's trying to get inside the house, consider installing a dog door. If she's trying to get under your bed, give her access to your bedroom. You can also create a "hiding-place" like his/her crate or a closet, that is dark, small and shielded from the frightening sound as much as possible. This might be a place where you could locate a fan or a radio that will help block out the sound. Encourage your pet to go to this special place when you are home and the thunder or other noise occurs. Feed him/her in that location and associate other "good things" happening to her there. She must be able to come and go from this location freely. Confinement in the "hiding-place" when she doesn't want to be there will only cause more problems. The "safe place" approach will only work with dogs who feel safe being still or with just slight pacing. Some dogs are motivated to move and be active when frightened and "hiding out" will not help them feel any less fearful. **Distract your Dog:** This method is most effective when your dog is just beginning to get anxious. Encourage him/her to engage in any activity that captures their attention and distracts from fearful behavior. Start when he/she is watchful and alerts you to the noise. **Immediately** try to interest your pet in a game or diversion that you know they enjoy. A game of fetch or practicing some basic obedience commands may require enough attention that your pet's level of stress can be kept at a lower level. Offer a lot of praise for paying attention to the game or the commands. As the storm or the noise builds, you may not be able to keep his/her attention on the activity, but it may delay the onset of the fearful behavior. If you are unable to keep your pet's attention and he/she begins respond with fear, stop the process. You may mistakenly reinforce the fearful behavior by continuing the game.
- **Behavior Modification:** Behavior modification techniques are often successful in reducing fears and phobias. The appropriate techniques are called "counter-conditioning" and "desensitization". This means to condition or teach your dog to respond in non-fearful ways to sounds and other stimuli that previously frightened him/her. This must be done **very gradually**. Begin by exposing your pet to a level of noise that doesn't frighten him/her and be sure you add something pleasant, like a treat or a fun game. Gradually increase the volume as you continue to offer her something pleasant. Through this process, your dog will come to associate "good things" with the previously feared sound. Remember, any noise can reach a level of unhealthy sound for humans and pets. Some caution about loud sounds makes sense.

Example:

- Make a tape with firecracker sounds on it.
- Play the tape at such a low volume that your dog does not respond fearfully. While the tape is playing, feed her dinner, give her a treat or play her favorite game.
- In your next session, play the tape a little louder while you feed her or play her favorite game.
- Continue increasing the volume through many sessions over a period of several weeks or months. If at any time while the tape is playing, she displays fearful behavior, **STOP**. Begin your next session at a lower volume – one that doesn't produce anxiety – and proceed more slowly.
- If these techniques are not used correctly, they won't be successful and may make the problem worse.
- Thunder, lightning and rain or some other groups of fears may be combined and it may be quite difficult to recreate the fear stimulus. You may need professional assistance to create and implement this kind of behavior modification program.

Consult your veterinarian: Medication may be available which can make your dog less anxious for short time periods. Your veterinarian is the only person who is licensed and qualified to prescribe medication for your dog. **Don't attempt to give your dog any over-the-counter or prescription medication without consulting your veterinarian.** Animals don't respond to drugs in the same way people do, and a medication that may be safe for humans could be fatal to your dog. Drug therapy, alone, won't reduce fears and phobias permanently, but in extreme cases, behavior modification and medication used together might be the best approach. Talk with your veterinarian about possibilities.

What Not To Do

- Attempting to reassure your dog when he/she is afraid may reinforce her fearful behavior. If you pet, soothe or give treats to her when she's behaving fearfully, she may interpret this as a reward for her fearful behavior. Instead, try to behave normally, as if you don't notice her fearfulness. The conditioning mentioned previously takes place over long periods of time and gradual increases in levels of sound or exposure to the situation your pet finds frightening. Treats or games are a distraction as you work with your pet NOT a reward for being afraid. Watch your pet carefully for his/her response.
- Putting your dog in a closed crate to prevent him/her from being destructive during a thunderstorm is not recommended. Your dog is likely to still be afraid when locked in the crate and is likely to injure herself, perhaps even severely, while attempting to get out of the crate. If your dog seeks out the crate, leave the door open and be sure your pet has a Nylabone or sturdy chew toy in the crate to ease tension with chewing.
- Don't punish your dog for being afraid. Punishment will only make him/her more fearful and may result in a response called "fear biting".

FEAR OF STORMS, ETC. (CONTINUED)

- Don't try to force your dog to experience or be close to the sound that frightens him/her. Making a dog stay close to a group of children who are lighting firecrackers will only make the dog associate the fearful sound with a fear of children. Now you have two fears to deal with and a pet that is miserable.
- Obedience classes won't make your dog less afraid of thunder or other noises, but could help boost general confidence.

These approaches don't work because they don't decrease your dog's fear. Merely trying to prevent your pet from escaping or being destructive won't work. If he/she is still afraid, your dog will continue to show that fear in whatever way possible (digging, jumping, climbing, chewing, barking, howling).

Animal Behavior Specialists

If your dog has **severe** fears and phobias and you're unable to achieve success with the techniques we've outlined here, please consult with your veterinarian and an animal behaviorist.

UNDERSTANDING AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR IN DOGS

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True aggression in dogs is meant to intimidate or harm a person or another animal. Growling, baring teeth, snarling, snapping and biting are all aggressive behaviors. Although aggressive behaviors are normal for dogs, they're generally unacceptable to humans. From a dog's perspective, there is always a reason for aggressive behavior. Because humans and dogs have different communication systems, misunderstandings occur between the two species. A person may intend to be friendly, but a dog may perceive that person's behavior as threatening or intimidating. Dogs are not "crazy" or necessarily "vicious", when displaying aggressive behavior.

Because aggression is so complex, and because the potential consequences are so serious, we recommend that you get professional in-home help from an animal behavior specialist and consult your veterinarian, if your dog is displaying aggressive behavior. But we hope the following information will be helpful as you try to understand a dog's view of the world.

Types of Aggression

Dominance Aggression: Dominance aggression is motivated by a challenge to a dog's social status or to his control of a social interaction. Dogs are social animals and view their human families as their social group or "pack". Based on the outcomes of social challenges among group members, a dominance hierarchy or "pecking order" is established.

If your dog perceives his/her own ranking in the hierarchy to be higher than yours, it's likely that you pet will challenge you in certain situations. Because people don't always understand canine communication, you may inadvertently challenge your dog's social position. A dominantly aggressive dog may growl if he is disturbed when resting or sleeping, or if he is asked to give up a favorite spot, such as the couch or the bed. Physical restraint, even when done in a friendly manner, like hugging, may also cause your dog to respond aggressively. Reaching for your dog's collar, or reaching out over his head to pet him, could also be interpreted by him as a challenge for dominance. Dominantly aggressive dogs are often described as "Jekyll and Hyde" pets because they can be very friendly when not challenged. Dominance aggression may be directed at people or at other animals. The most common reason for dogs in the same family to fight with each other is instability in the dominance hierarchy. (see our handout: "Canine Rivalry"). For a family pet, no matter what their ranking with other pets in the household, the humans, all humans, must be in charge. *This is not accomplished by punishment.* It requires leadership and knowledge. You owe it to your family and your pet to help everyone learn good obedience techniques.

Fear-Motivated Aggression: Fear-motivated aggression is a defensive reaction and occurs when a dog believes he is in danger. Remember, it is your dog's perception of the situation, not anyone else's intent, which determines your dog's response. For example, you may raise your arm to throw a ball, but your dog, perceiving this to be a threat, may bite you because he believes he is protecting himself from being hit. This does not mean your dog has been abused in the past. A dog may also be fearfully aggressive when approached by other dogs.

UNDERSTANDING AGGRESSION (CONTINUED)

Protective, Territorial And Possessive Aggression: Protective, territorial and possessive aggression are very similar. They involve the defense of valuable resources. **Territorial aggression** is usually associated with defense of property. However, your dog's sense of territory may extend well past the boundaries of "his" yard. For example, if you walk your dog regularly around the neighborhood his/her territory may be the entire block! **Protective aggression** usually refers to aggression directed toward people or animals that a dog perceives as threats to his family, or "pack". Dogs become **Possessively aggressive** when defending their food, toys or other valued objects (such as Kleenex stolen from the trash)!

Redirected Aggression: This type of aggression is relatively common, but is a behavior that pet owners may not always understand. If a dog is aroused into an aggressive response by a person or animal that he is prevented from attacking, he may redirect this aggression onto someone else. A common example occurs when two family dogs become excited, bark and growl in response to another dog passing through the front yard. The two dogs, confined behind a fence, may turn and attack each other because they can't attack the intruder. Distraction is often an effective method of dissipating this and other forms of aggression. A pet that is busy obeying your command cannot act out with aggression. See other information sheets available about "Canine Rivalry" and raising an "Educated Dog".

Predation is usually considered to be a unique kind of aggressive behavior, because it's motivated by the intent to obtain food, and not primarily by the intent to harm or intimidate.

Individual Variation

Dogs differ in their personalities and responses regarding aggressive behavior. Some dogs respond aggressively with what appears to humans to be very little stimulation. Others may be subjected to all kinds of threatening stimuli and events, and never attempt to bite. The difference in this threshold is influenced by both environmental and genetic factors. Raising the threshold using behavior modification makes a dog less likely to respond aggressively. How quickly this can occur is influenced by the dog's gender, age, breed, general temperament, and by whether the techniques are chosen and correctly implemented. *Consult a professional.*

What You Can Do

- *First* check with your veterinarian to rule out medical causes for the aggressive behavior. An animal in pain is very likely to be aggressive.
- Seek professional help. An aggression problem will not go away by itself. While it is true that puppies and adult dogs respond with variety, working with true aggression problems requires in-home help from an animal behavior specialist. See our information on Puppies "Nipping" and "Chewing" for additional clarification.
- Take precautions. Your first priority is to keep everyone safe. Supervise, confine and/or restrict your dog's activities until you can obtain professional help. You are liable for your dog's behavior. If you must take your dog out in the public, consider a cage-type muzzle as a temporary precaution, and keep in mind that some dogs can manage to remove a muzzle.
- Avoid exposing your dog to situations where he is more likely to show aggression. You may need to keep him confined to a safe room and limit his people-contact.

UNDERSTANDING AGGRESSION (CONTINUED)

- If your dog is possessive of food, treats or a certain place, don't allow him access to those items. In an emergency, bribe him with something better than what he has. For example, if he steals your shoe, trade him the shoe for a piece of chicken.
- Spay or neuter your dog. Intact dogs are more likely to display dominance, territorial and protective aggressive behavior.

What Not To Do

- Punishment won't help and, in fact, will make the problem worse. If the aggression is motivated by fear, punishment will make your dog more fearful, and therefore more aggressive. Attempting to punish or dominate a dominantly aggressive dog is likely to cause him to escalate his behavior in order to retain his dominant position. This is likely to result in a bite or a severe attack. Punishing territorial, possessive or protective aggression is likely to elicit additional defensive aggression.
- Don't encourage aggressive behavior. Playing tug-of-war or wrestling games encourages your dog to attempt to "best" you or "win" over you, which can result in the beginning of a dominance aggression problem. When dogs are encouraged to "go get'em" or to bark and dash about in response to outside noises or at the approach of a person, territorial and protective aggressive behavior may be the result.

DEALING WITH DOMINANCE IN DOGS

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What Does “Dominance” Mean?

In order to understand why your dog is acting “dominant,” it’s important to know some things about canine social systems. Animals, who live in social groups, including domestic dogs and wolves, establish a social structure called a dominance hierarchy within their group. This hierarchy serves to maintain order, reduce conflict, and promote cooperation among group members. A position within the dominance hierarchy is established by each member of the group, based on outcomes of interactions between themselves and the other pack members. The more dominant animals can control access to valued items such as food, den sites, and mates. For domestic dogs, valued items might be food, toys, sleeping or resting places, as well as attention from their owner.

In order for your home to be a safe and happy place for pets and people, it’s best that the humans in the household assume the highest positions in the dominance hierarchy. Most dogs assume a neutral or submissive role toward people, but some dogs will challenge their owners for dominance. A dominant dog may stare, bark, growl, snap, or even bite when you give him a command or ask him to give up a toy, treat, or resting place. Sometimes even hugging, petting, or grooming can be interpreted as gestures of dominance and therefore, provoke a growl or snap because of the similarity of these actions to behaviors that are displayed by dominant dogs. Nevertheless, a dominant dog may still be very affectionate and may even solicit petting and attention from you.

You May Have A Dominance Issue With Your Dog If:

- He/She resists obeying commands that he knows well.
- He/She won’t move out of your way when required.
- He/She nudges your hand, takes your arm in his mouth, or insists on being petted or played with.
- He/She defends his food bowl, toys, or objects from you.
- He/She growls or bares his teeth at you under any circumstances.
- He/She won’t let anyone give him medication or handle him.
- He/She gets up on furniture without permission and won’t get down.
- He/She snaps at you.

What To Do If You Recognize Signs Of Dominance In Your Dog

If you recognize the beginning signs of dominance aggression in your dog, you should immediately consult an animal behavior specialist. No physical punishment should be used. Getting physical with a dominant dog may cause the dog to intensify his aggression, posing the risk of injury to you. With a dog that has shown signs of dominance aggression, you should always take precautions to ensure the safety of your family and others who may encounter your dog by:

- Avoiding situations that elicit the aggressive behavior.
- During the times your dog is acting aggressively, back off and use “happy talk” to relieve the tenseness of the situation.
- Supervise, confine and/or restrict your dog’s activities as necessary, especially when children or other pets are present.
- When you’re outdoors with your dog, use a “Gentle Leader” or muzzle.
- When you’re indoors with your dog, control access to the entire house by using baby gates and/or by crating your dog.

DOMINANCE IN DOGS (CONTINUED)

Dominance aggression problems are unlikely to go away without your taking steps to resolve them. Treatment of dominance aggression problems should always be supervised by an animal behavior specialist, since dominant aggressive dogs can be potentially dangerous. The following techniques (which don't require confrontation with your dog) can help you gain some control:

- Spay or neuter your dog to reduce hormonal contributions to aggression. NOTE: After a mature animal has been spayed or neutered, it may take time for those hormones to clear from the system. Also, long-standing behavior patterns may continue even after the hormones or other causes no longer exist.
- "Nothing in Life is Free" is a safe, non-confrontational way to establish your leadership and requires your dog to work for everything he gets from you (see our handout: "Nothing in Life is Free"). Have your dog obey at least one command (such as "sit") before you pet him, give him dinner, put on his leash or throw a toy for him. If your dog doesn't know any commands or doesn't perform them reliably, you'll first have to teach him, using positive reinforcement, and practice with him daily. You may need to seek professional help if your dog is not obeying each time you ask and after two to three weeks of working on a command.
- Don't feed your dog people food from the table and don't allow begging.
- Don't play "tug of war," wrestle, or play rough with your dog.
- Ignore barking and jumping up.
- Don't allow your dog on the furniture or on the bed, as this is a privilege reserved for leaders. If your dog growls or snaps when you try to remove him/her from the furniture, use a treat to lure him off. Otherwise, try to limit his/her access to your bed and/or furniture by using baby gates, a crate, or by closing doors.
- Always remember to reward good behavior.
- Consult a veterinarian about acupuncture, massage therapy, or drug therapy.
- Obedience classes may be helpful in establishing a relationship between you and your dog in which you give commands and he/she obeys them, (be sure to use a trainer who uses positive reinforcement methods). Obedience classes alone, however, won't necessarily prevent or reduce dominance aggression.

A Note About Children And Dogs

From your dog's point of view, children too, have a place in the dominance hierarchy. Because children are smaller and get down on the dog's level to play, dogs often consider them to be playmates, rather than superiors. Small children and dogs should not be left alone together without adult supervision. Older children should be taught how to play and interact appropriately and safely with dogs; however, no child should be left alone with a dog who has signs of aggression.

INTRODUCING YOUR NEW DOG TO YOUR RESIDENT DOG

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Animals that live in groups, like dogs, establish a social structure within the group called a *dominance hierarchy*. This dominance hierarchy serves to maintain order, reduce conflict and promote cooperation among pack members. Dogs also establish territories, which they may defend against intruders or rivals. This social and territorial nature affects their behavior when a new dog is introduced to their household.

Introduction techniques

- **Choose A Neutral Location:** We recommend you introduce your dogs in a neutral location like a fenced park. Your resident dog is less likely to view the newcomer as a territorial intruder if the space does not “belong” to either of them. Each dog should be handled by a separate person. Be sure your resident dog is handled by someone that is recognized as a member of your group, either a close friend or family member. Just a reminder, if you frequently walk your resident dog in a park near your house, he/she may view that park as within their territory, so choose another site that is less familiar.
- **Use Positive Reinforcement:** From the first meeting, you want both dogs to expect “good things” to happen when they’re in each other’s presence. Let them sniff each other for a brief time. This is normal canine greeting behavior. As they meet, talk to them in a calm but happy tone of voice – never use a threatening or warning tone of voice. Do not allow them to investigate and sniff each other for a prolonged time. If either dog appears to become impatient, end the sniffing encounter by distraction. After a short time, get both dogs’ attention, and give each dog a treat in return for obeying a simple command, such as “sit” or “stay”. Take the dogs for a walk and let them sniff and investigate each other at intervals during this distracting activity. Continue with the “happy talk”, food rewards and simple commands. If you meet another dog along your walk, be aware of *redirected aggression*, the name for a form of aggression that is caused by one encounter but directed to whoever is closest—even humans. Such tension can be distracted and relieved by requesting commands be obeyed and a calm, slow gift of reward, either treat or praise. Be sure the reward is not given until the behavior has been modified!
- **Be Aware Of Body Postures:** One body posture that indicates a good beginning is a “play-bow”. One dog will crouch with his/her front legs on the ground and her tail and hind quarters in the air. This is an invitation to play that usually elicits friendly behavior from the other dog. Watch carefully for body postures that indicate an aggressive response, including hair standing up on the other dog’s back, teeth-baring, deep growls, a stiff legged gait or a prolonged stare. If you see such postures, interrupt the interaction immediately by calmly and positively getting each dog interested in something else. Handlers can call their dogs name, have them sit or lie down, and reward each with a treat. The dogs will become interested in the treats which will prevent the situation from escalating into aggression. Try again for a shorter time and with greater distance from each other.
- **Taking The Dogs Home:** When the dogs seem to be tolerating each other’s presence without fearful or aggressive responses, and the investigative greeting behaviors have tapered off, you can take them home. Whether you choose to take them in the same, or different vehicles, will depend on their size, how well they ride in the car, how trouble-free the initial introduction has been, and how many dogs are involved.
- **Multiple Dog Households:** If you have more than one resident dog in your household, it may be best to introduce the resident dogs to the new dog one at a time. Two or more resident dogs may have a tendency to “gang up” on the newcomer.

INTRODUCING YOUR DOGS (CONTINUED)

It takes time for this introduction process, but your investment now will save you heartache and hard times ahead!

Introducing Puppies to Adult Dogs

Puppies should not be left unmonitored with your resident adult dog for several weeks. Puppies usually harass adult dogs unmercifully. Before the age of four or five months, puppies may not recognize subtle body postures from adult dogs signaling that they've had enough. A healthy, well-socialized adult dog with good temperament may set limits with puppies by a growl or snarl. These behaviors are normal and should be allowed. Adult dogs that aren't well-socialized, or that have a history of fighting with other dogs, may attempt to set limits with more aggressive behaviors, such as snarls with hair raised on the neck and/or tail area or even biting, which could harm the puppy. A puppy should not be left alone with an adult dog until you're confident the puppy isn't in any danger. Be sure to give the adult dog some quiet time *away from the puppy*, and remember to offer your older resident dog attention and treats of food or praise for tolerance and good behavior.

When to Get Help

If the introduction of a new dog to a household doesn't go smoothly, contact your veterinarian or animal shelter to obtain the name of a professional animal behaviorist immediately. Dogs can be severely injured in fights, and the longer the problem continues, the harder it can be to resolve. Conflicts between dogs in the same family are often resolved with professional help. Punishment won't work and could make things worse. You have made the commitment to include your pet as a part of your family and just like any new friend; it will take time for all the family, resident pets and people, to develop a relationship with the "new kid".

CANINE RIVALRY

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What is Canine Rivalry?

Canine rivalry refers to competition and repeated conflicts between dogs that live together. Animals that live in social groups establish a social structure within the group called a dominance hierarchy. This arrangement normally serves to maintain order, reduce conflict and promote cooperation among group members. Some people refer to this as the “pack” mentality. Conflicts arise between household dogs when there is instability in the hierarchy. That means the ranking or social position of each dog is not clear or is in contention. Initially, dogs may only snarl, growl or snap without injuring each other. Sometimes, however, the conflict may intensify into prolonged bouts of dangerous fighting which may result in one or both dogs being injured and may be dangerous to humans who try to settle the dispute. Among animals under stress and fighting, there is an action called “redirected aggression”. The animal takes the anger it has toward another animal and turns it on whoever is closest...sometimes their human family. Unmonitored canine rivalry is not acceptable within the animal group or within the family of humans.

When to Get Professional Help?

Ongoing canine rivalry is potentially dangerous. Every group has the occasional argument, human and animal. Most often these moments pass with an effort to “make-up” and everyone settles into a pattern of family life. But when a conflict causes injury or never seems to really be settled, occurring day after day, it is time to ask for some advice. Because resolving rivalry problems requires managing the dogs’ somewhat complex social behaviors, it is often necessary for owners to obtain assistance from a professional animal behaviorist or veterinarian or animal shelter counselor. These individuals have experience and training to observe, interpret and modify animal behavior. Your veterinarian is able to rule out any physical illness or injury as a cause for poor temperament. These professionals can be of great help.

Why Does the Conflict Occur?

Remember, conflicts between household dogs usually develop when the ranking of each dog is not clear or there is competition. The rank is not established by gender. There are dominant males and dominant females. Check the following list to recognize some possible causes:

- Do you attempt to treat both dogs equally, rather than supporting the dominant dog's position? Obviously, we are not suggesting unkind behavior. But, if you do not acknowledge dominance, you actually make things worse. Be careful not to interrupt or interfere with the dominant dog's ability to control the preferred items (food, toys, beds, attention) in his/her environment, by giving preferential treatment to the subordinate dog(s). You may find you do this through comforting sounds or trying to give treats secretly to the subordinate dog(s), or being more demanding of the behavior of the dominant dog.
- Do you prevent the dogs from expressing the signals and ritualized behaviors that establish dominance? They can communicate with each other through ears, postures and sounds. Try to let them work it out and then abide by the structure as long as it is not violent and

CANINE RIVALRY (CONTINUED)

- falls within the rules of your family. But it helps to remember that these good furry friends are unique creatures and do not live with quite the same manners humans have learned to appreciate.
- Has a new animal has been introduced into the house?
- Has a resident animal died or moved somewhere else?
- Has a former resident animal returned after an absence?
- Has a young, subordinate dog reached social maturity (usually between ten months and two years of age)? It will take some adjustment for everyone to accommodate this “teen”.
- Has the once dominant dog aged to the point of becoming less able to maintain his/her dominant status?

Understanding Dominance Behavior and Social Structure

You cannot choose which dog will be dominant. The dogs will establish this between themselves. Your attempt to interfere may result in increasing the conflict.

- How do you know which dog is dominant? Individual personalities, as well as breed characteristics, are important factors. The dog that demands to be fed first, petted first and through the door first is usually the dominant dog. Remember that the rankings may be different in different contexts (one dog may control food, while another may control resting places), and they may change over time. You will never be able to second guess the structure of the group, but you will get to know which dog is in charge of what...for the moment!
- How is dominance established? Dogs usually establish their dominance hierarchies through a series of ritualized behaviors that include body postures and vocalizations that don't result in injury. One dog may "stand over" another by placing his paws or neck on the shoulders of the other. One may submit to another by lying down and rolling over on his/her back. However, because of past experiences, inadequate socialization or genetic temperament, some dogs may, with very little warning, escalate dominance displays into true aggression. If this occurs, contact your veterinarian for a referral to a professional animal behaviorist.

How Can I Help to Solve Rivalry Problems?

- If the dogs involved are intact males or females, spay or neuter both dogs. All dogs from APA of MO are spayed or neutered before adoption from the shelter. NO exceptions.
- Determine which dog is in charge. Remember, this ranking is based on the behavior of the dogs, and not the ranking you prefer. Who eats first? Who seems to be in charge of toys? Who comes to greet you first? That dog is dominant over that activity.
- Support the dominance hierarchy. You need to support whatever dominance hierarchy or "pecking order" your dogs establish for themselves. Don't undermine their hierarchy by attempting to treat them equally or by preventing the dominant dog from asserting his position. However, it is important to maintain YOUR top position within the group. All humans must come first, no matter what their age or size. This may require some training. Obedience classes are a great way to start! They also help the humans in the house to learn to speak the same language so the dogs can truly understand what is being asked of them. Everyone should mean the same thing when they say "down" or "sit" or "off". You may find our information sheet, "Nothing in Life is Free" helpful.

CANINE RIVALRY (CONTINUED)

- Never, under any circumstances, attempt to break up a fight between dogs, by grabbing their collars or inserting any of your body parts between them. If you feel you must break up a fight between dogs, do so by squirting them with a hose (outdoors), or squirting them with a vinegar/water mixture from a squirt bottle (indoors).
- Take advantage of the knowledge around you! Ask your veterinarian, your animal shelter, or a behaviorist, for help with methods to address your own specific needs.
- Please remember, if you respond to this type of problem inappropriately, you run the risk of intensifying the problem and potentially causing injury to yourself and/or your dogs.

Punishment will not solve the problem

We encourage you to seek assistance from your veterinarian regarding: spaying and neutering your pet; evaluating the health status of your dogs; and for a referral to a professional animal behaviorist. Rivalry and fighting problems can usually be resolved so that you and your dogs can live together in peace. Punishment can actually make the problem worse. But a little training can make moderate canine rivalry an interesting part of living with dogs, not a dangerous problem. Get smart yourself and you will help your family and your pets!

PREPARING YOUR PET FOR BABY'S ARRIVAL

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Helping your pet adjust to the arrival of a new baby is much like preparing a young child for the same event. Handling your pet's curiosity, anxiety and increased insistence for attention may seem like an overwhelming task, in addition to preparing yourself and your household for the baby's arrival. You can, however, help your pet adjust to the big changes ahead with minimal time and effort by making gradual adjustments to your lifestyle before the baby arrives.

Sounds and Smells

Your pet is very sensitive to sounds and smells and uses these special abilities to gather information. From your pet's point of view, you and your home have specific identifying smells that are uniquely yours. There are also certain sounds that your pet considers "normal" for your household. Even the different tones of voice you use send important signals. Your baby won't actually change those scents and sounds that are part of your identity, but the baby's arrival will certainly add some new and very different ones. It's important that you introduce these new smells and sounds to your pet gradually in a calm and pleasant atmosphere. Each time you introduce something new to your pet, make sure the experience is positive. Stroke him/her, give treats and praise good behavior when he/she is faced with a new sound or smell. Relax. If you act anxious, your pet will be anxious too. This is great practice for staying calm with your baby as well!

In order to prepare your pet for the new baby, borrow some baby sounds and smells. Visit a friend's baby or a nursery and make a tape recording of baby sounds like gurgling, laughing, screaming, crying and kicking. Start out with the volume turned fairly low and if your pet doesn't react strongly to the sounds, gradually increase the volume to a normal level. As you play the tape, look at your pet and speak calmly, using your pet's name. Smile! It adds a special tone to your voice that helps your pet relax. Repeat these sessions daily until the baby's arrival.

Handle a baby and absorb some of the smells of baby lotion, powder and food. Go directly home and spend some positive, relaxed time with your pet. Give him/her a massage or play with him while the baby smells mingle with your own odors and you play the recorded baby sounds. After a week or so, add the actual sources of the odors to the sound-and-smell sessions with the supplies you'll be using for your own baby. Think about your pet's perspective. How does a baby bottle smell when it's freshly sterilized? When it's dirty? Borrow a dirty diaper and let your pet become accustomed to that smell, too.

Borrow a baby! After a few weeks, combine baby sounds and smells (which should be familiar to your pet by now) with the bustle and attention of a visiting baby. This is an excellent "dress rehearsal" for the extra visitors and attention you and your baby will receive during the first few weeks after delivery.

Pets tend to feel alarmed and defensive when faced with unexpected sounds. Take a little time to become familiar with the "normal" sounds of your household. Is your home normally quiet, with little background noise? If so, how does your pet react to "extra" sounds like a

INTRODUCING BABY (CONTINUED)

vacuum cleaner, a ringing telephone or a whistling teakettle? If your home is normally noisy, your pet may simply sleep through the usual sounds, but how does he react when something unusual occurs? The more strongly your pet reacts to unexpected sounds, the more important it is for you to help him adjust to the "baby sounds" which will become a regular part of your home environment.

Try to recognize what smells are prominent in your home, including your own personal scent. Your home has its own mixture of smells that makes it feel familiar and safe – cleaning products, kitchen odors, even dust. Also be aware of the products you use that help create your own individual scent, such as soaps, hair care products, toothpaste, deodorant, laundry detergent and cologne. Any new smells should be added gradually, layered on over a period of weeks. Be aware of the effect these changes have on your pet. While you do this, try to keep one part of your home smelling “right” for your pet.

After you bring your baby home, be aware of the ways you use your voice. Do you only speak to your pet with negative tones when the baby’s in the room (“no”, “off”, “don’t”, “stop”)? If so, your pet will certainly connect unhappy feelings with the baby’s presence. While you hold your baby, smile at your pet and use his name. Your baby won’t mind. Give your pet a small treat when the baby is fed to distract your pet from the smell of the baby’s food. Make time with the baby a pleasant time for your pet as well.

Environment

If you will be redecorating or rearranging your home, do it long before the baby arrives. With your supervision, let your pet explore any off-limits areas, then exclude him from these areas *before* the baby arrives. Screen doors are excellent, inexpensive barriers for off-limits areas like the baby’s room. Your pet can still see, smell and hear all the action and so can you. If an off-limits room has been a favorite area for your pet, this will be a major change for him. Move his favorite things from that room into another area, if possible in the same arrangement.

To boost your pet’s confidence, establish a private, comfortable place that your pet can use as a safe retreat. Select an area you can close off, if necessary. The “safe-zone” should include a water bowl; a nest composed of a soft towel or you pet’s bed and some worn, unwashed clothing with your smell on it. If your pet is a cat, you should include a litter box in this area also.

Your pet can choose to retreat here, or you can choose to confine him to this “safe zone” when things get extra hectic. Spend some positive time with your pet in this area every day, and if he must be confined for an hour or so, it must not seem like punishment. If you are considering crate training and the crate as a safety zone, you **MUST** do this *before* baby’s arrival. During the transition, respect your pet’s need for rest and privacy. This will become especially important when your baby reaches the crawling stage. In addition to a “safe-zone”, cats should also have access to plenty of escape routes, hiding places and perches.

Routine

Routine is important to pets because they need to know what to expect. Think ahead and gradually begin establishing new routines. Include in your adjusted schedule, at least once a day, quality time for you and your pet, with no competition for your attention. This “non-baby” time is very important for your pet and for you!

INTRODUCING BABY (CONTINUED)

Some of the changes in your post-baby routine won’t be permanent, like getting up at all hours of the night. Help your pet handle temporary schedule adjustments by ignoring any extra attention-getting ploys used at those times.

Try to get back to your normal routines as soon as possible.

Social Order

The first priority for an animal faced with a new family member is to determine who will be top dog (or cat) in the relationship. Dogs and cats live by an unwritten code of ranking in their relationships. For most dogs and cats, it isn’t really important which one comes out on top, only that the rank be decided.)

Whether you have one pet or several, your own position in the family’s social order should be clear – you must *always* be the top-ranking animal in your family. This will be especially important as your baby’s arrival

approaches. When your position as leader of the family is secure and it's clear that the baby belongs to you, your pet should not challenge the baby's important rank in your home.

If your pet is very protective of you or your home, is a little pushy about food and toys, has been known to behave aggressively toward other animals and/or challenges your rank as a leader, then you probably have a dominant pet. In this situation, it's especially important that family rank and household rules be firmly established before your baby's arrival. You may need to seek the help of an animal behavior specialist.

Reinforce house rules and manners to remind your pet that you are the leader in your family (see our information sheet "Nothing in Life is Free"). If your pet hasn't learned basic manners or obedience commands, now is the time to start. It can become a very special time for you and your dog during this "waiting for baby" time. Train your dog to sit and lie down on command. This physical control will be especially important when your arms are filled with your baby and various baby paraphernalia.

Be sure that your pet understands when, if ever, jumping onto people or things is appropriate. If cats have always had access to any surface in your home (counters, tables and so forth) you need to decide which places will be off-limits after the baby's arrival. Start training your pet now to discourage him from jumping onto those places. Be sure to allow your cat access to some high-up places in your home. Dogs should only be allowed to jump when specific permission is given.

If your pet likes to spend time in your lap, teach him/her to ask permission before jumping up. Teach your pet that your voice, your look and your presence are also positive forms of attention –you don't always need to touch him to show affection. You can do this simply by talking calmly and pleasantly to your pet as he lies or sits nicely at your feet. Use his name, smile and make eye contact with him. When he/she tries to move onto your lap, stop the praise. As this is repeated they will learn to wait for the tone, look and action that indicate permission.

Insist on good manners. Don't accept any whining, growling or pushy behavior in an attempt to gain attention. Give your pet plenty of time and attention whenever you can, but not when he or she has demanded it!

Plan short periods of play time, treat time and snuggle time with your pet – with and without your baby in the room. Meals should be eaten in the same room and at the same time whenever possible.

Whenever anything inappropriate is in your pet's mouth, offer him a treat as "trade" for the object, say "drop it" and when he takes the treat praise him enthusiastically and offer him a toy that he's allowed to have. If you don't want it in your pet's mouth, don't leave it on the floor. Pets often simply cannot determine a baby toy from a pet toy.

Encourage a positive relationship between your baby and your "furry child" by involving them in activities you can all enjoy. Settle into your favorite chair by a sunny window, with your baby in your lap and your cat on a table beside you, so you can stroke them both at the same time! Walk with your baby in a stroller and your dog on a leash, just like you did before the baby came, but with this nice addition. (Be sure to practice with an additional caretaker for the first few times.) Share mealtimes, and when your baby gets a treat or a toy, be sure your pet has something nice to hold, chew or enjoy, too.

It can be a joyful and wondrous experience to watch two cherished members of your family grow and learn together. They both need your love and guidance to understand how your family "works".

WHY DOGS BITE: INFORMATION FOR CHILDREN AND THOSE WHO CARE FOR CHILDREN

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Dogs have limited ways to express themselves. They cannot “fight” or protect themselves with their “hands”. They use their mouths. That is how they are made. It is important for humans to learn why dogs might feel they need to bite. You can be safe and enjoy having a dog for a friend if you know more about what makes them act the way they do.

Excitement

The noises and movements you make when you play are very exciting to dogs. When dogs play with other dogs, they often play roughly with their sharp teeth and claws. Sometimes dogs forget that they can't play the same way with you, and because they don't have hands, they use their mouths to grab things. A dog can get hurt or hurt you by accident, just by being too excited.

What you should do: Play gently and calmly. If a dog gets too excited, freeze and walk away. Take some time out to give you both a chance to calm down.

Pain or Sickness

When a dog is in pain, he doesn't understand where the pain comes from. If you touch him, he may think you are causing the pain and will bite you to stop the pain.

What you should do: If a dog is “grumbling” or his hair is standing on end by his neck and/or tail, or acting like he is sick or hurt, leave him alone – even if he belongs to your family. Tell an adult, and together you can get medical help for the dog.

Anger

A dog will protect anything that's important to him: Toys (and remember a dog's toys may include sticks or other things you may not consider “toys”); his bed; his food and water bowls; his people; his yard; his house; or even his car. If you come near something that a dog feels is off-limits to you, he may bite to make you leave his “property” alone.

What you should (or should not) do: Don't go into a yard where there's a dog you don't know. Don't reach through a car window or fence to pet a dog. Don't pet a dog that's tied up. Don't wake a sleeping dog or touch a dog's “property”.

Fear or Surprise

Quick movements and sudden or loud noises are scary for dogs, and they may bite to protect themselves. If a dog thinks you're a stranger who might hurt him, he may not know how to get away, so he'll protect himself by biting.

What you should do: When you're around a dog you don't know, be quiet and move slowly. Always *ask* a dog's owner for permission before you pet him. If the owner isn't there for you to ask, **LEAVE THE DOG ALONE.**

WHY DOGS BITE (CONTINUED)

Warning Signs

Watch and listen for the warnings. A dog will let you know when he is upset. If his ears are laid back against his head, or his legs are very stiff, he is probably warning you that he feels threatened and will protect himself if he must. If the hair on his back is standing up, that's another warning. If a dog is growling or barking with his teeth showing, it means he is ready to bite. A dog's warning signs mean that you're doing something he doesn't like, so stop doing it!

What you should do:

- Freeze
- Count to five, slowly and silently.
- Move away very slowly, sideways or backwards.
- If the dog jumps on you, act like a rock by curling into a ball and covering your face and head with your arms.

What you should NOT do:

- Don't stare at the dog – that means “I dare you to bite me!”
- Don't run, jump or wave your arms around.
- Don't scream.
- Don't throw anything at the dog or hit him.

If A Dog Bites You

If you are bitten by a dog, or any animal, you should:

- Have an adult take you to a doctor.
- Wash the wound with soap and warm water.
- Write down the type, size and color of the animal. Was it wearing a collar? Did it have any tags on its collar? Where were you when you were bitten? Where did the animal go?
- Report all of this information to the animal control agency in your city or county.

MOVING WITH YOUR PET

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A common reason people give when surrendering a pet to our shelter is “moving”. Recognizing there may be exceptional circumstances, we remain hopeful you will consider your pet a true member of the family and not surrender unless there are no other choices. However, moving to a new home can be just as stressful on your pet as it is on you. Here are a few tips to help you and your pet through a “change of address”.

- Update your pet’s vaccinations at least three weeks before the move. Talk with your veterinarian to determine if your pet will need medication for nervousness or car sickness.
- Gather the supplies your pet will need during the move – food, water, medications, medical records, beds and toys. It also helps to bring along some of your dirty laundry because the familiar scent of these belongings is comforting to your pet and will help them travel and settle in.
- Keep your pet away from the moving-day activity. Confine him/her to a room where they feel safe and be aware that your pet could become frightened and bolt out the door unnoticed. It’s difficult to pack, move furniture, and keep an eye on your pet at the same time. You might consider a friendly place where your pet can stay during the packing and moving, like a neighbor, friend or already visited boarding kennel. As much as possible, try not to disrupt your pet’s daily routine.
- Be sure your dog or cat has a tag with your new phone number or the number of a friend so there will be someone to contact if your pet gets lost during the move. Microchipping is also helpful, but does not take the place of a tag.
- Move small animals, like birds and hamsters in their cages, covered with a lightweight fabric. Remove water and any other objects that might loosen and injure them. You must keep the temperature constant for these small friends to survive.
- Unpack and settle in a bit before turning your pet loose at the new place. Keep the doors to your extra rooms closed and slowly give your pet access to them as they become accustomed to their new home.
- Orient your dog or cat to the new surroundings. IF possible, try to place their favorite resting place (dog bed, chair or cushion) in the same position or area, as it was in your old home. Put their food and water bowls and toys in familiar places as well.
- Be vigilant in your new surroundings for dangerous openings, sharp items and the potential for darting out a door into trouble.
- Before you allow your pet (and we do NOT encourage cats to live outdoors), into your yard, check for any gaps in fencing, sharp or dangerous items or potential climbing and escaping opportunities.
- If you have a dog, walk him/her around the house, the yard and the block. If you have a cat. Sit quietly and pet her, preferably while sitting in a familiar chair. Provide a place for your cat to hide (she’ll do this anyway). Make sure she’s eating, drinking and using her litter box.
- Be patient, loving and reassuring with your pet, and they will adjust to the sights, sounds and smells of their new home.