



## HOW CAN I STOP MY DOG FROM CHEWING?

Puppies commonly chew up to the age of 18 months. Grown dogs chew as a way to explore their world. Rather than eliminating chewing, try to redirect it toward safe, appropriate objects. To limit destructive chewing:

- Ensure that your dog is getting adequate exercise and play. If you lack the time to exercise your dog appropriately, his energy will be funnelled destructively.
- If you catch your dog in the act, interrupt the chewing with a loud noise and offer an acceptable toy. When your dog takes the toy, offer praise and a treat.
- If you suspect your dog is chewing due to separation anxiety or fear, consult with a reputable animal behaviour specialist or a trainer.

## WHAT IF, DESPITE ALL EFFORTS, MY DOG'S BEHAVIOUR IS TOO DIFFICULT?

Giving up an animal is never easy for the owner or the pet. If, despite your best efforts, your dog's difficult behaviour continues, consult a trainer to discuss new strategies. If that doesn't work, try to find a caring and responsible new home, or surrender your pet to our shelter. We will do our best to find your former companion the happy, healthy home he deserves.



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# The Challenging Dog

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Dogs can engage in a range of challenging behaviours — including barking, chewing and escaping — but with a little training and plenty of exercise, most difficult behaviours can improve.

## WHAT IS CONSIDERED CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR IN A DOG?

Much behaviour that is considered challenging or difficult, like barking or chewing, is normal dog behaviour. It's only when such behaviour becomes excessive, or directed toward objects we value, that it can rightly be called difficult. Challenging dog behaviour includes things like:

- Barking
- Chewing
- Digging
- Jumping
- House soiling
- Stealing (food, objects)
- Escaping

## WHY IS MY DOG DIFFICULT?

Reasons vary, but boredom, isolation and lack of exercise are frequent causes of undesirable behaviour. All dogs need exercise, both mental and physical, to stay healthy and happy. Other common reasons for difficult behaviour are fear or separation anxiety.

## WHAT CAN I DO IF MY DOG IS BORED?

- Play with your dog daily — try playing fetch in the back-yard!
- Visit dog-friendly parks to allow your dog to interact and play with other dogs.
- Spend at least a half-hour each day walking your dog. Allow time for sniffing and exploring.
- Increase your dog's mental stimulation every day by teaching commands and tricks.
- Take a dog training course. It will increase bonding and stimulate your dog.

- If your dog is left alone a lot, have a trusted friend, relative or hired dogwalker walk and play with him. Even a half-hour visit in midday will be a welcome diversion.
- Provide your dog with plenty of appropriate toys. When you introduce a new toy, watch carefully to make sure your dog doesn't tear it up and eat the pieces. Try challenging toys, such as nylon bones and Kong™ toys filled with treats, to keep your dog occupied.
- Rotate the toys periodically to keep your dog's interest fresh.

## MY DOG'S BEHAVIOUR IS WORSE WHEN HE'S AFRAID. WHAT CAN I DO?

Sometimes dogs engage in challenging behaviour, like barking or chewing, when they are exposed to something they fear, such as loud noises.

If you think your dog is acting out due to fear:

- Find out where your dog goes when he's anxious. Allow constant access to that space, or create a similar space your dog can retreat to when he's frightened. Try to limit exposure to the "fear trigger."
- If the fear is excessive, talk to your veterinarian. Your dog may benefit from anti-anxiety medication or the help of a professional trainer.

## MY DOG HAS PROBLEMS WHEN I'M AWAY. WHAT CAN I DO ABOUT SEPARATION ANXIETY?

Dogs with separation anxiety have difficulty separating from their primary human. Typically, they will engage in difficult behaviour — such as chewing, scratching or howling — within 20 to 45 minutes after having been left. If your dog has separation anxiety:

- Keep your arrivals and departures low key.
- Leave your dog a reassuring object, such as an old piece of clothing with your scent.

- Develop a safety cue that will let your dog know you'll be coming back. Common cues are playing the radio or television, or providing access to a special toy while you're away.
- Often another dog will help your anxious dog feel more secure; however, if you're contemplating another dog, talk to a behaviour specialist, or trainer.
- If your dog is extremely anxious, consult your veterinarian. Dogs with severe separation anxiety can harm themselves or their home.

## HOW CAN I CORRECT DESTRUCTIVE BEHAVIOUR?

The appropriate correction depends on the particular behaviour. However, no matter what sort of difficult behaviour your dog is engaging in:

- Ensure that your dog is getting adequate exercise.
- Reward positive behaviour with praise and treats.
- Don't expect to totally eliminate the behaviour. Try to control, manage or redirect it.
- Crate train your dog to create a safe environment for him. Crate training ensures that your dog and your belongings are safe when you're absent.
- Never punish a dog unless you catch him in the act. The dog will not understand otherwise, and it may make the problem worse.

## HOW CAN I STOP MY DOG FROM BARKING SO MUCH?

Excessive barking can be an annoyance for your neighbours as well as your family. Here are a few tips that could help:

- Ensure that your dog is getting adequate exercise.
- Teach a "quiet" command by allowing one or two barks, then saying "quiet" while shaking a can of coins to distract your dog. While your dog is quiet, offer praise and a treat or toy.
- If your dog barks at perceived intruders, such as the mail carrier, desensitize your dog by having someone walk by the yard. Offer treats and praise as quiet behaviour continues and the person comes closer.