



Peninsula Humane Society & SPCA

Is Your Dog an Escape Artist?

Cause

Dogs often try to escape because they don't like their confinement area or they would rather be somewhere else. Be sensitive to your dog's needs. What is it about the confinement area that she doesn't like? Is she frightened of anything in it? Is there nothing to do in there, and she is lonely, bored or frustrated? Don't allow the confinement area to be a prison for your dog. Make it a fun, secure, and enjoyable place. Spend time there with your dog. Don't just toss her in and ignore her. Build her confidence that this is not an unpleasant holding tank. Your dog will probably sleep contentedly all day while you're gone if you give her plenty of opportunity for walks, runs, playing with other dogs, training, and games with you.

Male dogs often try to escape because they like to roam. Many times this behavior is eliminated completely by castrating the dog. Your dog should be neutered for several reasons, including his health and safety as well as population control.

Treatment

One of the best things you can do for a dog that is confined to a yard is to provide him with a digging pit. It will keep him entertained for hours. See information in the pamphlet on *Digging* for instructions on providing a digging pit.

Most escapes are attempts to go over, under, or through fences. You can boundarytrain your dog (see *Digging* pamphlet), make the fence escape-proof, or temporarily boobytrap the fence. An easy way to boobytrap is to tie a few balloons either to the top or along the bottom of the fence. When the dog claws at it, the sudden burst of air and noise of the popping balloon will keep the dog away from the rest of the balloons - and the fence.

If your dog is trying to escape by bolting through the front door each time it is opened, she needs to be taught to sit-stay. Enroll her in an obedience-training class right away if necessary. Each time, before the door is opened, instruct the dog to sit and stay. Another technique is to very carefully (do not hurt the dog) but suddenly slam the door shut in front of the dog's face as she tries to exit. The loud noise and sudden appearance of a barrier will convince her that dashing out the door is not a good idea.

For more info, call our free Behavior Helpline (650/340-7022 x783 or, for Spanish, x786) or consider a low-cost consultation. To make a consultation appointment, call 650/340-7022 x667. The PHS/SPCA Behavior Department, like many shelter programs, is funded by donations.