

## Escape Behavior in Dogs

**Why does my dog keep escaping?** Determining your dog's motivation behind escaping is the first step toward addressing the behavior. Common motivations include:

***Social Isolation or Frustration:*** Boredom is a common motivator for escape behavior. Ensure your dog receives plenty of physical exercise, social interaction with you, and a variety of everyday [Enrichment](#) items to lessen their motivation to escape.

***Fears and Phobias:*** Fearful dogs are an increased flight risk as they are easily startled. Loud noises such as thunder, fireworks, or construction can trigger that flight risk. Be sure to bring your dog inside during these noisy events.

***Separation Distress:*** Some dogs struggle with being left alone and will escape in an attempt to seek out their family. Set up a long-term confinement space such as a dog-proofed room with a bed, water bowl, chew toy, and feeder toy for times where your dog will be left home alone.

***Roaming Behavior:*** Intact male dogs are driven by their hormones to seek out female dogs. Neutering your dog sooner rather than later is the best way to address this motivation.

### Manage Escape Behavior

To lessen the likelihood of escape behavior, avoid leaving your pet unmonitored outside for extended periods of time. Train a [Reliable Recall Cue](#) so your dog comes consistently when called, and consider modifying your yard to address your dog's method of escape.

***Fence Diggers:*** Attach a skirt of chicken wire to the base of your fence, extend it at least two feet into your yard, and cover the chicken wire with rocks or ground cover. Another option would be to line the interior perimeter of your fence with heavy objects such as railroad ties and cinder blocks.

***Fence Jumpers and Climbers:*** Make sure your fence is tall enough to deter jumping. Six foot fences are capable of keeping a majority of average sized-dogs contained. If extending the height of your fence is not an option, consider adding coyote rollers to the top of your fence or adding a 45-degree inward-tilting fence topper. Chain link fences are easier to climb than vertical plank fences. To lessen the likelihood of fence climbing, consider attaching vertical wooden planks or paneling to the interior portion of your fence.

**Training Tip #1:** If your dog escapes, avoid chasing them. Coax your dog back to you with a cheerful voice and their favorite treats and toys, then reward them for returning.

**Training Tip #2:** If your dog is continuing to escape, consult a qualified, reward-based trainer or contact our Behavior Helpline at (505)983-4309 ext 1251 for tips and next steps.

For more resources, check out <https://sfhumanesociety.org/behavior-library/>

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