

ESCAPE BEHAVIOR

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pasadenahumane.org/behavior.

Typically, a dog develops escape behavior if they do not receive enough entertainment and enrichment inside their home. They will escape to find things they enjoy, such as food, animals to chase, people to interact with, or other ways to have fun! Escape behavior can be very easy to manage with a little extra effort. Follow these guidelines to keep your dog safe at home:

Yard Check: If your property has a yard, ensure a secure fence completely enclosing the area. Walk along the entire fence to check for holes or any broken equipment and fix these issues before introducing the dog to the yard. Never leave the dog outside without supervision. Check that your fencing is secure on a regular basis.

Leash Up: Always keep your dog on a leash when outside. The dog should wear a limited-slip collar, such as a martingale, so they cannot slip out of the collar. You may choose to leave the leash on your dog even while in the house. It is okay to let them drag the leash when the front door is likely to be opened, when you first introduce them to your home and when you are outside in a fenced area.

Secure Doors & Windows: Be sure all doors and windows are secure and can be locked in your home. Whenever you are home with the dog, make a habit of securing everything so the dog cannot slip out of a door or window.

Training: Teach your dog a sit and sustained stay when people walk in and out the door. Make sure the whole family is on board. Start with your dog on a leash as someone practices walking into or out of the house. Use treats to keep the dog focused on you and have them sit and stay. As they get more comfortable focusing on you instead of the door, you can eventually graduate to practicing sits and stays while the leash is dropped (but still use treats!). Hopefully, your dog will learn to sit and wait while the door is in use without being prompted.

Exercise: Give your dog plenty of exercise and attention before you leave them alone. A long walk and a focused obedience session can help your dog relax when left alone. See our handout on creative ways to entertain your dog to help exercise them both mentally and physically.

Mental Enrichment: Provide your dog with long-lasting treats and activities to play with in the home, even when you leave them alone. These activities include bully stick chews, pressed rawhide, a stuffed kong, or a puzzle game.

Note: A dog may develop escape behavior as a stress response if they are experiencing separation anxiety. If your dog only escapes when left alone and shows other symptoms when left alone, such as destroying household items or excessive barking, they may be showing signs of separation anxiety.

We are always here to help! You can find additional behavior and training resources at pasadenahumane.org/behavior.

Adapted from Northeast Animal Shelter



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