



## The Canine Escape Artist

Escaping is a serious for both you and your dog, as there can be tragic consequences. A dog running loose is in danger of being hit by a car, injured in a fight or hurt by a human. Furthermore, you are liable for any damage or injury your dog may cause and you can be cited by law enforcement for allowing your dog to run free. In order to solve an escaping problem, you must determine how your dog is getting out and why.

### Why does my dog do this?

It could be boredom, an exciting person/animal on the other side of the fence, or the dog catches a good scent and follows it. Sometimes, it can be related to an anxiety of being left alone or a fear response to a loud or unfamiliar noise. If you've just adopted your dog, it's possible that everything is unfamiliar.

### How can I prevent it?

- **Check your fence line.** Make sure that there aren't things for your dog to jump on or climb that will make it easier for them to escape. Be sure your fence is solid, without gaps or weak points that could be knocked over or pushed through. Check behind bushes for gaps that you cannot see
- **Play with your dog in your yard.** Being present to supervise will help your dog want to stay in the yard. Keep your dog attached to a leash in the yard in the beginning.
- **Teach your dog to pause at every doorway and gate** and wait to be released through. Have all family members practice this.
- **Provide your dog with daily physical and mental stimulation** to prevent boredom. Regular walks, fetch, feeding out of food dispensing toys, training, and other activities can help prevent your dog from wandering.
- **Ensure your dog's collar or harness is fitted well** to prevent escaping when on walks. Keep your dog on leash during walks and trips to the park to prevent them from darting away if they are startled.
- **Leave your dog somewhere safe inside your home** when you are gone. Be sure any windows and doors your dog has access to are closed and locked. Leave your dog with safe toys, like a Kong, to keep entertained.

### What if my dog escapes?

Make sure your dog is always wearing a collar with tags and be sure that the microchip has the correct information as well. There are many GPS trackers that dogs can wear too.

If your dog bolts away from you, resist the urge to run. Instead, try using verbal commands that your dog knows. You can also begin calling your dog by name in a happy voice or whistle loudly. When they look, turn around and run back towards your home to entice them to follow you – like a game of chase. Another option is to grab a squeaker toy, a ball or a bag of treats. Squeak, bounce the toy or shake the treats to get their attention.

If you aren't near home, try the happy "puppy, puppy" or whistling sounds, but run at a 45 degree angle so your dog sees you and hopefully runs towards you. If your dog approaches you, try crouching down and offering a treat. Talk in a "happy" voice to attract your dog.

As time goes on, your dog should learn that inside your home is a great place to be, and hopefully won't be as likely to run away. If you follow these guidelines, you should be able to safely manage your dog while you work on training.