



Territorial Marking Behavior in Dogs

Marking behavior is not a house-soiling problem. Both male and female dogs can display marking behaviors. To resolve the issue, you need to address the underlying reason for the need to mark.

Your dog may be urine-marking if:

- The problem is primarily urination.
- Your dog isn't spayed or neutered. Both intact males and females are more likely to urine mark than are spayed or neutered animals.
- Your dog is not comfortable with other animals in or outside your home. When there is anxiety around territory, some dogs may feel a need to ward others away by urine-marking their territory. Even if your dog just sees or hears another animal through a door or window, they may feel a need to mark the territory.
- Your dog urinates frequently on neighborhood walks.

What You Can Do

- Spay or neuter your dog as soon as. Spaying or neutering may significantly reduce urine marking. However, if your dog has developed a habit of urine marking over a long period of time, a pattern is probably already established. Changing this long-standing behavior will take time and patience.
- Resolve conflicts between animals in your home.
- Clean soiled areas thoroughly using an enzyme-based pet urine removal product.
- Make previously soiled areas inaccessible or unattractive. If making soiled areas inaccessible or unattractive isn't possible, try to change the significance of those areas. Feed, treat and play in the areas they are inclined to mark.
- Keep objects likely to cause marking out of reach. Guests' belongings, new purchases and so forth, should not be placed on the floor.
- If your dog is marking in response to a new resident in your home (a new baby, roommate, spouse), have the new resident make friends by feeding, grooming and playing with the dog. Make sure good things happen to your dog when the new baby is around.
- Watch your dog at all times when indoors for signs. When they begin to urinate, interrupt and take outside, then praise and give treats if they urinate outside. When you're unable to watch closely, use the confinement or a crate or small room where that has never been marked or tether to you with a leash.

What Not To Do

Don't punish your dog (i.e. hitting, using newspaper, yelling). Punishment is ineffective because your dog won't fully understand what it is you're attempting to do. Many become afraid or more anxious with any punishment and the marking behavior gets worse. Territorial marking is very normal behavior.