



Escape Prevention Tips - How to Help Prevent Your Dog from Getting Lost

Home

- **Use “airlock/catch-pen” systems** like baby-gates and x-pens in front of any exits to prevent door-darting. This way, any person walking in and out must go through one door and close it with the dog behind it, before opening the second.
- **In the car, ensure that your dog is either in a crate, securely on leash**, or that their harness is fastened with a harness seatbelt before any door is opened. Same for windows that are open more than a crack.
- **Close low windows and add screens or child-safety devices** that keep windows from opening more than a few inches.

Walking Equipment

- **Use secure walking equipment, sized correctly for the dog.** We recommend a “Freedom Harness”, clipped to the back and front, and the front also clipped to martingale or flat collar. Other front-clip harnesses such as “Sensation” or “Wonder Walker”, clipped to collar may also be sufficient for some dogs. A leash clipped to a martingale collar may also work, although is not as useful for teaching loose-leash walking.
- **We recommend walking with a 4-6ft nylon leash.** We do not recommend the use of retractable leashes.

Recall

- **Enroll in a basic manners class** like East Bay SPCA Skill Builders or a recall workshop to teach your dog how to come to you when called.
- **Ensure your dog will come to you quickly and consistently in any new environment**, before taking them off leash completely.
- If you are still practicing, **let your dog drag a 30-foot long-line** (not a retractable leash), so you have time to step on it, if your dog does not respond to you immediately.

Yards

- **Do not leave your dog unattended in a yard**, as they may bite holes through the fence, break through loose boards, jump over the fence, dig, or cause general destruction to your fence or yard. It is important to note that tethering a dog in the yard can result in injury and cause more stress for the dog. Dogs should receive physical and mental exercise (1-2 hours) before being left alone.
- **Check your fence for height and loose boards** and check boards monthly after adoption. Many dogs can jump fences that are 6-8ft high. You may need to replace your fence with a taller one. Fences with horizontal cross-pieces or holes to use as footholds are particularly easy for dogs to climb.
- **If desired, add a “coyote” roll-bar to the tops of fences and gates**, even if the fence is over 6’, but especially if it’s lower. Or, add an “eave” of 3’ that goes in towards the yard, at the top of the fence. Ensure that items that your dog can use as a “ladder” aren’t pushed up against the fence.
- **Consider lining your fence with heavy, flat concrete or brick paving stones** to prevent digging. Or add gardening mesh under the soil/fence, going in towards the yard for 1 or 2 feet. This prevents digging tunnels under the fencing.
- **Keep the gates to your yard locked**, so no strangers are able to leave them open accidentally. Some dogs also know how to open latches that are not locked.
- **Explore leaving enrichment to occupy your dog when you are gone.** If boredom or separation distress are contributing factors, having tasty puzzles to work through can help to keep your dog occupied constructively. For a comprehensive look at enrichment, see our Canine Food Enrichment Handout on our website in the “Behavior Resources” section.