

Tips, tricks and tools to keep Fido in the Yard

Dogs are social, adventurous creatures by nature and it can be natural for them to want to leave their home to explore new places. Dogs often become bored easily because they are so smart and curious! When they are left to their own devices when bored they may escape the yard either by jumping, climbing or digging out. Below we have compiled some ways to keep your hound on the ground in his own yard!

For jumpers and climbers:

- **Extend your fence.** You don't necessarily have to make it higher, but adding a section to the top that tilts inward will deter your dog. A lean-in or L-footer will do the trick. You make a lean-in by taking some farm wire and attaching it to the top of your fence, so that it creates a sort of awning on the inside. Your dog will see fencing above him and that should deter him. An L-footer extends horizontally from the top of the fence and also creates an awning-type deterrent.
- **Remove climbing aids.** Walk around the yard and take note of anything close enough to the fence that can be used to climb on: A wood pile; garbage can; children's slides or playground equipment; even a bench, chair, or boulder.
- **Buy a coyote roller.** These are long, metal bars that can be attached to the fence to prevent your dog from getting the foothold he needs to get over. When an animal tries to use it to gain footing, it rolls like a rolling pin. Designed to keep coyotes out, they're equally effective for keeping a beloved pet in. They do require mounting brackets and end caps, but you can find complete kits online.
- **Add landscaping.** Plant a hedge of dense shrubs along the inside of the fence line. Not only does this make for a more difficult jump, it looks great, too.
- **Invisible Fence.** Can be purchased at local pet store, generally easy to install, effective for most dogs. Training is required to teach the dog where the boundaries are. Not for sensitive or insecure dogs.

For diggers:

- **Attach an L-footer along the bottom of the fence, facing in.** You can use chicken wire, hardware cloth, or a piece of chain-link fence attached to the base of the fence. Some people bury it for aesthetic reasons. But you can also lay it on top of the grass and hold it down with rocks, gravel, mulch, or even planters.
- **Pour a concrete footer.** This will stop even the most determined digger. Pour concrete along the perimeter of the fence and sink the bottom of the fence into the mixture.

For border patrollers:

- **Block the view.** For a watchdog, guard dog, or any dog that patrols his territory, it's often the sight of "danger" that propels him out of the yard. If you have a chain-link fence, run plastic slats through it. With any type of fence, rolls of bamboo or reed fencing are a relatively inexpensive alternative. Just use zip ties to attach it to your existing fence. It blocks the view and doesn't look half-bad. While this takes longer to be effective, you can also plant climbing shrubs or vines along the fence, though you'll have to protect them from the dog until they're established.

More Tips for All the Houdinis

No matter how your dog escapes the yard, there are several other measures you can take to ensure his safety.

- If you have a gate that's often opened or left open by accident, install an air lock. Take a few lengths of fence and another gate and create a small, enclosed area inside or outside the fence. When someone wants to get in (or out), he or she will have to go through one gate, close it, and then open the second gate.
- Get your dog a puppy bumper. This is a collar stuffed with fiberfill that's meant to keep puppies and small dogs from slipping through small openings.
- Make sure all the latches on gates and fences are secure. If you have a gate that blows open or a latch that doesn't stay shut, add a lock or hook-and-eye closure.
- Make the yard his happy place. The backyard shouldn't be his prison; it should be his haven, shelter, and playground. Make sure he has plenty of fresh water and some shade. For fun, bring out a treat-dispensing toy.
- Don't leave him alone out there for long periods of time. The very best way to keep him in the yard is to be there with him. Play with him, brush him, use it as training time or just hang out. He'll be less interested in leaving if his best friend is there, too!