

KEEPING YOUR DOG AT HOME

Most often, a dog who escapes is a dog who has not had time to bond with his family indoors. No matter how high you build your fence or how sturdy you build your pen, keeping your dog confined will be a constant battle unless you take the time to improve your relationship with him indoors. Granted this task will be more challenging for some than others, but the time and effort you invest in training and walking your dog daily will save you much more in the long run. There are also dogs that love their families and being indoors but will “jump” at the opportunity to meet a new friend. This presents less of a problem, though, because this dog still loves being indoors, so confinement inside is always an option.

BUILDING A BARRICADE

There are all sorts of ways to physically confine your dog to your property outside. Here are some examples:

- Build a taller fence or add taller extensions.
- Install inward facing brackets at the top of your fence and string deer netting between the brackets.
- Install a “roll bar” on top of your fence.
- Add visual barrier strips to your cyclone fencing.
- Plant wide shrubs inside your fence.
- Install a shorter fence a few feet in from your existing fence.
- Build an outside pen with a brick or cement border at the base and a wire top.
- Install an underground wire fence with your visible fence.

By the way, if your dog is dangerously reactive to other people, dogs or cats, you run a very high risk leaving him outside unsupervised at all. If this is the case, you are far better off seeking assistance to modify his behavior than seeking a way to more successfully confine him outside.

THE NEWCOMER

If you are considering bringing a new adult dog home and you are not sure how he feels about fences, help ensure the habit does not begin by using a long line when you initially take him out in the yard. A long line is simply a leash, tracking lead, or even a clothesline (knotted to a leash clip) that is 30’ or longer. Take him out in the back yard on the long line with your pockets full of his dinner or some other delectable goody. If he gets to the end of the line, let him sniff around there, but if he comes to visit with you, dump a handful of food stuff on the ground at your feet. Then tell him what a wonderful dog he is and hold onto the long line as he goes out to investigate again. Each time he returns to you, make sure he is highly rewarded. Eventually you can teach him a good game of fetch or find-the-Kong, but for now you just want him happy to hang out with you in the yard.

THE WORRIER

Some adult dogs are nearly feral (undomesticated) due to their lack of socialization as a puppy. If this dog even thinks he sees an opening he will try to “run to save his life.” Make sure this dog gets used to sitting on the back porch with you on a 4’ leash before you even venture to the long line. This dog will need lots of calm reassurance, and possibly a body harness attached to a leash with a very sturdy clip. He will probably be too stressed to eat food outside, just make sure not to expect too much from him and offer him lots of verbal praise.

THE ATHLETE

If your dog enjoys jumping and running and climbing, consider channeling that energy by teaching him agility, flyball, freestyle, disc dog, lure coursing or any of the other physically challenging and rewarding dog sports. Nothing wrong with a little jumping and climbing as long as he does it with you!