

Time Outs

You can use Time Outs if your dog is exhibiting an unwanted behavior that you simply cannot redirect or control. Whenever she just goes over the top, put her in a time out for 3-5 minutes.

If your dog is generally exhibiting unwanted behavior, keep a leash on her at all times. When it comes time for a Time Out, the leash gives you quick access to lead her to her Time Out spot without touching her (which is rewarding).

How to do it:

Pick out a word or phrase to indicate she has “lost” and is going to Time Out (e.g., “Time Out”, “I’m sorry”, “Too Bad”, etc). Say your Time Out word, take the leash, turn and briskly walk to the time out area. Avoid talking or interacting with the dog any further as this could be mistaken as rewarding attention to your dog.

Inside: This can be a laundry room, bathroom, or extra room. Remove soft blankets, toys and treats. You want it to be less pleasant than where she usually is (with you!) so she learns to avoid the unwanted behavior that got her here and ultimately get to stay with you.

Outside: Have a tie-down spot in your backyard where you can clip your dog and walk away. When you are away from your house, carry a [carabiner](#) so you can clip your dog’s leash to a fence or wrap it around a tree and walk a ways away.

A couple things about Time Outs:

1) Be neutral when you say your time out word. The “punishment” isn’t coming from you or the place where you put her. The “punishment” is the social isolation and loss of freedom. Those in charge control access to freedom; time-outs show the dog that unwanted behavior means she loses her freedom.

2) Time Out starts when the dog is removed from you and should only be 3-5 minutes to begin with. However, if your dog is whining, barking, or throwing a temper tantrum then you need to wait until they are quiet and calm before they can come out of Time Out. So the first few times she might be in Time Out for a longer time, but that’s okay. When she comes out, ignore her for two minutes and then resume life as if nothing ever happened. This is their second chance to hopefully choose a better and rewardable behavior! If your dog repeats the unwanted behavior, she goes right back to Time Out for another 3-5 minute interval. If your dog continues to choose unwanted behavior after coming out from Time Out, you can increase their Time Out time up to 15-20 minutes and when they are calm/ quiet.

3) Meanwhile, establish clear rules and boundaries so she also knows when she “wins.” It is not fair to always punish a dog without also teaching what you do want her to do!

So your pattern should look like this:

- i. Lavishly reward any and all behaviors you do want her to do. Things like

hanging out calmly and quietly, playing with their toys, not jumping up or mouthing on you when being petted, and performing obedience skills.

- ii. Ignore behaviors that are just annoying or aren't such a huge deal (but you would like to stop happening), and
- iii. Give time outs for behaviors you simply cannot redirect, are damaging or dangerous (such as excessive mouthing or jumping)

This makes the rules very clear: "Do what I like and win, or do what I don't like and lose."