



# Understanding Canine Behavior

## Time-Outs (Too Bad!): A Penalty for Bad Behavior

The goal of this handout is to give you a clear way of correcting your dog for an undesirable behavior. The reason why words such as “No!” & “Off!” do not work is because we typically haven’t established rules or meaning behind these words. Usually such commands are backed up with lots of useless emotion & the words are over-used in the dog’s daily routine, not to mention using physical means for corrections. This may not include anything harsh at all but **any** form of physical punishment usually **never** works. Let’s do something that works—time-outs!

A simple reward system for a dog, just as with children, is to look, touch, or talk to the dog (be it nicely or angrily). A prime example of this reward system is when a dog jumps up. What we see most people do when the dog jumps up is to push down on the dog while looking at him & yelling “NO” or “OFF.” The dog then hits the deck only to reload & jump right back up again. This then becomes the cycle. The question is asked, “Why does my dog keep jumping up on me?” & we would answer, “It is because you keep rewarding the behavior.”—you are touching & talking to the dog & those are rewards even if you are using a negative tone.

### WHAT YOU’LL NEED

(1) First, you will need a snap buckle/hook similar to what is on the end of your leash.



(2) Second, you will need some thin, lightweight nylon rope or clothesline. Attach a 12-foot section of the line to the snap buckle & hook it to your dog’s collar. We will now refer to this as a “long line” or “time-out rope”.



**Note:** Do not use the leash you use to walk the dog. The leash must hold **value** later in our training & will not if your dog realizes it is the same line that is used for corrections.

(3) Or you can get a line that is durable for puppies or dogs that may chew their long line.

I suggest the Small Dog Tie Out you can find at pet stores. It is a metal cable in an epoxy coating & already has a buckle hook on it.



### HOW TO EXECUTE THE TIME-OUT

(1) When the dog displays an undesirable behavior, quickly & emotionlessly pick up the end of the long line. Immediately turn away & walk toward a crate or designated room with your back to your dog. As soon as you feel tension in the long line (or your dog “puts on the brakes”), say in a very emotionless tone, “Too Bad” & place the dog in the area you have chosen for timeouts.

(2) Leave the dog in the time-out area for twenty minutes (20 minutes) the first week you do a time-out for a behavior (This would be for those who are just establishing what a time-out is for your dog.) After one week each time-out should be two minutes (2 minutes) in length. It’s important that the timeout clock does not start until the dog is settled & quiet. If the dog barks or cries, the clock is reset.

(3) When the timeout has expired, let your dog out & ignore him (do not talk to, look at or touch your dog) for two minutes (2 minutes).

### WHAT IF THE BEHAVIOR HAPPENS AGAIN RIGHT AWAY?

When & if he repeats the same undesirable behavior, repeat this process even if it occurs within the first two minutes of being released from timeout. Dogs learn in cycles of four or six. If you correct your dog four to six times for the same negative behavior [correctly & consistently], then you have established a rule that your dog will understand.

## WHAT BEHAVIORS WARRANT A TIME-OUT?

- ✓ **Counter surfing.** The dog sniffs around a counter or jumps up on one to get something.
- ✓ **Jumping on furniture**—Uninvited.
- ✓ **Digging in the trash.** (Only if you catch the dog in the act!)
- ✓ **Stealing something.** Your dog grabs something & runs off with it. (Again, only if you catch them in the act!)
- ✓ **Jumping on people uninvited.**
- ✓ **Barking at the door or while/when looking out a window/door at passersby or other dogs.**
- ✓ **Rough-housing or mouthing on another dog.**
- ✓ **If play-biting or nipping has gotten to an escalated level.**
- ✓ **Grabbing clothes or nipping at kids.** (Parents need to be right there & take action quickly.)
- ✓ **Growling or snapping at you.\*** (See special instructions for this time-out under “Troubleshooting”).

## TIPS TO MAKE NOTE OF.

- **It is very important that you do not display *any* emotion before, during, or after a time-out.** This only confuses the learning process. Remember that we are training a behavior & we don't want to intimidate the dog. The command should mean removal of reward & separation from the pack. As long as we never use emotion then it will not make the timeout area a bad area & therefore not a punishment. It is also important that we are consistent in our corrections as this is the only way the rules are established.
- **Do not ask the dog to come to time-out & do not say anything like, “Bad dog! Now you get a time-out!”** Just execute the time-out as you should, quickly & emotionlessly.
- **Even more critical than the time-out part of this exercise is the reward system once the dog is “getting it”.** For example, let's assume you have been doing time-outs for your dog barking at a window in the front of the house. After three time-outs you notice that your dog perks his ears & thinks about going to the window. However, after a few time-outs, the dog now redirects & looks at you instead of heading straight to the window. I cannot stress enough how much you must acknowledge that your dog has suddenly made a decision not to do the incorrect behavior. The second you notice that your dog is thinking, “Hmmm. Maybe I shouldn't go to the window or I'll have to go to time-out.” Then you praise, you get very happy. “Good boy, Scruffy! Good boy!” Pet him & tell him he is a very good dog!
- **Do not use physical means for time-out & never grab the dog to put him in time-out. You must use the time-out rope.**
- **Hit a door when a tantrum is thrown.** If the dog begins to whine or scratch a door (when using a bathroom or laundry room as the time-out area) you can stand by the door and hit it with your open palm just eye level where the dog is on the other side. Slap it really hard as soon as you hear a peep. This is an “Environmental Correction” where the dog assumes the room told him to shut up as that loud bang sounds like a shotgun went off in that room!
- **Start the clock over if the dog starts to vocalize.** The time-out should be 20 minutes of silence!

## **TROUBLESHOOTING.**

### **My dog began doing great with responses to time-outs but now he seems to fine going in there, sometimes he puts himself in time out right after he does something bad! Now what?**

This is actually common if the dog thinks the crime is worth the punishment. This indicates that we have to increase the severity of the time-out. There are a couple of things you should try & see what hits home best. Often when you go to his measure the dog will not be doing the behavior again! Try the following in the order listed.

- 1) Instead of hauling the dog to the normal time-out area you will immediately take your dog outside to a secure tree, pole or balcony railing (where it is safe & the dog cannot injure himself) preferably in the sun. Tie the time-out rope securely around the object so that the line is short enough that the dog can sit but cannot lie down. The line should be very secure & pretty short in length. The purpose here is to cause some discomfort. Do not have it tight around the dog's neck or allow the dog to choke—not that short! Just enough that they can't move around much & all they can really do is stand there or sit. You should be down to 2-minute time-outs so if the dog is in the heat it will be miserable but not too hot that it's unsafe.
- 2) Find what your dog hates. What does he despise? The vacuum? Being brushed? Being bathed? Whatever your dog hates you will use this for your time-out. Let's use a vacuum. This is often a great choice. As soon as the dog warrants a time-out then take him to a high counter (if your dog isn't too heavy for you to lift safely) & put him on the counter. Have your vacuum ready & already near this location first. Now hit the "on" switch & vacuum the dog's back for 2 minutes. Hold the long line up so that the dog cannot move or turn around to nip or get away from the vacuum. This one usually does the trick!

### **My dog growled at me (or snapped at me) in an aggressive manner. What do I do now?**

This warrants a modified version of time-out. This is also very critical that this is followed through completely & not a version of this plus a few modifications of your own. This is a serious behavior problem & must be addressed but if you address it incorrectly you can actually cause the problem to escalate, possibly to a dangerous level.

The second your dog exhibits one of these behaviors you need to immediately take him to his crate & put him in there. Toss a blanket or towel over the entire crate & preferably have the crate in another, isolated part of the home. Take out any bedding, toys, bowls, etc. Nothing should be in there. This is the new dungeon.

Your dog should stay in there for 24 hours with no food or water. You will take your dog periodically on the leash for a potty break. Do not let the dog off the leash. If there are other dogs in the home put them away before you take this one out. Allow time to potty (15 minutes tops) then back into the crate he goes.

Your dog is in an A/C area & is not doing any activity so no food or water is needed or necessary. If you absolutely feel the need for at least a sip of water he may have a few laps. However you must hold the bowl and offer it. If they do not take it right away the water goes away.

Remember at this time your dog is in an ultimate time-out. There should be no conversation, requests for commands or any interaction at all. Only put on the leash, allow the potty breaks & put the dog back in time-out. That's it. Once the 24 hours is up you may let the dog out & resume as usual. If it happens again, yes the dog goes back to this **exact** routine.

If you are having any other difficulties or run into any other problems please contact your trainer. Do not modify the time-outs as we have them listed. This program works quite well when executed as instructed. Please feel free to contact any of our trainers for any assistance!—[www.aictdfw.com](http://www.aictdfw.com) or **(214) 731-3191**.