

Running Away – Not Coming When Called

Dogs that run away and do not come back when called can be frustrating as well as dangerous. Local laws require that your dog must be confined by a fence or on a leash when outside of a fenced property. If your dog is loose you are responsible for any damage they may cause and may be required to pay fines to get your dog back if they are picked up by animal control.

Unfortunately, other terrible things can happen if your dog is allowed to run loose which might include collisions with traffic, exposure to poisons, danger from encounters with other animals or abuse from other people.

The following information will help you keep your dog safely at home.

Why your dog runs away

The first step to curbing your dog's roaming ways is to determine why he is running away in the first place. Dogs that lack training or are bored are the most likely to run away and not come back when you call them. Other reasons might include sexually induced roaming whether your dog or another dog in the neighborhood is in season, a neighbor could be providing treats or other rewards, or your dog might be afraid of something which causes him to flee.

Why your dog doesn't come back when you call them

Your dog must learn that coming back to you is the most rewarding behavior. Each time your dog comes to you give them an awesome treat, a lot of love, or play a game with a favorite toy and then let them go again if possible. Also, no matter the reason



Additional Resources

Please contact our Behavior Team to speak with a skilled behavior specialist.

BehaviorTeam@spca.org

214-461-5169

www.spca.org/petuniversity

Check the above website for upcoming Pet University training classes to teach your dog Recall/Come When Called and much more.

why your dog ran away, never punish your dog when you catch up to them or when they come back to you. If your dog enjoyed their time away from home only to come home and be punished it will make it less likely that they will rush home the next time they get away. If your dog is running away of something he is afraid of then punishing him will only make the fear worse by breaking down the trust in your relationship.

What to do about running away

While you are teaching your dog to come when called and to not run away, you will need to make sure that your dog doesn't get the opportunity to get away from you. Here are a list of things to do to keep your dog from getting away from you.

- Spay or neuter your dog. Dogs that are unaltered are 90% more likely to try to escape. It can take several weeks or months for the hormones and hormone receptors that cause this type of roaming to dissipate after spay/neuter.
- Enroll in a humane obedience course to increase your dog's obedience skills as well as build a stronger relationship between you and your dog.
- Provide your dog with more exercise. A tired, well exercised dog is less likely to feel the need to get out for extra exercise.
- Provide more mental stimulation at home by giving your dog more toys, delicious chews and stuffed kongs.
- Play games with your dog at home (see Games to Play With Your Dog series – [Find It](#), [Hide and Seek](#), [Tug](#), and [Retrieve](#))
- Keep your dog in a reliable, conventional fence (not an invisible/electric/shock fence). Electric fences are not fail proof and if your dog gets out of the electric fence they will not likely be able to get back in.
- Supervise your dog at all times when they are outside or if you are opening doors that your dog likes to dash through.
- Keep your dog leashed at all times when you are outside of your home or fenced yard. Be sure that your dog's collar or harness is fitted properly and will not slip off.