

# Dog 101

## How to Keep Your Escape Artist at Home

Is your pup sneaking out to run the neighborhood? Are you worried that they may put themselves and others in danger when they are running loose? We want to help. Not only is it dangerous for your pet, but it could be costly to you if your pet causes damage or injury.

Common reasons pets escape includes social isolation, fears and phobias, sexual roaming or separation anxiety.

### 7 Your pet is escaping out of social isolation if:

- He is left alone for long periods of time without playmates or toys causing him to be bored and lonely.
- He's active or of an active breed who needs a job or activity to keep him happy.
- He escapes to a place that may provide him with the interaction he is seeking.

If this sounds familiar, reference our handout on **Isolated Dogs: Problems & Solutions** in our Resources for Pet Owners Section. We offer ideas to help you increase his "people time" so his daily interaction is fulfilled, and he is sufficiently challenged, both mentally and physically.

### 2 If your dog is escaping due to sexual roaming:

- Have your male dog neutered and/or your female dog spayed. They can have this surgery as early as eight weeks of age. Although you may alter adult dogs safely, they will recover much more quickly and have fewer complications when they are young. Dogs become sexually mature at around six months of age. This age is also when females can have heat cycles and become pregnant.
- Unaltered males are motivated by a strong drive to seek out female dogs. This can cause even more issues for your un-spayed female dog who may escape while she is in heat. An unwanted litter causes stress for you, more care necessary for her and more dogs in a community than there are available homes.

**Millions of dogs and cats are still euthanized each year. You are part of the solution when you spay or neuter your pets!**

### 3 If your dog is escaping because of fears & phobias:

- By identifying what is frightening your dog, you can desensitize him with help. Some triggers can be loud noises like fireworks or thunderstorms.
- One tip is to leave your dog indoors when the specific noise is likely to occur. A white noise machine or loud fan can help mute the frightening noise.
- Ensure your dog also has access to his “safe place”, a place where he likes to go when he is anxious – see our **Crate Training** guide for info on how to create a safe place.
- We can help with professional trainers at both of our campuses! Phone counseling is provided and in person classes are offered. Scholarships are available. Learn more in our **Dog Training** section.



### 4 If your dog is escaping due to separation anxiety:

- This is a panic response that occurs with dogs who are never or rarely left alone. Others have recently been at a shelter or boarding kennel, or who have experienced a change in the family’s routine or structure.
- Some tips to help include keeping arrivals and departures low-key.
- Leave your dog with an article of clothing that smells like you.
- Establish a word or action you use every time you leave, signaling to your dog that you’ll be back. This could be playing the radio or leaving him a certain bone or toy.
- We suggest with this behavior that you also consult a veterinarian as soon as possible as medication or other techniques may be necessary.
- Our professional trainers can also provide a systematic process that will help your dog get used to being alone. Email us at [dogtraining@sbhumane.org](mailto:dogtraining@sbhumane.org)

