

11 Behavior Management

Behavior Management Products



What products are available to help prevent undesirable behavior?

There are numerous products on the market that have been designed to help prevent undesirable behavior in pets. Leashes, harnesses, and head halters are needed to keep pets under control, especially when outdoors. A crate, cage, or X-pen provides a safe comfortable home for the dog when the owners are not available to supervise. Child locks and child barricades such as baby gates can be used to keep pets away from potential problem areas.

Timed feeding devices and automatic watering devices can help maintain a regular feeding routine at times when the owners might be away from home.

What types of toys are recommended?

Because dogs, especially young puppies, are strongly motivated to chew, it is important to provide a variety of chew toys. Many dental products make excellent chew toys while improving dental health.

Find a few products that are safe, durable, and appeal to your pet. Some representative products of each type are listed here as examples. There may be other appropriate products available in your local area.

Many companies manufacture toys that can be stuffed or coated with food or treats or that can be filled with food that is only released when the toy is manipulated. Examples include Kong®, Kong® Biscuit Ball, Kong® Dental Stick, Nylabone® Crazy Ball™, Buster® Food Cube™, Omega Paw® Tricky Treats™, Premier® Busy Buddy™, Premier® Twist 'n Treat™, Premier® Bouncy Bone™, and Premier® Kibble Nibble™. Some toys are even designed to be linked together once the dog can easily retrieve the food to provide greater complexity and longer duration. (Linkables™) Toys that provide a moving target for chasing and pouncing are attractive to most cats. Examples include Feline Flyer™, Cat Dancer™, Tiger Toy™, and Laser Mouse™.



Photo courtesy of Kong Company

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Interactive toys provide an opportunity for social play with the owner. The Mutt Puck™, Boomer Ball™, Water Kong™, and a variety of flying disks have been designed for interactive play with dogs. Some cat toys are designed for interactive play because they need to be set in motion by the owners, while others are propelled by battery power. Toys that might be manipulated by the cat itself include Crazy Balls™, which can be filled with either food or a flashing light toy for play. Some new toys for cats are round or egg shaped and made of lightweight plastic in which food and treats can be placed. The small openings in these toys can be adjusted to deliver food and varying degrees of difficulty as the toys are batted or rolled. FUNkitty™ Twist 'N Treat™, FUNkitty™ Egg-cersizer™, PetSafe® Slim Cat™, and Pipolino® – even something as simple as an empty cardboard box or paper bag may be appealing to some cats.

Most cats benefit from scratching and perching products. A product known as Pavlov's Cat™ delivers food treats each time the cat scratches the post. For scratching problems, plastic nail coverings (Soft Paws®) are available that can be glued onto the toenails to prevent damage to furniture. For cats that chew on household items such as plants, planting a cat herb garden may attract the cat.



Tug-A-Jug™

Photo courtesy of Premier Pet Products

Some dogs may become possessive over toys and food. Premier® Tug-A-Jug™ is a toy made from a bottle with a rope in it. The bottle is filled with small treats, and every time the dog pulls on the rope, treats are released, motivating the dog to leave the toy and take the treats. This may help teach your dog to leave objects for a better reward.

Laser toys can present a problem to some cats and dogs, which can become frustrated if they are unable to achieve a desired outcome (catch the light). Some of these animals develop compulsive or obsessive light and shadow chasing. Pets that lose interest or cease the game on their own are not likely to develop this problem. If the dog or cat wants to continue light chasing when you have had enough, give a favored treat or toy as a reward to end the game or start another game instead.

What type of training collar should I use for walking and controlling my dog?

The head halter is a quick and effective method for teaching the dog to respond to commands, allowing you to effectively implement a reward-based training program. The halter controls the dog by exerting pressure behind the neck and around the muzzle, rather than by pulling against the trachea. By pulling forward and upward, you can prompt your dog to sit, and as soon as the pet performs the appropriate response, you can immediately release the tension. A favorite treat or toy can be used to reinforce and “mark” the correct response.



All head halters are excellent walking and control devices and avoid placing pressure across the trachea. With the Halti™, Gentle Leader®, and Snoot Loop®, the leash is attached to a ring beneath the muzzle, and you can quickly and immediately redirect the head and close the mouth. With the Easyway™ and Canny Collar™ head halters, the leash is attached to a ring behind the skull, providing a quick and effective means of controlling pulling.

The Gentle Leader® also functions as a “head collar” and can be fitted and adjusted so it can be left on the dog for supervised control and training. Body harnesses (Gentle Leader® Easy Walk Harness™, Halti Harness™, and K9 Pull Control™) will effectively stop pulling but do not provide head control. See our handout on head halter training for additional information on their use. For video support on the fitting and use of the Gentle Leader® head halter and the Easy Walk Harness™, visit www.abrionline.org.

What products are available to aid in reinforcement-based training?

The use of a clicker in training can be an excellent means of providing immediate reinforcement for dog and cat training and shaping gradually more desirable outcomes. Target devices are also available that can be used to train a dog or cat to come, follow, and touch an object for rewards (see (18) Clicker and Target Training).

The MannersMinder® is a training device that delivers food or treats from a dispensing device by remote activation. Activating the remote control emits a tone from the MannersMinder®, which is immediately followed by release of food from the device (see (18) Clicker and Target Training). The MannersMinder® can be particularly useful for training pets to settle in a specific location (e.g., go to your mat, go to your bed) (see (61) Teaching Calm – Settle and Relaxation Training). The device can be set up in a location and the pet first trained to go to the device to receive its food reward.

Gradually, calmer and more relaxed behaviors can be trained by training the pet to lie down for rewards and then shaping longer and more relaxed behaviors before the reward is released. The MannersMinder® can then be used to teach desirable behaviors when company arrives or as an alternative to barking (response substitution) or for desensitization and counter-conditioning (e.g., to sounds) by associating the sound with the delivery of rewards from the MannersMinder® (see (19) Desensitization and Counter-Conditioning, (20) Implementing Desensitization and Counter-Conditioning – Setting Up for Success, (79) Aggression – Territorial, (91) Fears and Phobias – Inanimate Noises and Places, (93) Fears and Phobias – Storms and Fireworks – Treatment, and (94) Greeting Behavior – Door Charging).

Are there products designed for cat control and training?

A variety of cat leash and harness products (Come With Me Kitty Harness and Bungee Leash™) can also be an effective way to maintain physical control and shape behaviors for reward training. Outdoor confinement and fencing products can be a practical way to house cats outdoors while preventing them from wandering away from the property.



Photo courtesy of Premier Pet Products



What products are useful for house soiling problems?

For house soiling in both dogs and cats, it is necessary to eliminate any residual odor to prevent the pet from being attracted to the odor at the site. A number of products are specifically designed to remove the stain or odor of pet urine and are more effective than general household cleaners. Products that use enzymes, bacteria, or a combination of these two, such as Anti-Icky Poo®, Nature's Miracle® Urine Off®, and Urine Erase® are particularly effective on urine stains that are relatively fresh and have not been pretreated. There are also products that are species-specific odor counteractants such as Cat Odor Off®, which can be used to neutralize odors even after other stain and cleaning products have been applied. For larger areas, a concentrated product will allow you to dilute a sufficient quantity to saturate the entire area. Black lights and moisture detectors can help to identify the soiled site. For cats, a synthetic cheek gland pheromone called Feliway® is available to be sprayed on areas where the cat might be inclined to spray or mark, in order to reduce marking (see (8) Medication – Complementary for more details). For dogs that house soil, an indoor litter system or house training pads might be appropriate to teach the dog a new, more acceptable indoor elimination location.

What products are available for treating noise phobias and anxiety?

Commercial products are available that reproduce a variety of sounds that often cause fear in pets, including thunderstorms, fireworks, and gunshots. Some that are specifically designed for treatment of canine fears and phobias might also include a training manual on how to effectively desensitize and counter-condition. For further details, see (92) Fears and Phobias – Storms and Fireworks – Immediate Guidelines and (93) Fears and Phobias – Storms and Fireworks – Treatment. Recordings containing a wide variety of sounds, including vacuums, trucks, hot air balloons, airplanes, and crying babies, are useful for desensitization and counter-conditioning or as background noises for habituation in puppies.

Some products have been designed to reduce anxiety in other ways, such as a wrap (Anxiety Wrap®, Thundershirt™) that exerts constant pressure and a cape that reduces static electricity associated with thunderstorms (Storm Defender™ Cape), although there is minimal data to support their efficacy at this time. The Calming Cap™ has been developed to reduce stimulus intensity during desensitization training by covering the eyes to reduce visibility of stimuli. Similarly, Doggles® might reduce visual stimuli. Thunderband™, Mutt Muffs®, and ThunderHut™ might reduce audible stimuli.

“ If the problem is related to fear and anxiety, punishment may serve to increase the pet's anxiety. ”

How do I decide what products to use to correct undesirable behavior?

Before using any product for interrupting or deterring undesirable behavior, the first question should always be whether the pet is being given suitable and sufficient enrichment and outlets for its behavior and whether these are being adequately and consistently reinforced. In addition, it is essential that you determine if anything might be reinforcing the undesirable behavior so that this factor can be eliminated.

Numerous products have been designed to interrupt or deter undesirable behavior. However, the primary goal of training should always be to train the pet to exhibit the desirable behavior, rather than to punish the undesirable. Therefore, perhaps the most practical use for these products is to prevent recurrence of the problem during the owner's absence or as an aid in disrupting undesirable behavior so that responses that are more desirable can be achieved and reinforced.

This is one area where the quality and durability of the product is essential and the type of warranty may be an important consideration. Follow the instructions carefully, and supervise the pet whenever the product is being used. Punishment is intended to reduce the probability of a behavior in the future. To be successful, punishment must be administered during misbehavior and must be sufficiently noxious or unpleasant to deter the pet. Before using any punishment technique, it is important to determine why the pet is exhibiting the behavior. It is of little value (and inhumane) to try to stop the undesirable behavior without resolving the underlying cause. In fact, if the problem is related to fear and anxiety, punishment may serve to increase the pet's anxiety. When considering methods of punishment for undesirable behavior (see (23) Using Punishment Effectively), behavior products can be particularly useful because they are less likely to cause fear or defensive behavior toward the owner. If the punishment device can be activated while the owner is out of sight, as in remote punishment or booby traps, then the pet may learn to cease the behavior whether the owner is present or not. If a training device is not effective immediately, discontinue its use, and seek professional advice, because continuing to reprimand or punish the pet is counterproductive and may create fear and anxiety.

Why do some behavior modification products utilize shock?

“ The use of shock cannot be justified if there are other practical and more humane ways that the problem might be resolved. ”

For punishment to be effective, it must be sufficiently aversive or unpleasant to overcome the pet's motivation to perform the behavior. For this reason, some punishment devices use “shock” to deter the pet. When determining what punishment, if any, might be useful or appropriate for your pet, you must consider all the options available, the severity of the problem, the effects of the punishment on the pet (and you), and the consequences to the pet and you if the problem persists.

The use of shock cannot be justified if there are other practical and more humane ways in which the problem might be resolved. In fact, in some countries, products that use any level of shock have been banned as being cruel and inhumane. In addition, most problems can be prevented with the need for punishment with owner supervision or confinement away from sites where problems might arise to ensure the pet engages in appropriate behaviors and prevent undesirable behaviors. For indoor avoidance, devices and booby traps such as motion-activated spray and alarm devices or unpleasant surface coverings such as double-sided tape or carpet runners with nubs up are often sufficient.

Owners with large yards and no fencing may need to keep their pet indoors, tied up, or confined to a small pen outdoors. Outdoor electronic containment fencing, with proper installation and training, may be an alternative to keep pets from roaming off the property. Learning is enhanced if the signaling device has a tone that precedes the shock, providing an audible signal to the dog. After a very few pairings, the pet should learn to avoid further shock and therefore stay within the barriers of the property. These systems vary in reliability and are best used when installed by professionals who also supervise the training. On the other hand, even a highly noxious punishment may not be sufficient to overcome reflexive, innate, or highly motivated behaviors. Consider, for example, the dog that continues to pursue porcupines even after receiving a face full of quills. Therefore, shock devices may not be effective if the dog is highly motivated to run off the property. Of course, electronic containment fencing does not keep or prevent other animals or people from entering the property. In addition, for some dogs, the shock is so aversive as to cause fear of returning outdoors into the yard.

Because training should focus on rewarding what is desirable, the use of punishment, including any device that causes pain, should not be used.

In summary, even though devices that use shock or static corrections can be effective at deterring undesirable behaviors, training should focus on rewarding what is desirable and preventing what is unacceptable through avoidance, supervision, and the use of devices that do not cause pain or discomfort.

What products are useful for training and punishment when the owner is present to supervise?

Physical forms of punishment should always be avoided because they can lead to physical injury, can trigger fear and defensive aggression, and are seldom effective at deterring the pet from repeating the behavior.

In fact, physical punishment can serve to reinforce some unwanted behaviors by providing attention or alternatively lead to fear and defensive aggression. In some cases, use a device that you can activate remotely to provide an immediate, undesirable consequence that your dog can associate with a specific behavior (in which case, the device is used as a punisher). You can also use this device as a means of interrupting an undesirable response (disruptive stimulus) so that an appropriate desirable response can be achieved and reinforced.

How can a device be used to train appropriate behavior?

The concept of a disruptive or inhibitory stimulus is that it is sufficiently startling to interrupt the behavior. Whether the disruptive stimulus is also a punishment will depend on its effect on the pet and the problem. Some pets may be sufficiently deterred by the disruptive stimulus that it will reduce the possibility of the behavior recurring, while others may be interrupted but will not be deterred from repeating the behavior, or will habituate to the stimulus over time. The goal of the disruptive stimulus is to inhibit the undesirable response (with a minimum of fear or anxiety), and provide a window of opportunity to achieve the desirable response (which can then be reinforced negatively and/or positively).

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Citronella Spray Collar
Photo courtesy of Premier Pet Products

What devices can be used for pets that misbehave in the owner's presence?

Disruption or punishment devices include audible trainers, or ultrasonic trainers or a citronella spray repellent. Rape alarms, water rifles, and compressed air may also be effective (see sources below).

Why should the owner remain out of sight during punishment?

If the pet realizes that the owner is administering the punishment, the problem may cease when the owner is watching, but the pet will learn that the behavior is safe when the owner is out of sight. Therefore, if punishment is used, it is best administered while remaining out of sight, so that the pet does not associate the “punishment” with the owner.

What devices can be used to punish a pet while the owner remains out of sight?

A remote citronella or scentless spray collar and a number of remote ultrasonic collars are available. The remote citronella spray collar also has an audible tone that can be paired with a favored reward so that it serves as a remote form of reinforcement (as in clicker training). A remote vibration trainer has been designed for deaf dogs. For cats, you might place a remotely activated alarm or remotely activated spray device in areas that you want your cat to avoid (such as plants or counters).

Because it is imperative that pet owners use these devices during (not after) misbehavior, a pet monitor is another practical training tool. A small motion detector, The Tattle-Tale™, is capable of picking up the movement of a dog or cat on virtually any surface. The device can be set up in any area where the pet might “misbehave” (e.g., scratching, garbage raiding, climbing on counters or furniture). Home security monitors, motion-activated cameras, and even pet webcams are also available for monitoring and assessment when the pet cannot be supervised.

What can be done when the owner is absent?

Environmental punishment (or booby traps) may train the pet to stop the inappropriate behavior or to avoid selected sites even in the owner's absence. This type of punishment resembles the learning that occurs when pets are exposed to cars, barbed wire, cactus plants, sprinklers, and other unpleasant things in their environment. Automatic pet doors can be used to give one pet an opportunity to escape from other pets or to use a particular room or feeding area while the others are prevented from entry, because only the pet wearing the activation collar can enter through the door. In fact, some new cat doors that are activated by the cat's microchip have now been developed so that only those cats whose microchip is programmed into the door can gain access.

With a little planning and ingenuity, it is often possible to design a successful booby trap out of everyday items. A few strips of double-sided tape, a few empty tin cans set to topple, or an upside-down plastic carpet runner may successfully keep pets out of an area.

Outdoor devices: Generally, the best approach is preventive confinement with fencing, a dog run, or owner supervision. Pet repellents (available from most garden centers), motion-activated alarms (Critter Gitter™), a motion-detector sprinkler (The ScareCrow™), or a motion-detector can of compressed air might keep the owner's pet out of areas on the property (e.g., garden) or keep stray animals off the property. Ultrasonic deterrents appear to be variably effective at best.

Indoor devices: Motion-activated alarms and spray devices or double-sided tape can be placed in areas to keep cats (and perhaps dogs) away from plants, bird cages, fish tanks, drapes, windowsills, and furniture that might be scratched, as well as off tables and counters and out of rooms. Taste aversives may be effective at deterring chewing behaviors. Some cat and dog doors have been designed to be activated only by the pet wearing the activation collar or "key" or even the pet's own microchip so that individual pets can be allowed to access areas of the home while keeping other pets away.

What products are useful to control and deter barking?

For a bark-activated device to be effective, it must be sufficiently noxious to deter the barking, sensitive enough to detect each undesirable vocalization, and specific enough that it is not activated by extraneous stimuli. The Super Barker Breaker™ and K-9 Bark Stopper™ are audible bark-activated alarms that are designed to be placed on a counter or table in an area where a dog might bark (e.g., front hall, cage). Bark-activated collars emit a spray of citronella, lemon, or pressurized air or use an audible or ultrasonic sound to interrupt or deter barking. These collars are most useful when the owner is present, because if they successfully interrupt the barking, they provide an opportunity for the owner to reward desirable behavior. If used when the owner is not present, the spray collars may be sufficient to deter some forms of barking in some dogs but do not work if the disruptive effect is not sufficient to override the dog's desire to bark. In addition, bark collars should not be used until the cause of the barking is determined. For example, using bark devices on dogs that are barking due to anxiety may actually increase their anxiety even if the barking is disrupted, or the dog will continue to bark and receive the punishment.

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PRODUCT MANUFACTURER INFORMATION

Direct Interactive Devices

Barker Breaker, Mini Barker Breaker (sonic) - www.amtekpet.com
Direct Stop Repellent, (citronella spray) - www.premierpet.com*, petsafe.net
Clix – Dog stop alarm - www.companyofanimals.us
PetZoom – ultrasonic pet trainer - www.petzoompettrainer.com
Ultrasonic remote trainer - www.petsafe.net
Pet Agree / Dazer II (ultrasonic), KII Enterprises - www.kiienterprises.com
Dog Off - Ultrasonic and Sonic deterrent - www.koolatron.com

Monitoring Devices

Tattle Tale, (vibration motion sensor) - KII Enterprises, www.kiienterprises.com
Panasonic pet cam - <http://www.seemypetcam.com/cameras/>
Pet monitor - <http://www.eyespyfx.com/mywebcam.html>

Remote Devices

Spray Commander (remote scentless spray collar), Premier Pet Products - www.premierpet.com*, petsafe.net
Ultrasonic remote trainer – petsafe.net
Pet Safe remote spray trainer (citronella or unscented) – petsafe.net
Innotek spray commander – citronella – innotek.net
Deaf dog remote training devices - <http://www.deafdogs.org/resources/vibramakers.php>

Booby Traps (Avoidance Devices)

Cat stop – ultrasonic outdoor deterrent – www.contech-inc.com
Pawz Away deluxe spray deterrent (unscented) – petsafe.net
Scraminal – Critter Gitter – audible motion activated alarm – amtekpet.com
Scarecrow – motion-activated sprinkler - www.contech-inc.com
Ssscat motion-activated spray – innotek.net
Stay away motion-detector spray – contech-inc.com
Sticky Paws - www.stickypaws.com

Electronic Pet-Activated Doors

Electronic smart key (collar) activated doors – www.petsafe.net
Microchip activated cat doors - sureflap.ca, petporteusa.com, www.petdoors.com

Self-Cleaning Litterbox

www.littermaid.com
catgenie.com
scoopfree.com
petsafe.net

Automatic Feeding/Watering Devices

Automated feeders – petsafe.net
Automated feeding dish – koolatron.com
Automatic / timed feeding dishes – www.smarthome.com
Perfect pet feeder - <http://www.perfectpetfeeder.com>
Programmable feeder – petmate.com
Water dog – outdoor motion activated pet water “fountain” – www.contech-inc.com

Bark-Activated Devices

Bark Free and Super Bark Free audible and ultrasonic bark-activated trainer - www.koolatron.com
Gentle Spray Bark Activated Collar (Citronella or Scentless) – premierpet.com*, petsafe.net
Innotek lemon spray bark collar – Innotek citronella spray bark collar - innotek.net
Outdoor bark control – ultrasonic – petsafe.net
PetSafe spray bark collar – unscented or citronella - petsafe.net
Super Barker Breaker, SureStop Barker Breaker - Good Neighbor Barker Breaker (audible bark-activated deterrents) - www.amtekpet.com
Ultrasonic indoor bark control – petsafe.net

Head Halters

Gentle Leader, USA: www.gentleleader.com, Canada: www.gentleleadercanada.com
Halti - www.companyofanimals.co.ukwww.companyofanimals.us
Snoot Loop - <http://snootloop.com>
NewTrix easy way collar - www.newtrix.ca
Canny Collar, The Canny Company - www.cannycollarco.com
Comfort trainer head halter – www.petexpertise.com

No Pull Halters

Chest attachment:
Gentle Leader Easy Walk Harness - www.gentleleader.com
Halti Harness - www.companyofanimals.us
Sense-ible and sense-ation body harness - <http://www.softouchconcepts.com/>
Rear attachment:
Holt - Coastal Pet Products - www.coastalpet.com
Sporn training halter - Sporn Company - www.sporn.com

Sound Desensitization

Helping Fido Welcome Your Baby – helpingfido.com
Master's Voice - www.mastersvoice-dog.com
Sound CDs for dogs - Thunderstorms, Fireworks, New puppies: www.calmaudio.com
Sounds for desensitization on CD - PABA www.gentleleadercanada.com
Sounds for desensitization or habituation - scarednomore.com
Sounds Scary (thunder and fireworks) - www.soundtherapy4pets.com
Thunder/Noise CD: helpingfido.com
Thunder: Suburban thunder: <http://www.f7sound.com/dog.htm>
Sounds Good CD - Babies/Thunder - dogwise.com
Sound soothing – Babies: www.soundtherapy4pets.com
Sound sociable – Socialization: www.soundtherapy4pets.com
Sound speedy – Vehicles/traffic: www.soundtherapy4pets.com

Products for Reducing Anxiety/Muting Sounds Stimuli

Anxiety wrap - <http://www.anxietywrap.com>
Calming cap - thundershirt.com
Doggles - <http://doggles.com/products.html>
Mutt Muffs - www.safeandsoundpets.com
Storm defender cape - www.stormdefender.com
Thundershirt-www.thundershirt.com
Thunderband <http://www.jfinnovations.net/products.html>
Thunderhut - www.thunder-hut.com/

Odor Eliminators

KOE/AOE/Cat Odor Off /Dog Odor Off (odor neutralizers) - www.thornell.com
Anti-Icky Poo – antiickypoo.com
Nature's Miracle - <http://www.ilovenaturesmiracle.com/home/index.php>
Urine-off - www.urineoff.com
Urine-Erase - www.reidell.com

Miscellaneous Products

Busy Buddy, Pogo Plush, Linkables, Fun Kitty - www.premierpet.com*, www.petsafe.net
Buster cube - www.bustercube.com
Cat enclosures: www.purrfectfence.com, habitathaven.com, kittywalksystems.com
Kong dog and cat toys - www.kongcompany.com
Slim cat feeding toy – petsafe.net
Manners Minder – www.premierpet.com, www.askdryin.com, petexpertise.com
Nina Ottoson interactive toys - www.companyofanimals.us
Nylabone toys - www.nylabone.com
Pipolino cat feeding toy – pipolino.ca, pipolino.us
Planet Dog Toys - www.planetdog.com
Tricky treat – Fitness first treat – portion pacer (slows eating) - omegapaw.com
Pavlov's cat - cat scratch feeder - <http://www.mktmkt.com/pavlovscat.html>
Smart Cat Toys – esmartcat.com
Soft paws nail coverings - www.softpaws.com