

Aversives for Dogs

Determining an effective aversive reaction for your dog is definitely a case of trial-and-error, as individual preferences will vary with each dog. This is often the best method to discourage a dog from a particular action or place, but will seldom work effectively without offering an alternative that is both convenient and rewarding.

Texture

You may need to weight the “material” firmly or tape it in order for it to stay put. To protect furniture or floor finish from sticky substances, attach them to a piece of foil or heavy plastic and secure that with weights or light tape. These are more effective for puppies, small dogs and low-energy dogs than for those who won’t let a little obstacle stand in their way.

Indoors

- ◆ Shelf paper (sticky side up)
- ◆ Double-sided carpet tape

Outdoors

- ◆ Irregular/sharp rocks, firmly set into dirt
- ◆ Chicken wire, firmly set into dirt (sharp edges rolled under)

Both

Heavy plastic carpet runner (pointed side up)

Taste

Some of these substances may damage furniture or floor finishes, so be sure to test them in a hidden location before widespread use. Except for hot sauce and cayenne pepper, these substances should be safe to apply to most people’s skin; however, some individuals may be sensitive to them.

- ❖ Bitter Apple or similar sprays and gels marketed specifically for taste aversion
- ❖ Insect repellents, especially those containing citronella or citrus odors (check for toxicity, if it’s safe for young children, it’s generally safe for pets)
- ❖ Some hot sauces
- ❖ Cayenne pepper
- ❖ Some muscle rubs
- ❖ Citric odors (colognes, concentrated juices or fresh peels)
- ❖ Aloe gel

Surprise!

Remote Controlled Aversive:

- ◆ Motion detector that reacts with a startling sound
- ◆ Snappy Trainer (upside-down mouse trap that’s securely taped under paper to avoid contact)
- ◆ Aluminum pie plate containing water, beans or pebbles -- preferably balanced precariously
- ◆ Scat Mat (very slight electrical shock)

Human Controlled Aversive:

Use these to get your dog’s attention, and thereby offer an appropriate alternative.

- ◆ Spray bottle or squirt gun filled with water or a combination of water and vinegar (NOTE: avoid the super-duper water guns that have a very forceful spray)
- ◆ Loud air horn
- ◆ Whistle
- ◆ Shaker can (soda can containing nails, pennies, beans or pebbles -- securely taped shut)

WARNING: For fearful dogs, try everything else before trying surprise techniques, especially those using noises!