

TIME-OUT

What is a time-out?

A technique used to teach a dog to stop doing something we don't like, just like you would do with a child. *The idea of the time-out, in essence, is the removal of fun or stuff he wants.* We do this by removing the dog from the situation or by restricting his access to an object, person, or dog.

Examples of what to use time-outs for.

Inappropriate dog-dog play (nipping, rough wrestling, or incessant barking) or greetings.
Jumping on people to greet them.
Demand barking.
If your dog gets mouthy or jumpy during playtime with you.

How to use a time-out.

Pick a target behavior. Decide the specific behavior that triggers a time-out. And *be ready to give a time out EVERY time the behavior occurs, no exceptions.* Consistency is key. *For time-outs to work they must be given every time your dog engages in the target behavior—at the very second he begins.*

Find what happens just before the behavior you want less of. *This is the antecedent* and is what will get the warning cue.

Step 1. Give your warning cue. "Easy"

Anytime you see the antecedent behavior, give your warning cue. If your dog responds to the cue and dials down the behavior, praise him and allow play to continue.

Step 2. Signal the time-out. "Too Bad"

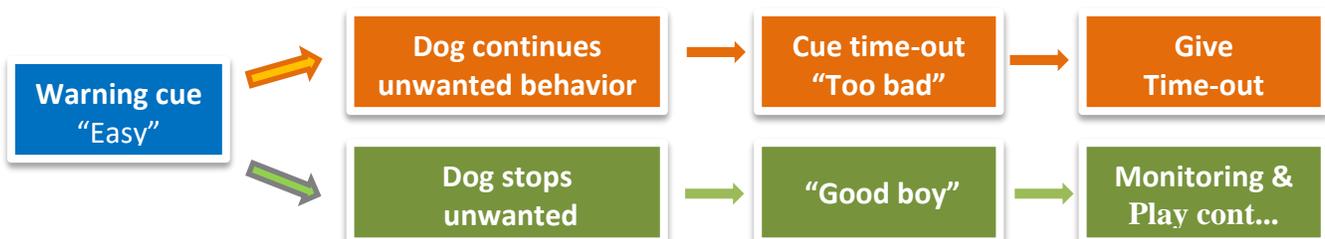
If your dog disregards the warning cue and engages in the target behavior—in this case nipping—give him the time-out signal (like "Oops!" or "Too bad").

Step 3. Give the time-out.

Time your dog out by putting him on a leash and removing him from the room or the play area at the park or by removing yourself if the behavior is targeted towards you.

Step 4. Back to play.

Release your dog after 1-2 minutes to try again. Be sure the time-out is long enough for them to calm down, but not so long that they get bored and start making their own fun.



What can a time-out look like?

- Putting your dog in his crate (if he is crate trained).
- Putting him behind a baby gate or closed door.
- Putting your dog on a leash.
- Walking your dog away from an object, person, or dog he wants to get to.
- You leave the room! Move away from your dog while they are tethered or stop the game.



Bob loves his crate. He just doesn't want to be in it right now!

The Phases of Training

Phase 1: "Tra la la" ~ 1 to 4 trials done

Dog has made no connections between the elements in the flowchart above

Phase 2: May Try Resisting Arrest ~4 - 12 trials done

Dog has made the connection between the time-out and the T/O cue so may try to avoid being caught. But no connection yet between the warning cue, behavior and punishment

Phase 3: Hit and Miss ~12 - 20 trials done

Dog is beginning to put it all together and so is engaging in target problem behavior less and/or heeding warning cue (i.e. ceasing target behavior when warned) but not consistently

Somewhere Between Trials 12 & 20: Success! The Behavior Crashes

Dog has put it all together and refrains from target problem behavior and/or consistently heeds warning cues, with only occasional lapses (time him out for these)

These are a lot of legwork, BUT if you stick to your guns, they are miracle workers!

Say hello to my little friends.

I am the stalwart religious one that WILL call out each and every pre-cursor to bad behavior with a warning cue "Easy" my son.



And I am the one with the motivational punch! What, you didn't here stalwart? You just got here? "Oh, too bad for you". High mag time-out!

Troubleshooting: If your dog is still engaging in the target behavior after, say, half a dozen time-outs, or he does something particularly rude, a final time-out may help to get your point across. Follow steps 1-4, but don't give your dog another opportunity to misbehave again that day. Leave the park or head home if you are out on a walk.