



# IS YOUR DOG AN ESCAPE ARTIST?

The best way to deal with a dog who escapes a fenced yard is to learn **WHY** they like to get out so you can prevent further attempts. Successful escape is rewarding for a dog so it is important to address this issue as soon as it starts happening. While a fenced yard can be enjoyable for dogs, the Connecticut Humane Society doesn't recommend **ANY** pet live outside or be left in the yard without supervision as dogs are vulnerable to escape, theft, and injury.

**Dogs seek to leave their yard for a variety of reasons.**

- 🐾 **Boredom-** An uninteresting environment can cause a dog to seek out his/her own fun.
  - *Solution-* Make sure your dog has tons of toys in various sizes, textures and shapes. Treat dispensing toys and puzzles, like appropriate Kong's and Kibble Nibble Treat Balls, are a great way to keep your pooch's mind busy. Regularly swapping out toys can help prevent boredom. Get involved, too! If your dog does not like to play alone, engage them with games. Have your dog perform a few tricks before handing toys over or hide them around the yard like a doggie scavenger hunt.
- 🐾 **To get to a sight, sound or smell-** Hounds and terriers are especially interested in neighborhood happenings.
  - *Solution-* Consider reinforcing your fence; i.e. adding extensions on the top that tilt inward to prevent climbing and bury the fence further into the ground to prevent tunneling.
- 🐾 **High energy/active breeds-** Breeds in the herding and sporting groups need more than your average walk. Hanging out in a fenced yard is not adequate exercise for very active dogs.
  - *Solution-* Provide ample daily exercise. Fetch is a great way to wind energy down and is fun for dog and owner! Enroll the dog into classes that require physical and mental stimulation i.e. fly ball, agility or doggie daycare. A tired dog is a good dog!
- 🐾 **Fear-** Loud noises like thunder and fireworks may frighten some dogs enough to escape.
  - *Solution-* Identify the trigger then try to avoid it. Provide the dog with a "safe place" where s/he can go to feel comfortable. Consider working with a professional trainer for behavior modification protocols. In severe cases, you may need to consult with your vet to pair the training with anti-anxiety medications.
- 🐾 **Not spayed/neutered-** Being intact means they are hormonally driven to look for a mate!
  - *Solution-* Spay/Neuter as soon as possible. This will decrease the need to escape in search of a mate and can help with some behavior and medical issues.
- 🐾 **Supervision & Training-** In combination, these are the two best ways to prevent your dog from escaping. Training creates a strong bond between you and your dog which can be a wonderful deterrent to wandering. A dog that is happy at home is more likely to stay at home. Remember, if you cannot actively supervise your dog's outdoor activity, s/he should remain inside where s/he cannot make a break for the neighborhood.

**As a parting thought-** If your dog does escape, do not punish him/her when they return or are caught. Doing this can make them afraid to return home or come to you when found after an escape.