



DIGGING DOGS

Why do dogs dig?

- On a hot summer day dogs may dig a hole to have a cool place to lie
- To flush out prey or dig for rodents
- Dogs dig to bury or retrieve bones
- Dogs also dig to escape from confinement
- Can occur when dogs have insufficient stimulation, exercise, or attention

How can I determine why my dog is digging?

The first step in treating inappropriate digging behaviour is to determine the reason for digging. Prevention, redirecting, management, and reducing your dog's motivation to dig by providing for all your dog's needs are essential so that digging is not merely redirected to a new location. Inhibiting or preventing all digging, without understanding and dealing with the dog's motivation could result in new behaviour problems such as chewing, excessive vocalization, or escape behaviours.

Dogs that dig because they are pursuing prey will continue unless you can get rid of the prey. Dogs that dig to get cool should be provided with a cool resting area with plenty of shade and water. On very hot days, it is best to keep your dog inside. For some dogs, digging may be an indication of a lack of exercise and attention. Additional play, mental stimulation, and exercise may be required especially if your dog is young and very active. Dogs that continue to dig may require additional stimulation to keep them occupied when owners are not around (we have several interactive toys at our store at the Calgary Humane Society). If your dog is digging, supervision is vital to interrupt the behaviour. This is particularly true for the dog that digs to escape from the yard or confinement area.

How can I stop inappropriate digging?

1. Provide a digging area

For some dogs, it will be useful for you to create an area where the dog is allowed to dig. This could be a spot in the backyard where you have placed soft dirt or perhaps a kiddie pool full of sand. Next, make this place somewhere that your dog would like to dig in. Bury things there that your pet would like to dig up. This might be food, lightly covered, or their toys.



2. Supervision and Management

Supervision and management should be used to prevent inappropriate digging. Always be out in the yard with your dog to interrupt the behaviour or add barriers around the areas that your dog is digging. Add mental stimulation toys in the yard to redirect your dog too.

If you find you are struggling to resolve your dog's digging behaviour, you can always call our behaviour outreach line at 403-723-6019 or book a consultation via our website <https://www.calgaryhumane.ca/what-we-do/animal-training/private-consultations/>