

TIME OUT! Many experts in children's behavior recommend using "time-out" instead of punishment for hyperactive children. Instead of being spanked or yelled at, the child is put in one spot and required to stay in that spot for a certain period of time. Part of the philosophy behind the time-out is that the parent is able to establish

rules and guidelines without anger and the child sits still until he calms down.

Because active dogs are prone to getting into trouble and/or becoming over stimulated, you can use time-outs to interrupt bad behavior and control your dog without anger. At the same time, this gives your dog a chance to relax and quiet down. If the dog has learned the down/stay command, it can be taken to a specific spot, such as a small throw rug, and be told to lie down and stay. The length of time that the dog should stay in this position depends upon the dog, its level of training and the situation. A well-trained adult dog might be able to hold the down/stay for half an hour, but a young, partially trained dog might be capable of a down/stay for just five minutes. In any case, never let the dog get up and move away on its own. You must always release it from the time-out.

If your dog is not yet capable of extended down/stays, a crate is also good for time-outs. NEVER use a crate for punishment; the dog should always feel safe, happy and secure there. Without acting angry, put the dog in its crate and leave it alone for a period of time. If the dog barks, correct it and leave it again. Never let the dog out of the crate until it is calm, relaxed and quiet.

QUIET TIME

Active dogs excel in participating in activities with their owners: walking, jogging, fetching a ball or playing chase. However, quiet companionship - time to relax and be together - is also a wonderful part of the relationship between a dog and owner. Unfortunately, this is sometimes the hardest thing for an active dog to learn to enjoy.

An example of some quiet time you could enjoy together would be to leave the other dogs outside (if you have more than one) so there are fewer distractions and less competition and invite your dog to sit down on the floor in front of the television. Turn on a show you want to watch and have your dog lie down beside you telling her, "Lie down for quiet time." Give her a tummy rub until she starts to relax. Turn the tummy rub into a body massage, moving your hands slowly over her body, rubbing and massaging during an entire half-hour sitcom. The time together is just as good for you as it is for your dog.

DAILY LIVING

Life with an active dog may never be totally peaceful, but it doesn't have to be draining either. You must be aware of your dog's needs and of your relationship with your dog, making sure it views you as its leader. And you need to maintain your sense of humor so that you can enjoy your dog's energy rather than fight it. Living with an active dog offers more challenges than living with a more sedentary dog, but it can also offer more joys.

* Information taken from an article written by Liz Palika for the Sept., 1996 edition of Dog Fancy Magazine



Do you have an active dog? What does your active dog do when you are not paying attention

to it or when you are away from home? Chances are the dog doesn't sleep; instead, it barks at people or dogs outside and looks for something to

BUSY BODIES

do - possibly something mischievous. It might chew on your expensive shoes or the furniture, raid the trash can, have fun with the kids' toys and eat the groceries from the kitchen cupboard. It might also use its excess energy to rearrange landscape and ruin the lawn or run wildly up and down the fence barking incessantly. These dogs can be a challenge to live with, however an ACTIVE dog does not have to be a PROBLEM dog. With special attention, an active dog can stay away from trouble.

WHO'S IN CHARGE HERE? Many active dogs combine high intelligence with a tendency toward dominance. Therefore, your dog must understand that it is living in YOUR house and that YOU make the rules. In other words, take charge!

Some simple reminders can help establish this in the dog's mind. First of all, you should always eat first. In the dog's terms, the biggest, strongest, most dominant dog always gets the best food first. If it is time to eat, and you are not yet ready to eat, have an apple or a carrot, and have your dog lie down and be still while you eat. Never let your dog beg from the table. Have it do a down/stay, or put it in the crate or the backyard.

Always go through doors first, making your dog wait until you give permission for it to follow you. Again, in the dog's mind, the biggest, most dominant dog always goes first. By teaching the dog to wait at doorways, you can also prevent the dog from dashing out doors or gates. The same thing applies to stairs: You go first; your dog follows after.

Have your dog work for you. Make it sit each time you hand it a treat or feed it, or when you put on its leash. When the dog comes up and nudges you for petting, tell it to sit. When the dog brings you the ball to throw, have it sit first. The simple act of sitting is a good way to have the dog acknowledge that you are the boss.

PROVIDE A SAFE ENVIRONMENT

Because your dog has so much energy and is so curious, you need to provide it with a safe environment. This is necessary not only to protect your belongings, but also to protect your dog. What appear to be garbage can goodies to your dog could actually make it sick, poison it or cause an intestinal obstruction requiring surgery. A chewed electrical cord could shock your dog - even kill it - and could start a house fire. Protect your possessions; protect your active dog from itself.

Put away any collectibles and breakables or move them to higher shelves. Do not drop dirty clothes on the floor where your dog can easily drag them off. Close closet doors so that shoes are unavailable for chewing. Look at your house from your dog's point of view, and remove objects that might invite misbehavior. When you are home, you can protect your dog by making sure you know where it is at all times. Don't let it sneak out of sight and get into trouble. Instead, keep your dog in the room with you. Then you can praise the dog when it's good and intervene when it's not. Your dog should not be left free in the house when you can't supervise it. If you are taking a shower or running to the store for a few minutes, put your dog in its crate. If you are going to be gone all day, you can still leave the dog in the crate if a neighbor is willing to come over and let the dog out once to play and potty. When the dog can be trusted a little more, you can also block off one "dog-proofed" room in the house where the dog can stay while you are gone.

NUTRITION The adage "You are what you eat" applies to dogs as well as people. Active dogs need a complete and balanced diet that supplies

all their nutritional needs without adding undesirable ingredients. Opinions vary among experts in canine nutrition. Select a high quality food and do not hesitate to talk to your veterinarian about your dog's nutritional health and any concerns you may have about the food your dog eats. **EXERCISE is good for any dog's physical health, but regular aerobic exercise is ESSENTIAL for the active dog. A dog that gets regular aerobic exercise will be sharper mentally, more able to learn, and more apt to retain training than a more sedentary dog. Exercise also helps active dogs to use up energy that might otherwise be used for home and yard destruction.**

Just what is aerobic exercise? A brisk walk can be considered good exercise for toy or short-legged breeds. However a walk is not sufficient exercise for young, healthy, medium to large sized dogs. These dogs also need to chase balls or flying discs, go for long jogs with their owner or run, jump and play in the yard until tired. You must introduce exercise gradually, since dogs, like humans, can get sore muscles or become injured when exercising too vigorously.

OBEDIENCE TRAINING is necessary for all dogs, but it is especially important for active dogs. A group class is usually best for active dogs, as they can also be easily distracted by the world around them. In a group class, even though there are other dogs and people, your dog learns to pay attention to you, ignoring

the distractions. However, if your dog is so distracted that it can't concentrate, you both might benefit from one or two private sessions with a trainer so that the dog has a head start on the basic commands. When you are more confident, enroll in a group class.

Teaching the basic commands, especially the sit/stay and down/stay, helps teach your dog that it must control itself. Obedience training gives your dog something to think about besides making mischief. Classes and daily practice sessions will keep your dog

from growing bored; bored dogs are the most likely to get into trouble.