

Dog Training:Tie Down Tool

WHAT IS A TIE-DOWN?

The tie-down is a temporary management tool used to teach good dog behaviors while also helping them relax. A tie-down is a 2 to 3 feet long leash, rope, or plastic coated cable (that has clips on one or both ends) and is normally attached to an immovable object (such as a piece of heavy furniture or an eyebolt that is placed directly into the wall). The tie-down is attached to your dog's flat buckle or martingale collar. Leash or rope tie downs are not recommend as many dogs chew through them. However, if you must use a leash or a rope, be sure to soak it in a taste deterrent (such as Bitter Apple) every couple of days and be sure that the length is only 2 to 3 feet in length.

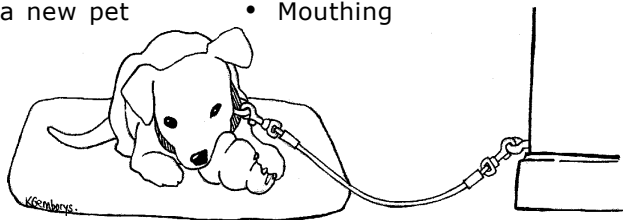
WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF A TIE-DOWN?

Proper use of the tie-down tool will help teach your dog good manners as well as to relax. The tie-down, when used correctly, will also help keep your dog out of trouble. The tie-down is NOT a substitute for training but a tool to help in training your dog good habits.

WHEN SHOULD I USE A TIE-DOWN?

It is very important to use a tie-down only when a person is home and can monitor the dog's activities. A tie-down should not be used when someone is not home or as a punishment for bad behaviors. A tie-down can help manage the following problem behaviors:

- Excessive playing
- Begging at the dinner table
- Chewing improper objects
- Separation anxiety
- Introduction of a new pet
- Housetraining
- Thievery
- Barking
- Jumping up
- Mouthing



WHY SHOULD I USE A TIE-DOWN?

A tie-down permits the dog to be inside with its "pack" or family rather than isolating a dog outside. It can teach your dog to settle/calm down and to be under control when inside the home. Because the length of the tie-down is restricted, your dog is encouraged to sit or lie down in the specified area (as they have limited movement). Tie-downs also prevent destructive behavior as the dog has very limited access to "chewable" objects.



HOW DO I INSTALL A TIE-DOWN?

When determining the room where to place a tie-down, keep in mind to look for a room where the family will reside most of the time. Suggestions include kitchens, living rooms, dens, offices, etc. Multiple locations can be set up so the dog can be moved when you change locations. An eyehook should be screwed securely at an angle into a stud in the wall just above the baseboard (about 5" from the floor). The tie down can be attached either with a clip or by pushing the loop of the tie down through the eye, then tread the clip through the loop.

Place at a distance from furniture, bookcases, electrical outlets, et cetera, so the dog cannot chew or become destructive (about 3 feet of 'blank' wall space works well).

NOW THAT I HAVE SET UP MY TIE-DOWN AREA, HOW DO I GET STARTED?

- Be sure the dog is wearing a buckle or martingale collar. DO NOT use a training collar (such as a choke collar, head halter, or prong collar) while the dog is on a tie down.
- Place a mat or old towel down so the dog rests on the mat while on the tie down. This give the dog a "target" to go to when training him to go to his "place". A humane trainer should be able to help you train a "target" or "place" behavior.
- To start, put the dog on a tie-down several times a day, for five to ten minutes a day. To make the tie-down area an agreeable place for your dog; do give him a stuffed Kong or other special chew toy. Slowly extend the time the dog is on a tie-down.
- Vary the length of time that your dog is on a tie-down so that he doesn't know how long he will be on the tie-down and will learn to be patient.
- The dog should initially get a reward each time he goes to the tie down, then randomly while he's there, but ONLY when he's calm and quiet. Quietly praise him while slipping him an especially good treat.

- If the dog barks while he is tied, leave the room (returning when he is quiet). It is important to IGNORE obnoxious behavior but praise and give treats for calm/quiet behavior.
- Notice and reward calm/quiet behavior. Be sure to reinforce good behavior by praising and giving treats to the dog once he is lying down.
- When taking your dog off the tie-down, end the activity with a "Release" cue.

DO I ALWAYS HAVE TO USE TIE-DOWNS?

No. A tie-down is a temporary tool to teach good household manners, not a substitute for training. As your dog becomes more relaxed around the house, you can lead him to his "place" area, and have him settle on his own for short periods of time without attaching him to the tie-down. Be sure this is done at a time when commotion and distractions will be at a minimum, for instance in the evening when the family is reading or watching T.V. Gradually increase the time when he is left on his mat without the tie-down, and always use the "Release" cue when you are ready to have him come off his mat.

ARE THERE ANY PARTICULAR DOGS THAT SHOULD NOT BE TRAINED WITH A TIE-DOWN?

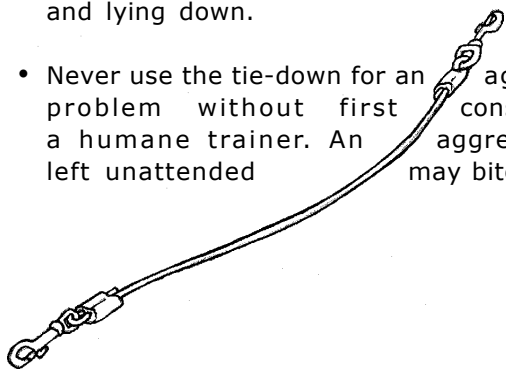
Yes. Never use the tie down for an aggression problem without first consulting with a professional humane trainer. If your dog is showing signs of aggression toward people or other dogs (such as possessiveness over toys or food, snarling, snapping, lunging), if you are unable to handle or groom your dog without a struggle, or if your trainer points out behavior that may lead to aggression, do not use the tie-down. Call a humane trainer immediately and arrange for a behavior consultation.

IMPORTANT TIE-DOWN GUIDELINES:

- Only use a tie-down when you are home.
- Only use the tie-down on a martingale, flat, or

buckle collar.

- Never use a tie-down outdoors, unless a human is also outdoors to directly supervise the dog (such as at family barbeques or while gardening).
- Never use the tie down as a punishment.
- Always give treats for calm, quiet behavior on the tie down.
- Interactions between children and the dog should be carefully supervised at all times, whether or not the tie-down is being used.
- Never allow children or others to bother the dog while on a tie-down, unless they are rewarding the dog with treats for being calm and lying down.
- Never use the tie-down for an aggression problem without first consulting with a humane trainer. An aggressive dog left unattended may bite.



WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A TIE-DOWN AND USING A CABLE/CHAIN/TIE OUT FOR THE YARD?

Chaining, tethering, or tie outs are terms which refer to fastening a dog to a stationary object or stake, as a means of keeping the dog under control in the yard. Tie outs/tethering are usually longer in length (anywhere from six to twenty feet). The main difference is that tie-downs are under supervision and around people whereas chaining or tethering usually isolates a dog from the family, usually in the owner's backyard. Dogs thrive on human interaction as they are social and "pack" animals. A dog kept on a cable or chain outdoors for hours, days or months can often become depressed and often aggressive. Since the tie-down is supervised, the dog's environment is often controlled. When a tie out or chain is used, the dog is often not supervised and is not able to run from a perceived threat (such as strangers, biting insects, or other animals). Some dogs can hang themselves on a tie out when left

alone. Some dogs can become tangled in the chain/tie out and can injure themselves. For these reasons, WE DO NOT RECOMMEND TIE OUTS, CHAINING. OR TETHERING.

USING A TIE-DOWN FOR SPECIFIC PROBLEMS:

MANAGEMENT - If you are busy and cannot keep a direct eye on your dog, put him on a tie-down. That way, he cannot chew up the furniture or get under foot when you are not looking. Remember to notice calm behavior and reward with praise and treats. Remember that your dog should have a nice bone or stuffed KONG to keep him occupied when he is on a tie down.

JUMPING UP - If your dog jumps on people when they enter the door, a way to train him to not jump is to put him on a tie down prior to the guests entering the household. After you have done your greeting, and your dog has calmed, you can either let your guest approach him and give him a treat, or let him off the tie-down. Remember not to reinforce any bad behaviors with attention. Only reward the your dog when he is quiet with praise and food treats.

SEPARATION ANXIETY - If your dog whines when you leave him in a different room or follows you endlessly, you can help your dog learn to relax without you by the use of a tie down. Setting up a few tie-down sessions daily will help your dog learn that when you leave, you will return again.

DOG TO CAT INTRODUCTIONS - When introducing a dog to a cat for the first time, it is recommended that you place your dog on a tie-down, and let your cat have free roam of the room. When the dog sees the cat and is calm, reward him with both praise and treats. This way, you cat can feel safe and you can be confident knowing that your dog cannot run after the cat.

If you have additional questions, please call our FREE Animal Behavior Help line at 408/727-3383, ext. 753 or use our email The Behaviorist web page.