

**Time outs can be effective way of teaching your dog or puppy that they need to control unwanted behaviors. Time-outs can be as effective with dogs and puppies as they are with children.**

They are far more effective than physical or verbal punishment. Attention fuels behavior, so yelling and scolding and getting up out of your chair could actually be a reward to your dog. Most dogs, at one time or another in their lives, do something "bad" just to get us to notice them and stop staring at the moving picture box in our living rooms! Anything that works will be repeated!



Photo courtesy of Amanda at ["A day in the life of our pugs"](#)

**A baby gate can be a marvelous management tool and time-out barrier.**

**A time-out removes all possible rewards. All you need is a plan and a time-out place.**

Since the "punishment" part of time-out is losing the opportunity to continue a game that got out of hand or some other self-reinforcing behavior, the time-out place must not be fun. Simply putting the dog outside is not a time-out - he may be pleased to be out in his own personal park. It must be boring. A settle down zone. Think of it as sending an unruly child to his room, or putting him down for a nap.

#### **Possible time-out places:**

- his crate or bed
- a short tether attached to a heavy piece of furniture or eye-bolt
- in the laundry room or kitchen
- you could remove yourself, the toy - the interaction ends abruptly

#### **But won't he hate his crate if I use it for punishment?**

If your dog otherwise likes his crate, it won't change how he feels about it. (My mom sent me to my room a lot as a kid, I never hated my room!) The key is to be matter-of-fact -neutral not angry- when you put him in there. You are taking away the privilege of your company. And no, he doesn't get his favorite bone when he's in time-out!

## **To use the time-out you must establish:**

- a clear "speed limit" - consistent black and white house rules
- a warning phrase like "time out"
- a predictable and consistent consequence, every time an infraction occurs
- the ability to steel yourself against protest or tantrums

### **Example:**

*The dog is playing a cooperative game of fetch but starts to get worked up. You ask him to "sit" before you will throw the toy and instead, he launches on you and tries to grab the toy from your hand or barks AT you. "Time Out!" Game over, Dude! All play ends. You can simply leave and take the toy with you, or, for more serious infractions, take him by the collar and march him silently to his time-out place and walk away, totally ignoring him. How long? It doesn't have to be too long. The count of 5 if he looks shocked or sheepish. If he's complaining, you must wait until he resigns himself to being there. When he gives you the big sigh and accepts his fate, quietly go release him with no fanfare.*

If you are consistent and predictable, soon the dog will monitor his own behavior in order to continue the privilege of your company. He will choose a desirable behavior, because it works!