



LARIMER HUMANESOCIETY

Guide to Inappropriate Digging

Digging is a natural behavior for dogs. However, when property is destroyed, this natural behavior quickly becomes a problem. Follow these steps to prevent and correct destructive digging.

Prevent your dog from digging

1. Prevent your dog from learning that digging in certain areas is rewarding (i.e. the garden, lawn, flower beds, etc).
2. Utilize a crate or dog-safe room to keep your dog out of trouble when you are not home. See the Guide to Crate Training for more information on how to crate train.
3. When you are home, keep an eye on your dog. If you are unable to supervise your dog, put him in his crate or dog-safe room.
4. Your dog should not be left unattended outdoors for extended periods of time.

Give your dog an appropriate place to dig

1. Digging is a natural behavior for dogs, so eliminating digging altogether is not a reasonable expectation.
2. Create a sand/soil pit or designated area in your yard for your dog to dig.
3. Bury toys and treats in the pit so your dog learns that it is a rewarding place to dig. Make the items easy to find at first. As your dog gets better at finding the items, bury them deeper in the pit.

Avoid punishing your dog for inappropriate digging

1. Punishing a dog after the fact will not teach your dog what they did wrong.
2. Even if a dog is caught in the act of inappropriate digging, punishment will likely only teach the dog that their owner is scary.
3. Punishment damages the relationship between dog and owner.

If you have tried what is provided here and still have questions, contact behaviorhelp@larimerhumane.org or call 970-226-3647 ext. 513