

6 Human Behaviors Dogs Hate

Mychelle Blake, MSW, CDBC, Lifestyle Contributor and Pet Behavior Expert

Mychelle has more than 13 years of experience in the pet health industry and is a Certified Dog Behavior Consultant as well as a valued member of IDEXX's Pet Health Network team since 2014.

[Dogs](#) have lived side by side with humans for at least 10,000 years or more, [according to thescientist.com](#). Despite living in close quarters with each other for so long, humans often do things to dogs that they believe dogs love, but dogs distinctly dislike. Misinterpretation and anthropomorphism lead to dogs that are forced to tolerate undesirable [behaviors](#) which eventually can cause fearful, anxious and even [aggressive](#) responses.

1. Hugging

We often hug our dogs because, as people, we enjoy hugs with each other and it follows logically to us that dogs would love this too. Most dogs, in fact, do not enjoy this and while some will quietly tolerate the behavior, other dogs can become fearful or anxious when held and may act out to let you know they are unhappy. An even more serious issue is children hugging dogs. [According to the American Veterinary Medical Association](#), children are the victims of the most dog bites each year by far, and this is often due to children handling dogs in ways that make their canine friends uncomfortable.

[\[10 Questions to Help You Avoid Dog Bites\]](#)

2. Rough handling

In addition to not liking hugs, dogs also are often subjected to handling that can be stressful. Having strangers and even familiar humans reaching their hands right into a dog's face in an attempt to pet their head can feel very intimidating from a dog's point of view. Dogs that haven't been properly desensitized to other forms of handling, such as [grooming](#), nail trimming and [veterinary exams](#) can find these situations extremely frightening. It's important to work with dogs, particularly as [puppies](#), to get them to enjoy handling and to make vet and grooming visits more pleasant in the future.

3. "Old School" communication

Our understanding of dogs has really changed over the years, particularly recently with the focus on canine cognitive cognition in many research universities. Still, despite this gain in knowledge, many humans still cling to disproven beliefs about dogs and dominance and their relationship to wolves. This philosophy can lead to dogs being handled and trained inappropriately and developing fearful and/or aggressive behavior. One example of this type of thinking is staring into a dog's eyes to let the dog know "you are boss." This type of body language is quite intimidating to a dog and can make a dog very uneasy. It's important to use [sound science](#) to learn more about how a dog sees the world and relates to other dogs and people to improve our interspecies communication.

4. Poor training techniques

Along with the change in our thinking about dogs, [training](#) has really evolved over the past decades to emphasize positive reinforcement and kinder methods of getting dogs to do the behaviors we want. Dogs do best in an environment where they are encouraged to do behaviors and rewarded for them with whatever they find most pleasing:

- [Food](#)
- [Toys](#)
- Affection
- Praise

Every dog is an individual and should be treated as such. Likewise, training that focuses on punishing dogs for behaviors, rather than teaching them what you want them to do, can lead to even more inappropriate behaviors because dogs find this threatening and unpleasant. Dogs are also often subject to "trendy" techniques, such as being asked to stand on a post or wall for a period of time with no reinforcement to "build confidence." These techniques have no basis in science, yet humans are all too quick to be lulled by marketing messages. Always look for a qualified, educated professional when looking for a training class or private consultation. [Visit the websites of the American College of Veterinary Behaviorists, the Animal Behavior Society, and the IAABC](#) to find someone near you.

[\[10 Simple but Effective Dog Training Tips\]](#)

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5. Inactivity

A big one for dogs, particularly dogs bred for activity, is not being given enough physical and mental stimulation by guardians. As a behavior consultant, I can say it's very normal to meet with a dog's family and find out that the dog is never taken on walks and they consider free run of the yard an appropriate amount of exercise. Meanwhile, Fido is [destroying their home](#) and [their yard](#) due to boredom and too much excess energy. If you have a specific [breed](#), [find out more about why the breed](#) was created and provide your dog with activities that meet that need. For example, some breeds were created to run for miles a day (such as [Dalmatians](#)) and a quick 10 minute walk around the block isn't going to give this dog what he needs to be healthy and happy. Likewise, dogs need to have mental stimulation – this can mean interactive toys, a variety of chew items, play with other dogs, and training. A dog wants to be fully engaged with life and hopes that human guardians will fill this need instead of relegating the dog to the backyard, the couch and general boredom.

[\[Learn the benefits of a tired dog\]](#)

6. Inconsistency

Dogs have a hard time understanding what we want from them, and when a guardian, or an entire household, is inconsistent, this makes it much harder for a dog to figure us out. If you have a dog, make sure you, and anyone involved with the dog, are all on the same page about hand signals, voice cues and how the dog can live in your home. Giving mixed signals isn't fair to the dog – imagine if you had one person in your household encouraging you to sit on the couch while others yelled at you when they see you sitting there! A great way to keep consistent is to write everything down in a chart, or use a whiteboard on your fridge and go over it with everyone in the household. It's our job to make our dogs' lives fulfilled and earn their trust and make our human lives less confusing to them.

If you have any questions or concerns, you should always visit or call your veterinarian -- they are your best resource to ensure the health and well-being of your pets.