



Doggy Time Outs

Puppies and many breeds of adult dogs are notorious for play-mouthing and jumping on people. Mouthing and jumpy play between two dogs is normal and socially acceptable, however most people consider these behaviors rude when they are directed at us. Dogs may use their mouths or jump up to get attention, and many dogs find out quickly this works for them! It's hard to ignore a dog who is jumping on your or putting his mouth on you.

What Should I Do?

Since dogs learn via consequences, it is important to teach our dogs that these behaviors no longer get rewarding attention. Instead, these behaviors will have the consequence of a 30 second to two minute time out. Avoid violent techniques such as yanking on collars, holding their mouth closed or kneeling your dog – these may make your dog fearful of you or human hands, or they may be interpreted by your dog as attention and play, making the behavior worse.

Where Should Time Out Be?

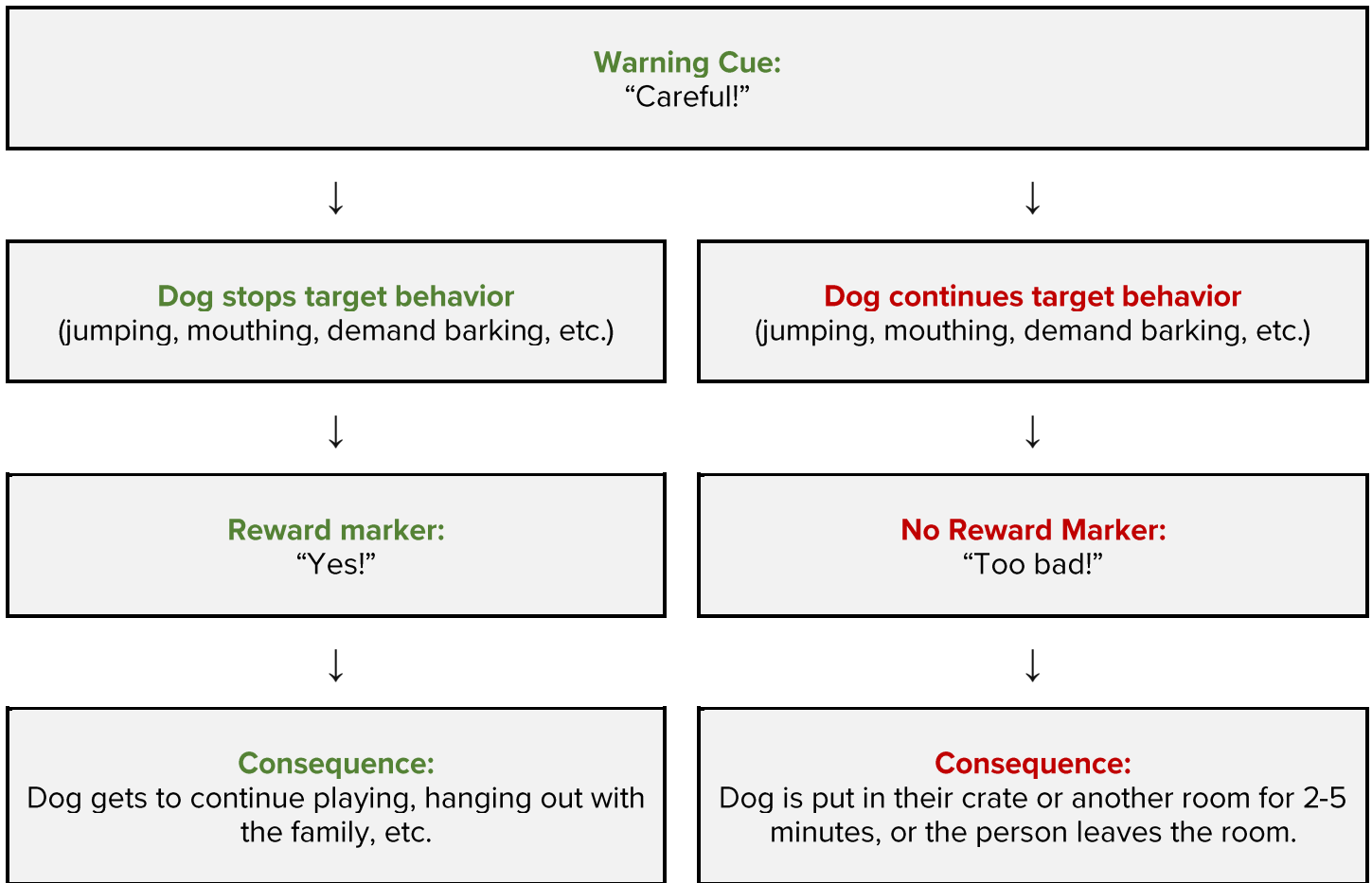
Time outs can take place in a dog-proof room like a laundry room or bathroom, or they can be in a crate. Many people ask if this will make the dog hate his crate, fortunately not so! Think of this like a child being send to her room: they don't begin to hate or fear their room, they just don't like being away from friends, television access, etc. Another way a time out can be given is by the person simply leaving the room instead. Again, your dog is behaving this way because they want attention, so if you leave, the consequence is the same.

Dogs Understand Flow Charts!

See the flow chart below. You can change your warning cue, reward cue, and time out cue, but make sure that everyone in the family is consistent. Time outs work really well for extinguishing behaviors like play biting or jumping up. But, they only work is done every time the dog misbehaves. People often try it a few times and then abandon the technique because they don't see immediate progress (See Phases 1-2). If only they had stuck with it longer, they'd have had success.

Tony La Russa's Animal Rescue Foundation

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The Phases of Training

1. **“Tra La La”** (Time Outs 1 – 4)

Your dog has made no connections between the elements in the flowchart above.

2. **May Try Resisting Arrest** (Time Outs 4 – 12)

Your dog has made the connection between the time out marker and the no reward marker, so they may try to avoid being caught. But there is no connection yet between the warning cue, behavior, and consequence. If your dog resists arrest, take a deep breath and wait him out. Trainers call this the “grim stalk down”. It may take five minutes to get them into time out but eventually they will relent. You may also want to attach a short leash (known as a grab-tab) to your dog’s harness so you can more easily collect them. Be patient and wait – avoid dragging them into time out.



3. **Hit and Miss** (Time Outs 12 – 20)

Your dog is beginning to put it all together and is engaging in the target behavior less and/or heeding the warning cue (i.e. ceasing target behavior when warned) but not consistently.

4. **Success! The Behavior Crashes** (Somewhere between Time Outs 12 – 30)

Your dog has put it all together and refrains from target behavior and/or consistently heeds warning cues, with only occasional lapses. Put them in time out for those minor lapses, even in the success stage.