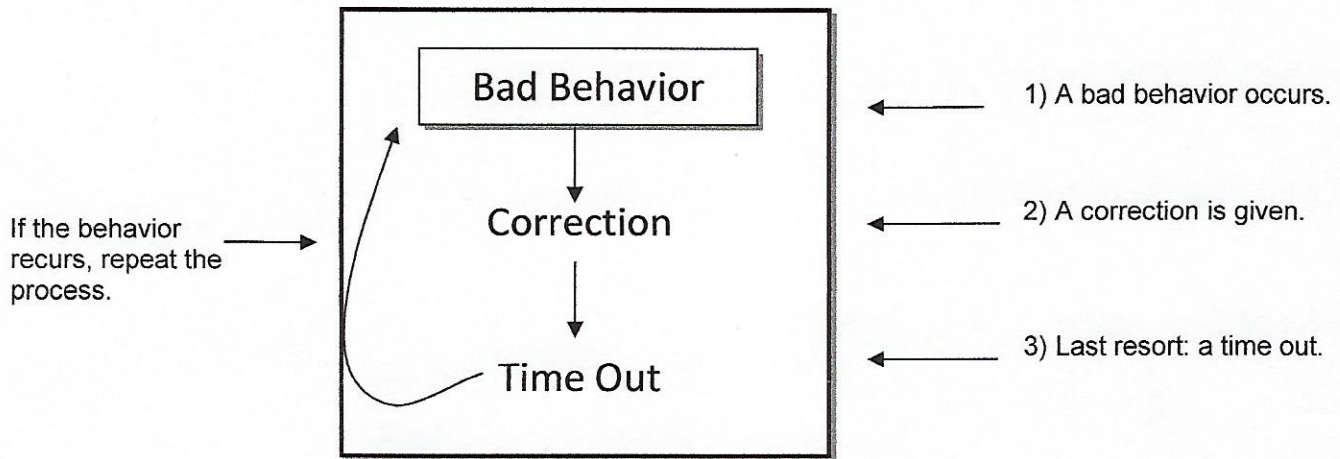




Handling Bad Behaviors

This approach applies to any undesirable behavior. Certainly there are specific tips and tricks for handling particular behaviors, but this is the general process for all bad behaviors.

Please note: if the dog listens to the correction, don't forget to praise him for listening!



The Theory

This is the process- when a bad behavior occurs, we consistently follow this plan. The dog learns that if he chooses to engage in this behavior, the results will always be the same: a correction¹ followed by a time-out² (if he didn't listen to the correction). Your job is to provide the dog *each and every time* with this behavior-response pattern so that he can learn the consequences of his behavior. If you are not consistent or if you are slow in addressing the dog on his misbehavior, the dog will not be able to make sense of the process. Once the dog figures it out, he will stop engaging in the bad behavior.

Tips

Be consistent – you must use this process immediately each and every time or the dog will not be able to figure out that these are the consequences of his behavior.

Watch your timing – Try to correct the dog immediately as he *begins* the bad behavior. Since dogs always think of things in the present, he will thus understand that “engaging in this behavior” is undesirable.

Be fair – Be fair in your corrections. Yes we want the dog to stop, but if we are overly harsh, the dog will be less willing to cooperate and we run the risk of scaring the dog (a scared dog learns only to be afraid of you!).

What if It Is Not Working?

Up the correction level – Be more startling. Here are some suggestions: Try a sharp, loud voice, a hand clap or foot stomp, a shake can, or even a squirt bottle filled with water. But remember, as soon as the dog begins to listen, you will lessen the correction level. This fairness is critical! If the dog perceives you as unfair, he may rebel!

Longer time out – If the dog is continually going back to the same old behavior, try increasing the length of the timeout. Try 5, 10 or even 15 minutes. If all else fails call your professional dog trainer for help.

¹ A **correction** is a command used to stop a bad behavior (e.g., Off, Leave It, Quiet). Corrections are typically startling at first, but as the dog begins to understand, you will be less and less so. Eventually a correction will be given calmly and politely, just as you would use the “sit” or “stay” command.
² A **timeout** is 2 minutes in the crate. It is not a punishment. Simply escort the dog calmly, quickly, and quietly to the crate. The dog will understand that this is the natural consequence of not listening.