

THE TIEDOWN

The Tie-Down is a useful management tool for: barking at the door, jumping on people, bothering the family at dinner, unwanted chewing, housetraining, playing too roughly, jumping on furniture, relaxing in the house, meeting a cat.

A tie-down is a 2-3 foot piece of cable wrapped in plastic with a leash clip on at least one end (some have a clip at both ends). One end attaches to your dog's flat buckle collar, and the other attaches to an eyebolt screwed into the baseboard of your wall. You can also wrap a tie-down around a piece of furniture, but keep in mind that your dog can get himself into trouble that way. Some dogs are stronger than they look and can pull a sofa across the room. Others will chew the piece of furniture the tie-down is wrapped around.

A tie-down should only be used indoors and only when someone is home. It should be placed in a fairly busy area (the kitchen or living room, for example), and, for safety reasons should only be attached to your dog's flat collar, not a Gentle Leader, Halti, Sense-ible Harness, training chain, or prong collar. When you introduce the tie-down, begin slowly. Place some chew toys, or food-stuffed toys on a blanket where your dog is to be kept on tie-down. Place her on the tie-down for 15 minutes, and sit with her. If she's so happy with the toy that she ignores you, get up and take a few steps away. If she's unfazed, walk across the room. Do this a few times a day for a few days. Then begin to extend the time your dog is on tie-down. Vary the time your dog is on tie-down as well, so she doesn't know precisely how long she'll be there each time. If she starts to bark, move away or leave the room until she stops. Return and offer praise when she quiets again.

Tie-downs are great for management, because they help limit your dog's choices. When a new guest arrives in the house, your dog could do a number of things, including rude behaviors like barking, jumping or playing tug-of-war with pant legs. If your dog is on tie-down, however, these options become limited. He cannot barge in front of you and decide to greet your guest before you do. He has to wait patiently while you greet the new arrival, and if he wants petting or attention, he has to offer behaviors you find appropriate before your guests approach. You are teaching your dog acceptable behaviors without lifting a finger.

General Management: If you're busy with things around the house, and can't keep a close watch on your dog, placing her on a tie-down will keep her out of trouble.

Jumping: If your dog likes to jump on family members or guests, you can use the tie-down to help curb that behavior. Place your dog on tie-down before your guests arrive, so he can't rush to the door and pounce. Then, after you greet your guest and your dog has calmed down, you can try letting him off tie-down. If he

jumps, calmly tell him “off” and walk him back to the tie-down. Reattach him, wait until he’s relaxed, and try again. Your dog will quickly start to learn that jumping on people will make him miss out on their company. If you have a particularly devoted jumper, you may not want to take him off tie-down at all. Instead, have your guest make a slow, calm approach. Each time your dog jumps or bucks, your guest should stop and take a step back. When your dog’s paws return to the floor, your guest can approach again. Your dog does not get to meet and greet until all four paws can remain on the ground.

Housetraining: You can use a tie-down in conjunction with a crate when housetraining your dog. Because a tie-down is short, the distance she has to move about in is about equivalent to when she’s in a crate. Being on tie-down allows a bit of variety, and you can give your dog some attention if she’s being particularly well-behaved.

Cat Introductions: If you have a cat at home and are worried about that first meeting, place your dog on a tie-down and let the cat have free run of the room. Every time the dog sees the cat and remains calm, give him a treat. (You can also give your cat treats for being calm around the dog.) Using the tie-down allows your cat to feel safe and allows you to feel in control of the situation.

Furniture Rules: If you’ve decided not to allow your dog on the furniture, keeping her on tie-downs in rooms with couches and beds will help establish the habit of relaxing on a comfy spot on the floor. This is especially useful for bedtime if your dog likes to sneak up onto the bed after you’ve fallen asleep. Some people prefer to have their dog on a tie-down instead of crated overnight.

Begging Prevention: If you want your dog to learn to be in the same room with you and food without demanding some for himself, place him on a tie-down in the room in which you are eating, but away from the table. You can even give him a food-stuffed chew toy or other distraction so he has something to do besides beg for table scraps.

When NOT to Use a Tie-Down: There are a couple instances when using a tie-down can actually create more problems than it solves. If you have a multiple dog household, do not place one dog on a tie-down while leaving the other(s) free in the same room. Oftentimes, the free dogs will taunt or harass the one on tie-down. Similarly, do not use a tie-down when small or active children are in the same room. Children too will sometimes taunt dogs on tie-down either intentionally or by accident, and this can create a dog that becomes fearful or uncertain around children. When your dog is on a tie-down, nothing should be able to make him feel frightened or trapped. In a room of high activity, a crate is a safer and more secure choice. Do not use a tie-down outside or if you are leaving the dog unattended.