

# 6 Things You're Doing that Could be Ruining Your Dog!

Here are 6 of the most common mistakes many well-meaning pet parents make without even realising that it is bad for the dog!

By Tanya Kane



Reprimanding a dog hours after a transgression never works!

We love our dogs no doubt, but sometimes our display of this love could actually be causing damage to our dog's behaviour. Here's a list of the most common mistakes many well-meaning pet owners make without even realising that it is bad for the dog!

## 1. Calming or Soothing a Scared Dog

Maybe loud sounds spook your dog, or maybe he is very scared of cycles on a walk. Regardless of the reason for the fear, calming your dog and trying to soothe him in

a way you would soothe a person will not help the dog. In fact, most often, it will have the absolute opposite effect. By trying to soothe him and fussing over him, you are most likely to reinforce the display of fear. He most likely will think he is absolutely right in being scared, and since you seem to approve, he will continue being fearful.

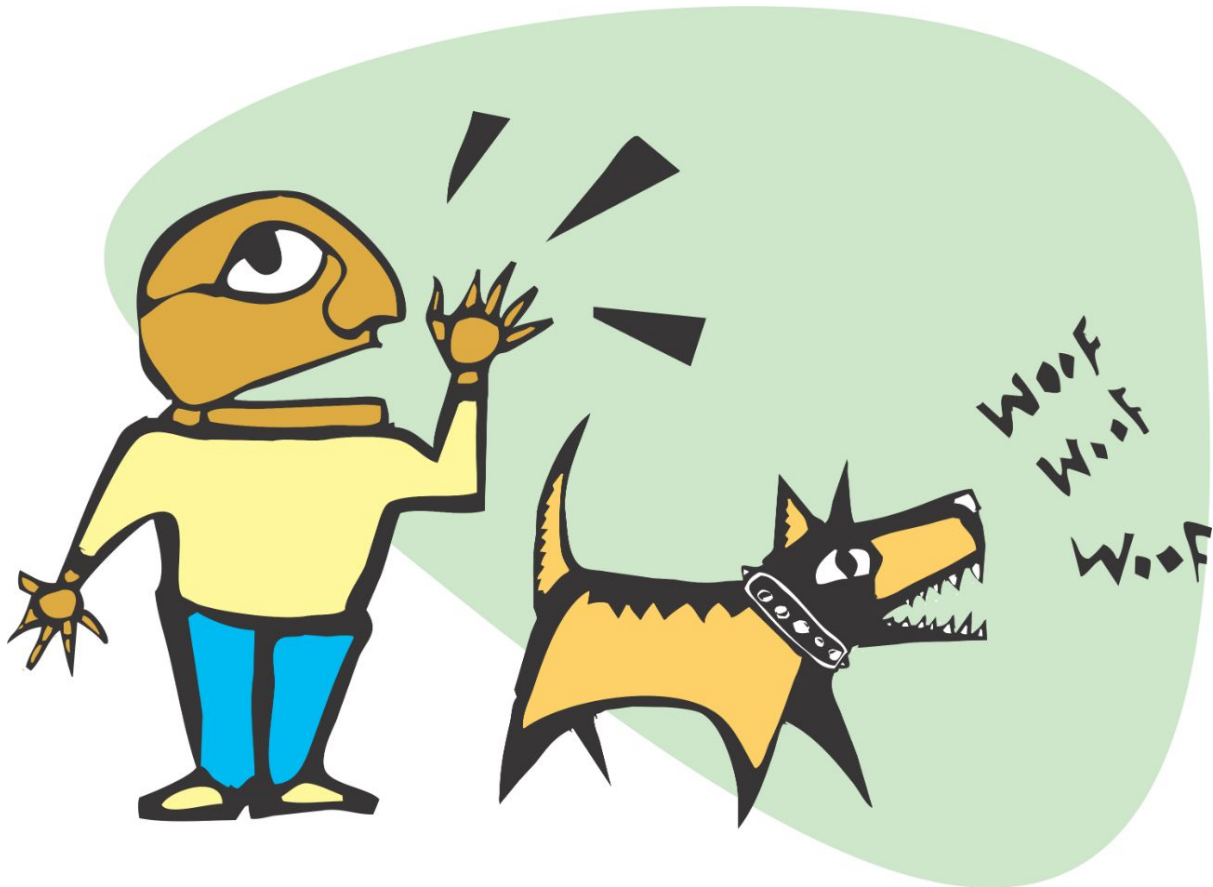


IMAGE COURTESY- EVGENGERASIMOVICH-SHUTTERSTOCK

Be careful to never encourage fear... it could have lifelong repercussions!

## **2. Shouting at a Barking Dog**

When a dog is excited and barking, you shouting at him will just be construed as your joining in the ruckus; the more the merrier! Again, now that you have joined in, the dog will think there definitely must be something to bark about, so you have reinforced the behaviour.



Curb the chaos, don't add to it. (IMAGE COURTESY- JEF THOMPSON-SHUTTERSTOCK)

### **3. Punishing a Dog for Something He Did 2 Hours Ago**

You walk into your house only to find your favourite piece of footwear destroyed. Fido may have done this two hours ago, but you reprimand him and he makes those sorry eyes. Most people will say: "Look! He knows he has done something wrong." He does indeed know he has done SOMETHING wrong, but he has no clue you are upset over the shoe! He is making dopey eyes only because you are shouting at him; he does not have enough intelligence to connect that to what was destroyed over an hour ago.

#### 4. Over-Fussing at Departures

Most people make a huge deal about leaving their dog alone. Departures are laced with hugs, kisses, sometimes even re-entries to recheck! What happens here is your dog picks up on your stress, and soon enough, he feels: "If you are worried, maybe I should be, too!" Without even realising it, we have laid the foundation for separation anxiety.

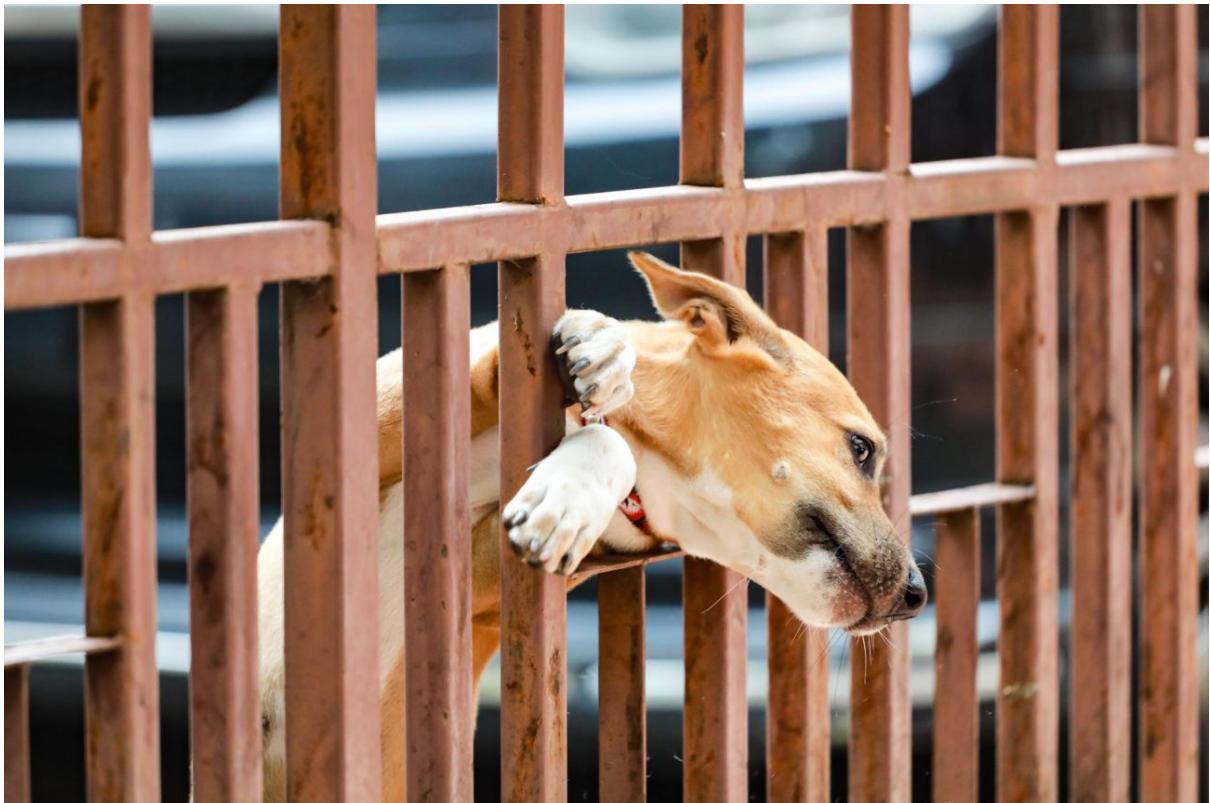


IMAGE COURTESY- SOMSAK NITIMONGKOLCHAI-SHUTTERSTOCK

Separation anxiety can take a toll on your pet's mental health.

## 5. Hand Feeding

Fido has decided he doesn't want to eat. Love equals food for many families, and the idea of a hungry Fido leaves Mom quite upset. Next thing you know, you see Mom sitting by his side, hand feeding him, adding his favourite toppings, all to make sure he doesn't miss a single meal.

Fido has successfully completed his Human Obedience Training! Now he can demand what he wants, when he wants it, and also how it must be dispensed.



IMAGE COURTESY- LUCIA ROMERO-SHUTTERSTOCK

Most dogs are very in-tune with their systems. One meal missed, here or there, will not affect them adversely. If a dog is hungry, he will eat. There are only very few cases when dogs display anorexia, and those instances are directly related to stress as well. So, if your dog is insisting you hand feed him, it's likely he has gotten you wrapped around the little digit of his little paw!

## 6. Humanising Your Dog

This is something that we are all guilty of, some more than others. Dogs are very instinctive in how they behave and react. Human beings, on the other hand, use intellect and emotions to gauge and manipulate our reactions to situations and people.

When you humanize your dog, you are putting tremendous pressure on him in terms of how he should behave. Unfortunately, he will not be able to keep up. Dogs are dogs, and they are lovely as they are, so we should also learn to let them be just that.



IMAGE COURTESY- ARTSVETLANA-SHUTTERSTOCK

Are you guilty of doing any of the above? Share your experience by leaving a comment for me below!