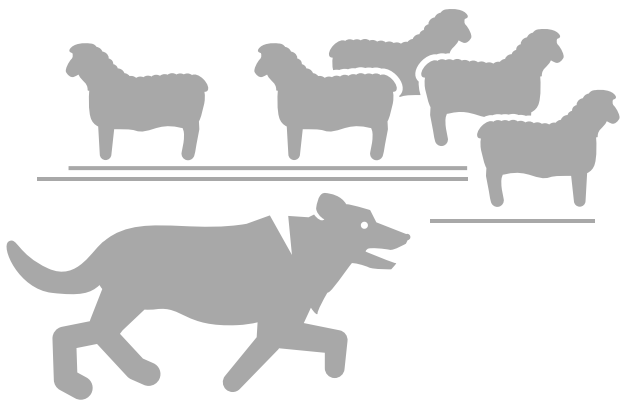


# Impulse Control

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## Understanding Natural Instincts

Your dog is an, instinctual animal, that has natural drives and instincts. They seek **self-reinforcement** in behaviours that are sometimes unsafe or not practical (like chasing a cat or barking at potential intruders). Don't expect them to have enough impulse control in tempting situations - set them up for success using a leash or fence until they are older with a more advanced skill set.



## A Note on Self Reinforcement

Self-reinforcing behaviors in dogs are actions or behaviors that the dog engages in, and the consequences of these behaviors are inherently rewarding, leading the dog to repeat them without the need for external rewards or cues from their owner. These behaviors can vary among individual dogs (jumping, barking, chewing, digging, sniffing, guarding, chasing).

# Keys to Successful Impulse Control

## Management

Keep shoes away, counters clear, and don't wear loose clothing. Use crates, leashes, baby gates, and pen's to help prevent unwanted behaviours. Redirect digging to a designated area's, supervise play to prevent chasing, and allow the dog to settle before greeting them.

## Capturing

Capturing your dog's good choices to resist instinctual behaviors is key to long-term success. Watch closely, and the moment they hesitate before digging, barking, jumping, or going for the trash, mark it with a "yes" and reward them. This reinforces that choosing self-control is worthwhile, encouraging them to make better decisions on their own without you having to tell them to.

## Cueing

Creating a strong "leave it" cue is valuable, but it's not a solution—it requires time and consistency to be reliable. Avoid repeating the command if your dog isn't responding, and start with easy distractions to set your dog up for success. Building motivation is key, so reinforce every success with high-value rewards to make listening to the cue worthwhile.