

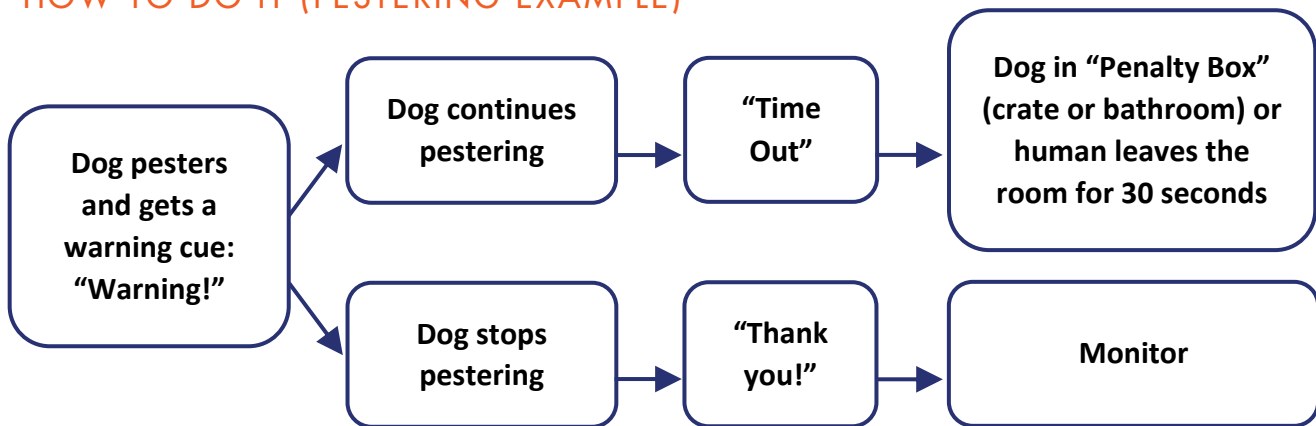
*If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Behavior and Training Department by phone: 410-235-8826 Ext. 151 or by email: trainer@mdspca.org.

Time-Outs

There is good news and bad news about time-outs. The good news is this: they work **really** well to reduce behaviors like play-biting, pestering, or watchdog barking (friendly dogs who bark at the doorbell). Essentially, **every time** the dog play-bites, pesters or barks you calmly put him in a “penalty box” like the bathroom or a boring, dog-proofed space away from you for 30 seconds. A crate is fine, too.

The bad news is that time-outs only work if done every time the dog misbehaves. People often try it a few times and then abandon the technique because “it’s not working”. If only they had stuck with it longer, they’d have had success. Often dogs need 12 to 20 **consistent and consecutive** time-outs before they learn to stop doing the problem behavior.

HOW TO DO IT (PESTERING EXAMPLE)



WHAT IT WILL LOOK LIKE

Be swift. If the target behavior is watchdog barking, don't wait for 30 seconds of barking before warning and then issuing the penalty—do it as soon as the barking begins. The dog should remain in time out until you are pretty sure he has settled down a bit.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Trials 1 to 4

"Tra-la-la"—Dog has made no connection between his behavior and the time out.

Trials 4 to 12

Resisting Arrest—Dog has made a connection between you saying “Time Out” and the time-out itself, so he may try to avoid being caught (this is annoying but it actually bodes well—it means he cares). But there’s no connection yet between his behavior and the time out.

Trials 12 to 20

Hit and Miss—Dog is beginning to put it all together. He misbehaves less often and/or heeds your warning cue by stopping the target behavior when he hears it, but not consistently.

Somewhere Between Trials 12 & 20

Success!—Dog has put it all together. He refrains from the problem behavior and/or consistently heeds warning cues, with only occasional lapses (time him out for these).