

# The Proper Way to Tether or Chain your Dog

**Many people use chains, tethers, or tie-outs to have their dogs outside, yet restricted.** I see all of these devices advertised in popular dog magazines, I see them hanging in pet supply stores, and I see many dogs on the end of one of them. Unfortunately, I have never seen any one of these devices come with instructions or recommendations on how, why, and when it is appropriate to chain, tether, or tie-out your dog. Also, I have rarely seen any written information regarding chained or tethered dogs. I live in a rural neighborhood where some dogs live on chains twenty-four hours a day. I have seen playful pups turn into aggressive dogs, I have heard (and helped) chained dogs barking because they couldn't reach their shade or water. I've helped dogs that I've heard crying because they've become "hung" on a fence with their chain. On one particular day, my neighbor's dog came over for a visit, but was not his happy usual self when he arrived. He had a worried look on his face; he paced and whined. I walked him home to make sure everything was all right. Upon reaching his house and his owner, his owner and I began a casual conversation. His owner casually mentioned that he just buried their new puppy in the backyard. The puppy had gotten tangled in her nylon tie-out and had strangled to death sometime that morning. Their other new puppy had witnessed the whole thing and, in fact was tangled but not strangled in the ordeal. Ironically, a week later they brought another puppy home and chained her as well.

I've talked with many people who state that their dog is "fine and well-adjusted on his chain." But, just what is their dog well-adjusted to... life on a chain? Dogs that become complacent on chains may be demonstrating what is known as "learned helplessness." Dogs that have realized that they are restricted to the length and entanglement of a chain usually become sedentary and listless while on their chain with intermittent bouts of barking out of frustration and boredom. Thus, these dogs pose little "problem" to their owners because they are "out of the way." Many times these dogs bark when their owners are not even home, so they are not even aware of a [barking problem](#). However, in spite of the owner's claim that their dogs are well-adjusted, usually these same dogs are reported to be uncontrollable in normal family situations. Many of these dogs are too "hyper" to be brought indoors. Those that are brought inside may demonstrate aggression to other animals and even people that they are not familiar with. Others may be unruly and destructive, running circles around the house like the Tasmanian Devil! They may be viewed as "stupid" or "smart but stubborn" by their owners. Dogs that live on chains have a greater chance of becoming aggressive and unruly.

**Chained dogs learn nothing except that they hate isolation and hate being restricted while the rest of the world (including other dogs, cats, and all animals and people) may come and go (on their territory) as they please.**

**Dogs are social animals. They choose to live in "packs" and rarely spend time alone.** When dogs are chained, tethered, or tied-out they are essentially isolated from their "pack" (your family). I often wonder why a person chooses to have a dog when the dog lives his life isolated on the end of a chain. I've been told by some people that they want a "watchdog" so they chain their dog outside. What can a dog do to a would-be intruder while restricted to a chain? If you would like a family watchdog, please read "[How to Train Your Family Watchdog](#)." A competent watchdog needs to be in the house (with you) or in a fenced yard. Ideally, a dog will have access to both the home and yard via a [doggie door](#).

**The ideal time for a dog to be chained or tethered is when *you* are at the other end.** However, there are times when dogs may be tethered while you are busy but near by. Such situations include a picnic lunch. If your dog is not reliable at the "[Down Stay](#)" command, it is necessary to tether his leash to the picnic table so that you can enjoy your lunch without having to constantly stare at your dog and re-command him to "Down." Also, if you like to take your dog with you while you're doing yard work in your unfenced yard, tethering him in the shade nearby where you are working will allow your dog to be outside with you and keep you company at the same time. **These tie-outs are short-lived and always under supervision. They can be advantageous to you and your dog because it allows you to take him more places, and it allows your dog the opportunity to accompany you and participate in your activities. This is the proper way to tether or chain your dog.**

Do you know of someone who chains their dog outside? Why not give them a copy of this article! Many well-meaning dog owners are not aware of the detrimental effect that chains, tethers, and tie-outs have on dogs.

*Source: [www.doggiedoor.com](http://www.doggiedoor.com)*