

Behaviour Modification

Inappropriate

Urine Marking

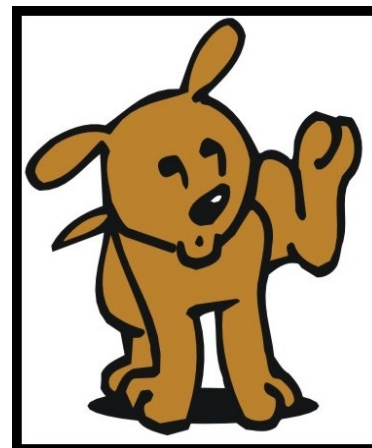


Urine marking should not be confused with urination. The purpose of urination is to empty the bladder.

Urine marking is in fact marking your presence with a scent, basically saying "I was here". It is a normal, natural behaviour. We see it mostly in intact male dogs, but it also occurs in neutered male dogs, and in females, intact as well as spayed.

Dogs mark theirs and their family's home patch by using scent marking with urine.

However, the behaviour can also be a sign of stress. The dog may be anxious about his or her environment, like the close presence of other animals, strange humans, etc. It can become a "nervous habit".



1. Vet Check

First check with your veterinarian to make sure there is not a physical reason for this behaviour, like for example a urinary tract infection.

2. Absolutely No Corrections

However frustrated you may feel, do not react with corrections ("No!" or worse) when your dog marks. If successful, it will only teach him not to mark when you are watching. More seriously, however, corrections drive anxiety, and so may make the behaviour even worse.

3. Clean Up

You need a solid clean-up programme. Clean up immediately, using an enzymatic cleaner to eliminate all lingering scent. Any remaining scent will encourage future marking behaviour in that spot. Also consider a belly band for your boy dog, but change the pad after each marking in order to avoid urine burn on his sensitive parts.

4. Neuter / Spay

Neutering can sometimes, but not always, stop the behaviour.

5. House Training

Re-installing the standard house-training protocol from puppyhood can also help, but make sure that it is done without any corrections.

6. Remove Stress

Remove all stressors from your dog's life, including corrections in training and daily living. Corrections drive anxiety and increase stress. This includes anything from shouting "No!", any leash corrections, to more severe corrections. Small dogs, in particular, may be especially sensitive to stressors such as grooming and handling, being picked up. Don't overlook the stressor of taking your dog for a walk in what he perceives as a threatening environment – if he doesn't want to go somewhere, don't force him.

7. Behaviour Modification Programme

If the above efforts do not result in elimination of the behaviour within a couple of months at the most, then please contact Cowichan Canine for assistance with a behaviour modification programme.

