

Driving With Your Dog

Every dog has the need to be in the car sometime. Whether it's time for a vet visit or a weekend trip to Grandma's house, it is important that your dog be well behaved in the car for everyone's safety. Some dogs are naturally well behaved in the car while others are nervous or over excited. Dogs manifest their fear or excitement differently. Some dogs cry, others whine, some can't sit still and still others can chew or become aggressive.

For the dogs whose behavior needs to be controlled you must first try and find the reason for the behavior. Then you can try and control the behavior.

Why Doesn't My Dog Like the Car and What Can I Do About It?

There are several reasons why your dog may not be on his best behavior in the car. The two most common reasons for naughty dog behavior in the car are that:

- The dog is fearful of the destination. If the dog is only asked to go in the car to get to the vet or groomer then he or she likely associates the car with an unpleasant activity. This, fortunately, may be one of the easiest fears to alleviate. Simply, begin taking your dog to fun destinations in addition to the necessary ones. For example, take him to the park for a walk or to a relative's house for a visit. That way he will not automatically think that he is going somewhere unpleasant on every car ride.
- The dog is uncomfortable in the car. There are several things that you can do to make a dog more comfortable. If you have a large dog and you drive an SUV or station wagon then consider laying blankets or even a dog bed in the trunk and allowing your dog to travel there instead of in the backseat. Obviously, that should never be tried in a traditional car with a trunk that is separate from the passenger area. A car seat specifically made for dogs might also make the dog feel more secure. These car seats are secured to the car with a car seat and often provide a soft, safe and secure ride for your dog.

Is There Anything Else I Can Do?

The best possible solution to dog anxiety about the car is the same as solutions to all kinds of doggie fears. The first thing you need to do is desensitize your dog to his or her fear. Make the car a fun place! Provide your dog with treats for getting in the car and for every few minutes of good behavior in the car. The biggest reward of all will come when you get to your destination. Go somewhere that your dog will enjoy such as for a hike or to a dog park. Provide treats again on your way home to reward good behavior. Throughout the trip praise your dog for calm and relaxed behavior.

It may be difficult to break a dog of his or her fear of the car. However, it is well worth the effort. It is important for the safety of everyone in the car, that the dog (and all other passengers) remain calm so that the driver can concentrate on the road.

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