



**OPERATION
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Escape! What to do about doggy door darters

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When your dog darts out the front door the first thought is to chase after them! For most dogs this usually turns into a fun game of chase. If you struggle to keep your free-spirit doggy in the house when you open the front door then follow these steps below.

1. Clear the decks

If you know you are going to be having someone coming to your door, whether it is company, a repairman, a delivery, or something else, put your dog somewhere where they can't get to the front door. You can put your dog in another room with the door closed, outside for a few minutes, in a crate or behind a baby gate blocking them from the front door. This will keep your sneaky pup from squeezing out accidentally when you least expect it.

2. Install protective measures

Baby gates, crates, or dog exercise pens can be excellent tools to keep your pet safely confined. For average sized doors a baby gate, or pet gate, works just fine. For a dog with a strong door darting behavior it is recommended that you purchase a pet gate with a human walk through door. You can find lots of options available online and some in pet stores. For larger openings in your house, you may need to find a larger extension for these gates or even use a pet exercise pen extended across the open area. You might even be able to just place your dog inside of an enclosed exercise pen or use a baby gate on another room and place your dog there for a bit. If you have trouble crating your dog, read our [Crate Training](#) article

3. Teach your dog to come to you in emergencies

There will be times when your fail-safe measure are going to fail. When that happens you will want to have an emergency tool to use. Think of a word that your dog knows that you have never used without following with something that they love. In some homes that might be the word(s) "want to go for a ride?" or "want a cookie?" or "Time to eat." If there is something that you always say to your dog before something really awesome happens, use it in emergency situations. When your dog gets out the door, get their attention by using your emergency cue and then run the opposite direction to go get the reward. Always reward your dog for coming to you no matter how hard it was for them or you. If you ever punish your dog when they finally come to you you are only making your training harder.

For behavior and training advice, please contact Operation Kindness at behavior@operationkindness.org or visit www.operationkindness.org/training.