

How to Stop a Dog From Licking a Wound

It's essential to understand that while dogs may instinctively lick their wounds, this behaviour is not always beneficial, especially for domesticated pets. Here's a breakdown of the reasons behind this behaviour, the potential risks, and methods to limit a dog's access to their wounds.



Why Do Dogs Lick Their Wounds?

- **Pain Relief:** Licking provides a soothing sensation similar to rubbing a sore spot on your body. It can help block pain signals temporarily.
- **Mild Antibacterial Properties:** Canine saliva has some antibacterial effects, which may have been beneficial for wild or feral dogs in cleaning wounds.
- **Over-Licking:** Unlike wild dogs that have to focus on survival, domesticated pets may lick their wounds excessively, which can lead to more irritation and injury.



Methods to Prevent Licking

1. Elizabethan Collar

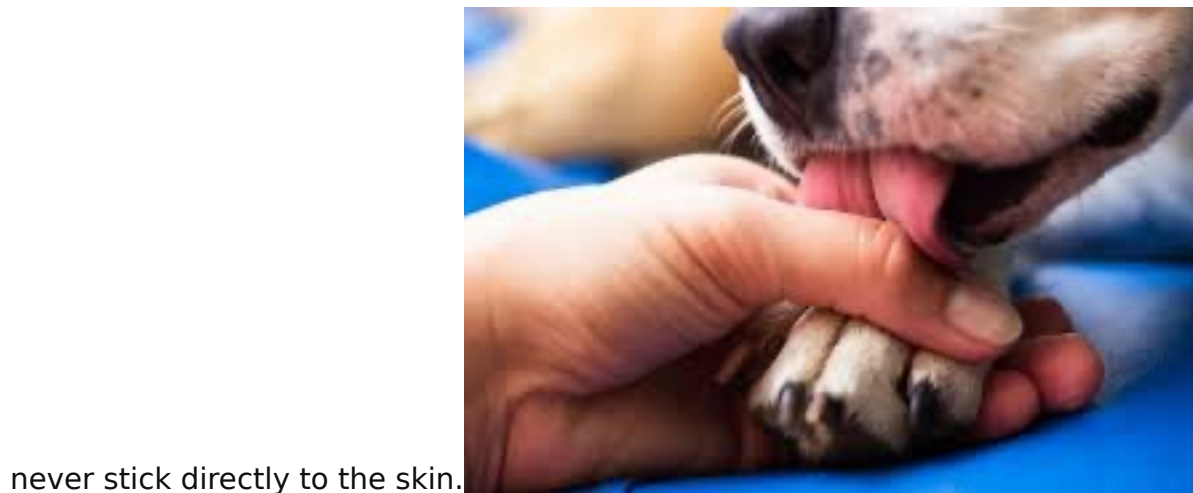
- **Description:** This cone-shaped collar prevents dogs from reaching their wounds.
- **Considerations:** While effective, it can be intimidating for pets and may cause them to bump into furniture. Look for transparent or softer versions for comfort.

2. Inflatable Collar

- **Description:** Resembles a life vest and provides a more comfortable option that limits movement.
- **Considerations:** Ensure a proper fit to prevent licking. Some types may be easily punctured.

3. Bandages and Boots

- **Bandaging:** Ensure bandages are waterproof and changed regularly, typically every 2-3 days.
- **Boots:** Available in various styles; ensure they fit well to protect paws.
- **Gaffer Tape:** Can secure bandages without damaging fur, but should



never stick directly to the skin.

4. Anti-Lick Products

- **Strips and Sprays:** These can deter licking, though many cannot be applied directly to open wounds and some dogs may not respond to them.

5. Distraction Techniques

- **Food Puzzle Toys:** Use toys that dispense treats to keep your dog occupied, such as Kongs filled with peanut butter or cheese.
- **Hide-and-Seek:** Hide treats around the house for your dog to find, promoting mental stimulation.
- **Ice Cubes:** Freeze broth or gravy into ice cubes for a slow treat that keeps them busy.



Monitoring and Supervision

Always supervise your dog during recovery to ensure that the protective methods are effective. If your dog is persistent in licking or seems to be in pain, consult your veterinarian for advice.

Conclusion

Preventing your dog from licking their wounds is crucial for proper healing. Employ a combination of protective measures, distractions, and regular monitoring to ensure your pet recovers safely and comfortably. If you have any concerns about your dog's behaviour or healing process, don't hesitate to reach out to your veterinarian for guidance.