

# Dog: Counter Surfing



## Why Dogs Surf Counters

Dogs counter surf because there might be food, of course. Crumbs, crusts, fruit bowls, meat defrosting or marinating, a breadbox—you never know what you might find. Even a spotlessly clean counter would still smell enticingly of the many meals prepared there and dogs are naturally curious creatures. For small dogs, the counter might also present a great vantage point to look out a window.

Prevention is the best cure here, because once your dog figures out your counters may hold tasty morsels, chances are he'll try to get to them again and again. From day one, keep your puppy or newly adopted dog away from the kitchen counter (use a baby gate or crate) when you can't supervise.

If the damage has already been done, here are some things to try.

## How to Deal with Counter Surfing

**Exclude hunger.** Always rule out hunger as an explanation for persistent counter surfing. Ask your vet for the correct amount of food for your dog.

**Keep all food stored away.** Use Tupperware® containers and sealed jars. If your dog has figured out how to get into cupboards, install childproof latches.

**Provide stimulation.** Make sure your dog has lots of fun things to do at home, whether he's alone or has company. Give him interactive toys, games, and other outlets for his energy. Try hide-and-seek toys, chew toys, plush toys with squeakers, and food puzzles like stuffed KONG® toys and treat balls.

**Restrict your dog's access.** Close the door to the kitchen, use a baby gate to block access, or put your dog in a safe, dog-proofed area when you can't supervise.

**Try an environmental deterrent.** For example the ScatMat® training mat or a motion activated canned air. These are remote punishment tools that are not related to you being present or yelling at them, which only lead to the dog learning not to do it when you are present.

**Don't yell after the fact.** If you catch your dog counter surfing, make a loud noise, stomp your feet or interrupt him in a way that he does not know it came from you. Never scold him, even if you find him under the table wolfing down tonight's lamb chops. Dogs only understand immediate consequences, so your dog would have no idea why he's scolded.