

## Repetitive Behaviour

Dogs are such playful creatures, it's common at times for them to whirl around and start chasing their tail or possibly lick at their paws. However, certain behaviours can become repetitive and begin to interfere with a dog's normal life and cause injury or other medical problems. It can also be quite difficult to stop a dog from performing repetitive behaviours.

The most common types of repetitive behaviours include:

- Licking
- Spinning, pacing or fly snapping
- Tail chasing
- Flank sucking

Some dog breeds are prone to developing repetitive behaviours and some dogs will do repetitive behaviours for no apparent reason. There are some contributing factors that may cause a dog to develop repetitive behaviours:

- Dogs that display anxious behaviour when their owner is gone for a long period of time during the day
- Dogs that do not have the opportunity to do species specific behaviour, such as socializing with dogs and people
- Dogs that have an underlying medical condition

There are some ways to help decrease or stop repetitive behaviours in dogs, such as:

- Intervening at an early stage before it escalates by distracting your dog with food or a favourite toy when they engage in repetitive behaviours.
- Asking for an alternative behaviour that they cannot do at the same time as the repetitive behaviour. For example, asking your dog to sit or lie down.
- Ensuring your dog has plenty of exercise and mental stimulation, including:
  - Interactive play, such as tug-o-war or fetch
  - Offering a variety of different toys to play with
  - Doing basic obedience training using positive reinforcement methods that not only helps with mental stimulation, but also strengthens the bond between you and your dog

If your dog is displaying behaviours that are repetitive and causing stress or injury, it is important to seek advice from a veterinarian to rule out any underlying medical conditions.

