

Quick Summary for Shooing "Em Off"

- Use only if walking away isn't working.
 - Don't use during pupping season, March-August, when parents MUST defend their young.
 - DO use if a coyote is decisively approaching your dog.
 - Be as OFFENSIVE as possible.
1. Slap a newspaper on your thigh loudly and dramatically.
 2. Walk decisively towards the coyote.
 3. Fix your gaze on the coyote's eyes -- so that he'll know it's no mistake it's him you are targeting.
 4. Angrily raise your voice and shout "Scat!" "Shoo!" "Off With You!"
 5. Make sure to force the coyote to move back -- to claim you've won!



Shooing Off a Coyote: A Primer



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A footnote about Habituation: "Habituation is something that naturally occurs in all animals. It's a simple orienting behavior towards things that are new in their environment, whether it's a sound, smell, something visible or another species. After a period of exposure, they stop responding. For example: Coyotes no longer pay attention to other species in their environment that turn out not to be predators or competitors."

Conditioning is a learned behavior. You can condition a coyote to come by your house by intentionally feeding it. A coyote conditioned to being hand-fed may approach people who are holding food. Conditioned or learned behavior can always be corrected.

Much literature states that a habituated coyote is dangerous. Hardly! A coyote habituated to human presence will ignore you, and not react to you as though you were a threat. Habituated animals that are not human-food conditioned are safer to be around, because they are aware of your presence and will not be spooked and become defensive – Aggression is a FEAR-based response."

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Relevant Information

Normal Coyote Behavior

Although coyotes for the most part stick to the shadows, it is not unusual to see one out during the daytime, on park trails, or on the streets. They like grassy fields where they can hunt, and they like woody areas where they can take refuge. At times they

may pass through our backyards. These are within the range of normal coyote behavior. We might ask, "Don't

they know they should stay in a park and out of sight?" But how could they possibly know OUR boundaries? Remember that humans delineate their "boundaries" very differently from coyotes: we use physical and visual boundaries which have meaning for us, such as fences and streets, whereas coyotes use olfactory ones which they create by marking or urinating along their territory's periphery. Most of the time when you see a coyote, it will be hunting in a field for rats or voles, or just passing through. Most of the time, when a coyote sees you, it will flee or keep far away. If a coyote is minding its own business, we try to leave it alone.

Eliminate Opportunities

Coyotes are known as "opportunistic" eaters -- they eat what they happen to find. You will be inviting them into your yard if coyotes find a food source there, such as small pets or pet food. Do not make your beloved pets a part of the food chain. Always supervise small dogs and keep your cats indoors if coyotes are around.

Shooing Off a Coyote From A Chance Encounter or From Your Yard

Coyotes want to avoid you as much as you want to avoid them. If a coyote comes within 30-50 feet of you, it will most likely be just an unexpected chance encounter. Coyotes are curious and may stop to observe. Most of the time **yelling or stamping your foot, as you approach the coyote**, is enough to make the coyote hurry away -- this works most of the time with most coyotes. **Tossing a small stone** in the coyote's direction -- but not directly at it so as to injure it -- will also cause the coyote to distance itself. **However, if you have a dog with you, the situation changes:** coyotes see dogs as competitors over territory and resources. If the coyote ignores you and holds its ground, it could be an indication that there are pups around. Back out of the area and calmly leave without forcing a confrontation. If a coyote comes to your yard, simply open the door and bang pots to scare it off.

Shooing 'Em Off More Firmly

Shooing Off A Coyote More Firmly From Your Dog

There might come a time when you'll want to shoo away a coyote immediately and unconditionally. If possible, always walk away from an adversarial or potentially adversarial situation -- but don't run as this might incite a chase. It is especially important not to confront a coyote when pups are around because, like all parents, the coyote will defend its young against your dog. However, you should shoo off a coyote if it is decisively approaching your dog, or if it has come into your yard where you have pets. Make sure your dogs are leashed and can be easily controlled or, if your dog is small, pick it up. Most problems can be prevented in the first place by having your dog leashed. Whether you are on a walk or in your backyard, always supervise small pets when outdoors.

Our Preferred Method

One of the best ways to show a coyote that **his proximity is not welcome** is a multi-sensory one: take a folded newspaper and slam it aggressively, repeatedly and dramatically on your thigh as you walk decisively towards the coyote, locking your gaze on his, and yelling "Shoo! Off With You!". The combination of the aggressively wide and big slapping movements, the loud slapping noise, your angry voice, the locked gaze, and walking decisively towards the coyote will show him 1) that you are directing this "attack" towards him and 2) you mean what you say. There is a caveat here: you **MUST** make the coyote move back substantially -- in other words, you must "win," otherwise the coyote could become resistant over time and he will think that you are just bluffing. It may take a couple of repeats for a coyote to "get it," but they do remember and will start fleeing upon seeing you. A periodic, but milder, reminder of your ferociousness will help maintain what you have taught. In any particular area, it will be the same coyotes that you encounter -- they are strongly tied to their territories, and milder "reinforcement" might be needed occasionally in the future. Use this technique sparingly and only when absolutely needed, as coyotes will become habituated to it and it will no longer work if used inappropriately without cause.

Technique for Firmly Shooing Off a Coyote Needs Practice & Repetition

Your "intervention" should be no-nonsense and appear confrontational. If you want the coyote to remember, you're going to have to make the event memorable for him: throw a real conniption. Coyotes read body language. It's all about bluffing -- your bluff must be bigger than theirs. And it's a mind set: you want to turn the tables from defense to offense mode. We all need to practice being adversarial/aggressive a little to become effective: it might help to watch someone do it to give you the swing of it. Knowledge and practice of this technique will give you confidence even if you never have to use it.