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Five Ways to Keep Your Dogs Safe from Coyotes

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by Nicole Pajer

There seems to be an increasing amount of stories about dogs being attacked by coyotes these days, and not just in rural areas. As humans have continued to develop land, coyotes have been forced into urban areas and are becoming less fearful of humans. Several years ago, a coyote even entered a downtown [Chicago Quiznos sandwich shop](#) and hopped behind the counter!



According to the [DFW Wildlife Coalition](#), coyotes are living and thriving in nearly every city across the United States. While they rarely bother humans, coyotes are a threat to domestic dogs, especially smaller breeds like Chihuahuas and toy varieties. Coyotes primarily feed on small rodents such as rabbits, but will definitely go after a small dog if given the chance.

Here are some tips on keeping your pet safe from coyotes:

1. **Be particularly cautious during coyote mating season**, which is January through March. During this time, coyotes [travel](#) long distances to find suitable mates and require extra calories to carry them on their journey. They then expend extra energy to build dens for pregnant females, who will need to stock up on additional meals. Studies show that [coyotes are particularly aggressive](#) during this time.
2. **Keep an eye on your dog when outside.** A small dog left unattended in a backyard is an easy target for a coyote. The best way to protect your dog is to go outside with it when you let it out. While a coyote will go after a dog, they tend to shy away from humans. If you come into contact with a coyote, it's suggested that you wave your arms, shout, and [do anything you can to scare it away](#), such as spray it with a water hose.
3. **If you have a fence, make sure it's coyote-proof.** According to an article by the [University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources department](#), a fence won't always keep a coyote out. Coyotes can jump over fences and have the ability to dig under a fence or slide through a fence gap. While it's tough to build a fully coyote-proof gate, fences should be a minimum of 5.5 feet high and should be built on a sloping terrain. To defer a coyote from climbing, fences should not exceed 6 inches between stays. In addition, a galvanized wire-mesh apron can be buried beneath a fence to hinder a coyote from digging under. An additional way to ensure that a coyote won't leap your fence is to install a coyote roller, which rolls off an animal that tries to climb the fence.
4. **Keep coyotes wild:** Do your part to make sure that coyotes remain fearful of humans. Don't feed coyotes or leave food out for them. This will cause them to come back to your area and to become accustomed to humans. Don't put your trash out at night, as coyotes tend to be most active in the evenings and early mornings. Also make sure to securely seal the lids of your garage cans so that coyotes don't smell food and come into suburban areas.

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5. **Keep your dog on a leash when walking it outside:** A dog running loose will attract a wandering coyote. Keeping your dog on a short leash when walking, especially through areas where coyotes tend to thrive, will help to ensure its safety.

As coyotes are moving into urban areas, attacks on domestic dogs are on the rise. A study conducted by the Cook County, Illinois Coyote Project found that 60% of recent attacks were on smaller breeds such as [Yorkshire](#) terriers, Shih Tzus and Jack Russells.

While tinier breeds are the preferred targets, coyotes have also been known to attack larger breeds, such as Labradors and German shepherds, especially if traveling in a [pack](#). This past January, a pack of three coyotes went after a Chicago area man's German [shepherd puppy](#), beagle, and golden retriever. The pack chased the dogs through the woods, leapt over the owner's backyard fence, and even broke the glass on the door of the house trying to get at the dogs.

Keep your pets safe by taking the above precautions to avoid coming into contact with coyotes and other wildlife.

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[RSS](#) | [Subscribe](#)**Amanda Schwartzmiller** 78 days ago

We have a large amount of Pyrenees owners in my area (I'm one of them) and these normal gentle giants will not hesitate to kill a coyote on sight. Even mine who is even tempered and gentle (actually a service dog) won't even sniff a female before trying to get rid of it. He seems to know the difference between feral animals and domestic ones. He will growl and chase off a feral cat but play with one of our friends cats. And we just live in apartments, there are many ranchers in the area that use Pyrenees to guard their livestock. I've heard from multiple sources of a pyr bringing home coyotes that they have killed. I live in east Texas btw and my dog is a lab mix, considered small for the breed, but still nearly twice the size of an average coyote

[Reply](#)0 **ec_sweetgirl** 79 days ago

Yes in Wyoming we kill them they are mostly a nuisance. That being said the only coyote Hybrids I have ever seen have been dog/coyote... I've never seen anything that indicated there were wolf/coyote hybrids so far... So keep an eye on your female dog in heat they will either kill her or breed her.

[Reply](#)0 **Faith Pezzini** 81 days ago

A co-worker had his small dog killed in front of him by coyotes earlier this year when he was out walking & letting the dog run around free. Felt really bad, but they live in a rural area where there are known to be wild animals (mountain lions, coyotes & bears) so I felt worse for the poor dog that it's owners didn't keep it safe by having it on a leash. Common sense, people.

[Reply](#)0 **Jodi Jones** 81 days ago

i wanted to add that a number of "large" coyotes are actually Coywolves- a coyote/wolf hybrid. and as you can imagine, they are much more dangerous than your average 65 pound coyote.

[Reply](#)[1 reply](#)0 **Doux Ancolie** 81 days ago

I have never heard of this term, or knew that cross-breeding like this existed. But I have seen some pretty good sized coyotes, so it makes me wonder now if what I have seen was this "Coywolf," and they run fast too.

[Reply](#)0 **Janet Hogan-meeks** 81 days ago

I live on a farm and deal with coyotes all the time day and night, they have been not shy around humans and I don't feed them. they attack an old dog I had several years ago and the younger dog came and jumped at the window to get help. thank goodness my dog didn't suffer to bad of injuries. we had ninety coyotes on our property at one time. we have had to put up fences all around our house to keep the dog and children safe as the are around during the day as well as night

[Reply](#)[1 reply](#)0 **Doux Ancolie** 81 days ago

I am glad your dogs were safe and that you have fencing to protect the dogs and children. I have six feet and four feet fences around my back yard. I have only seen one coyote run through my backyard, and he was movin...it was a blur he was so fast. But, he went over the six foot fence like it is nothing.

There have been many coyotes in my neighborhood too. Some have left due the increasing encroachment of oil & gas rigs being setup in the area. Last winter, a freezing cold night, my old friend Mocha (now 14y/o), asked to be let out at about 1am, and next thing I hear her howling and yelping in pain. She doesn't see or hear too good anymore, and I expected to see a coyote or a cougar attacking her, and wasn't sure what I would do. Instead it was a deer pummeling her with its front hoofs, just five feet from my back door. I immediately ran out and begin pushing the deer off my dog, until it stopped. Deer bed at night in my back yard during cold winter nights, and this pair had a fawn (I saw later on). So, I am sure Mocha stumbled on them laying down and the deer was just protecting her fawn.

That was a very weird experience, and a bit comical now. So, I have to watch Mocha when she goes out at night to make sure she doesn't get attacked.

[Reply](#)0 **Jayson Osmars** 81 days ago

"seal the lids of your garage cans"
wink wink

Seal and close your garage or seal and close your garbage cans lol

Another note the coyotes in the North East (Nova Scotia/Maine areas) are rather massive wolf sized breeds. My GF always had to take a baseball bat and air horn so SHE wouldn't get attacked when out walking. But that was serious backwoods area.

[Reply](#)0 **Ryan Quinn** 81 days ago

I have a Corgi/Shepard mix, and a shih tzu. Recently there have been numerous coyote sightings in my area. In addition to the many tips listed above, I suggest paying extra close attention to your dogs. They have much better hearing and smell than we do, and can give you an early warning if coyotes are nearby.

As much as some may not like it, I also suggest that when walking your dog at night, you carry a mag light flashlight. Not only will it help you to see in the dark, but it also gives you something you can defend you and your pooch with in case of an attack. If you do spot coyotes (especially in a pack), walk up to the nearest house, and ask if they can give you shelter from them until a car arrives to bring you and the pooch home.

[Reply](#)
0 ☐

Jeaneta-marie Anderson 81 days ago

While living in a rural area with a den of coyotes 1 1/2 a mile away, my ex-husband would go outside at night and urinate around the edges of the property. We had two German shepherds at the time. The coyotes would get close but never cross that boundary.

[Reply](#)
[1 reply](#)
0 ☐

Doux Ancolie 81 days ago

I have heard that this works for keeping deer away too, but I have never tried it.

[Reply](#)
0 ☐

Bonnie Mosher 82 days ago

#6....They can't stand the smell of human urine. I read that in a newspaper article in Canada. There was a coyote spotted near our cottage in Ontario. A group of us tested out the theory near the trail where it had been seen and we didn't see any more coyote sightings after that.

[Reply](#)
[1 reply](#)
0 ☐

Bonnie Mosher 82 days ago

There was a pack of coyotes that ambushed two boys and their Labrador Retriever on the other side of town. In number, they are definitely not to be messed with!

[Reply](#)
0 ☐

Octavia Imelda 82 days ago

I live in Sausalito, CA, and this summer, the coyotes started moving into town and killing our indoor-outdoor cats. We've had a semi-feral kitty colony near our place for well over 10 years with no problem until this year. We used to have a happy community of animals, including raccoons, possums, skunks, etc., and now they're all being decimated by the coyotes, and the remaining animals, who used to stop by for friendly visits, are now terrified.

[Reply](#)
0 ☐

Lis Beth 82 days ago

Carry bear mace, a large walking stick and a pocket knife.....that is what I do when I walk my 50lb Husky in the woods or concrete jungle.

[Reply](#)
[1 reply](#)
0 ☐

Doux Ancolie 81 days ago

I agree. I carry mace and knife...but, in recent months I have had more domestic dogs attack Mocha, and it happens in seconds, so fast, I don't have time to grab anything...just yelling at the dog to get away, stop, go home while I am getting my dog out from under the other dog. Hoping I don't get bit. Now that she is older, we have had more aggressive dogs come after us. In earlier years, I could ward them off and Mocha could protect herself better. She is Catahoula breed. Now, I think dogs sense she is older and weaker...so I am learning that I have to be on even more high-alert.

[Reply](#)
0 ☐

Susanne Heinz 82 days ago

Coyotes go after big dogs, too. They send out a female or smaller pack member to fake an injury or make playful overtures and then lead the big dog back to the pack for ambush. My Buddy will be 11 in February and he still chases coyotes if he sees one before I do, and we live in a well established residential area.

[Reply](#)
[1 reply](#)
0 ☐

Doux Ancolie 81 days ago

I have been told, by vets and boarding owners they will bring back female dogs to breed with the pack, and kill male dogs. Keep Buddy safe...if he gets attacked by a pack he won't have a good chance of surviving.

[Reply](#)
0 ☐

Linda Rogers 82 days ago

We live in an urban area that has a large population of dogs and cats. The people around our neighborhood like to let their cats run loose and we found 1/2 a cat in our yard one morning. We contacted Animal Control and let them know and were told that a large pack of coyotes had been spotted in the area and since then our neighbors cat went missing. That was after I warned them. I walk my dog on a very short leash and am very careful, especially at night. We have even seen their tracks in our yard. Animal control has assured us they are patrolling, but this is our fault too.

[Reply](#)
0 ☐

noby 82 days ago

coyotes arent moving into urban areas, urban areas are moving into coyotes! Plus since we've wiped out the wolf and the mountain lion (but we still insist on keeping wolves as pets, irony?) we've wiped out the coyotes natural competition.

[Reply](#)
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0 ☐

**Perry Steinmetz** 82 days ago

If you payed attention to what he was saying in the article he states that because of people moving into coyote territory they are becoming less fearful of people and therefore are starting to move into more urban areas.

[Reply](#)[3 replies](#)+1 ☐**Perry Steinmetz** 82 days ago

I just hate a HUGE eastern Coyote in my back yard the other night at around 2am, i went to take our 9 week old great dane puppy out and didn't even know it was out there until we walked inside and looked out the window. I made some noise he ran off, our lab and other other Dane are very protective of eachother an the puppy so as long as i don't see packs of them im not too worried.

[Reply](#)[2 replies](#)0 ☐**Perry Steinmetz** 82 days ago

*had, not hate

[Reply](#)+1 ☐**Jodi Jones** 81 days ago

Perry, it was probably a Coywolf

[Reply](#)0 ☐**Barry Busters** 82 days ago

Here in Georgia, the Coyote population is estimated to have grown over 900% in the last 15 yrs. It's an issue in new subdivisions that were built within a Coyote's territory. Outdoor cats are also in danger. We hear them celebrating a "kill" (hunting) several times a month as I am walking my dogs late at night. To be honest, it is such an awesome sound when you know what it is all about. That being said, I have only seen 2 in the last several years early in the morning at dawn on a back road.

[Reply](#)[1 reply](#)0 ☐**J Anderson** 82 days ago

Cats should be indoor at all times. Too many strays and ferals which are caused by those that are reckless cat owners. Believe it or not, cats are the number one threat to wildlife in the U.S. Google it if you don't believe me.

[Reply](#)0 ☐**Heidi** 82 days ago

Coyotes get a bad rap. I've been around them WITH my Labrador and it's more about respect and boundaries - leave them alone and don't allow your dog to initiate contact. If your dog runs up to them, then it's not the coyotes fault for responding in the way a wild animal would. However, I did have an incident when I was out jogging with my Lab in a rural area we had encountered coyotes before - they must have known we meant no harm as I looked up to see them running along with my dog who was running parallel to me - no one chasing, no one fleeing. It was a touching experience...

[Reply](#)[2 replies](#)0 ☐**J Anderson** 82 days ago

That is a nice story, and I adore all canines, but be careful :) It's still a wild animal...And a smart one at that.

[Reply](#)[1 reply](#)+1 ☐**Doux Ancolie** 81 days ago

ditto. Coyotes have trailed me while mtn biking, hiking or jogging. It is about respect and letting them know who is bigger and stronger.

[Reply](#)0 ☐**Kathleen Lisle** 82 days ago

Go to the FB page for " Stop Coyote Killing Contests New Mexico" & see the photos of piles of dead coyotes, shot just for being coyotes. Coyotes control the rodent population by eating mice & rats. Back in 1993 there was an outbreak of hantavirus, which is commonly spread by deer mice, which were most likely not being controlled due to coyotes being exterminated. Coyotes have their place in nature!!! Several people died in just a few days of exposure to the hantavirus, because it wasn't recognized for at least a month as being a fatal infection. Keep coyotes alive!!! To learn more about hanta virus, Google it, or go to Wikipedia or Bing & look it up. We really need coyotes ALIVE, not dead!!! Do like Cesar says & watch your pets!!! Letting coyotes eat mice & rats is much better than trying to poison them.

[Reply](#)[1 reply](#)+4 ☐**Raura Blanco** 81 days ago

Yes I agree that you shouldn't go out of your way to kill or hurt them. But if the coyotes are threatening you, your small children (because that does happen too), or your dogs, then you have a right to defend yourself and your family.

[Reply](#)+1 ☐