Tethering your dog can lead to serious physical and psychological harm.
Having a dog for a companion often leads to a very rewarding and deeply meaningful relationship. Dogs, like humans, are naturally social beings who thrive on interaction with human beings and other animals. In the wild, dogs and wolves live, eat, sleep and hunt with a family of other canines, forming a close bond with their pack. A domestic dog, however, will choose to bond with their individual owner or family. Because they naturally want to belong to a pack, dogs who have been banished to an isolated area for long periods of time can become stressed, destructive and even anti-social and dangerous.

Tethering is the practice of chaining, tying, fastening or restraining a dog to a ground stake or a stationary object, such as a tree or doghouse. Tethering your dog can lead to serious physical and psychological harm.

**Psychological harm**

Persistent tethering severely inhibits a dog from engaging in natural behaviors such as running, socializing and investigating his or her surroundings. This leads to extreme stress and frustration, often resulting in erratic and nervous behavior and hyperactivity, growling, fear of being approached and excessive ‘neediness’. An otherwise friendly and docile dog, when kept continuously chained, can become neurotic, unhappy, anxious and often aggressive.

Because dogs wish to be with their human ‘pack’, tethering renders them to a lonely and miserable life. Dogs have the same social needs as wolves (and, in fact, humans). In the wild, a way that wolves punish a pack member is to ignore the animal for a period of time. This means that dogs experience their prolonged chaining and separation from the rest of the family as rejection. Dogs who are treated like this are likely to become depressed and anti-social. A tethered dog is also at risk of becoming highly aggressive, attacking any unfamiliar animal or person who unwittingly wanders into his or her territory. A tethered dog who manages to get loose from his or her chains will usually remain aggressive and is likely to chase and attack unsuspecting people, particularly children and pets.

**Physical Harm**

In many cases, the necks of tethered dogs become raw and covered with sores as a result of improperly fitted collars and the dog’s constant straining to escape confinement. Some chained dogs have been found with collars embedded in their necks as a result of years of neglect. Chained dogs frequently become entangled in their chains, unable to access adequate food, water and shelter. A tether can also become tangled around or hooked on surrounding objects, causing potential injury and sometimes death by choking. Due to their restricted movements, tethering your dog also leaves her/him vulnerable to maddening flea and tick infestations, fly strike and heartworm disease.

Tethered dogs often lack proper shelter and are forced to suffer through outside elements such as harsh weather, biting insects and possible attacks from other animals.

**What about my family’s protection?**

People often claim that they tether their dogs for protection, as their dogs are left to bark at potential intruders. This does not offer adequate protection because a protective dog is used to being around people and can sense when his or her family is being threatened. A dog learns to be protective by spending lots of time with people and learning to recognize and love his or her human family. Dogs who are constantly tethered, however, cannot distinguish between a threat and a family friend because they are not used to being with people. This means that they are more likely to attack anyone, including children.

**How is the best way to keep my dog?**

While dogs should have regular outdoor access, they prefer to live inside with their family, with regular walks and outdoor exercise. If your dog needs to be housed outside at certain times, he or she should be placed in a fenced area with adequate space and shelter. To become a well-adjusted companion animal, dogs must interact regularly with humans and other animals. This results in a healthy, happy and friendly companion, as well as a joyous and fulfilling relationship.