

## Outdoor Repairs for Dog Owners

**Find practical solutions to common outdoor repairs that dog owners deal with.**

*By Maureen Kochan*

Sure, your dog has made his mark on your heart. But chances are he's also made his mark in your backyard – holes, deck scratches, and damaged fences are common but less-than-welcome parts of dog ownership.

Read on for some fast fixes for these backyard booboos, courtesy of Amy Matthews, licensed contractor and host of DIY Network's "Sweat Equity."

### Damaged Fence

Time: 30 minutes.

Skill level: Easy.

Stuff you'll need: Hammer; nail puller; nails; new fence board; primer; paint.

1. Remove damaged slat. (Use nail puller, if necessary.)
2. Cut identical piece of wood to fit the space. (Most home-improvement centers will cut the board for you. Just take the old board to the store.)
3. Nail the new board in place.
4. Prime and paint the board.

### Deck Scratches

Time: 30 minutes.

Skill level: Easy-medium.

Stuff you'll need: Medium-grain sandpaper; mineral spirits; clear, tinted, semi-transparent or solid stain deck sealant to match your deck.

1. Rub sandpaper over scratches in the direction of the wood's grain.
2. Clean any wood dust off the deck with mineral spirits. Let dry.
3. Finish the area with a clear, tinted, semi-transparent or solid stain deck sealant.

### Holes

Time: 1 hour.

Skill level: Easy.

Stuff you'll need: Shovel; dirt; sandbox; special dog treats; squeaker toys.

1. Fill yard holes when your dog is in the house so he can't see you. (Otherwise, he'll think digging is just a wonderful game.) Don't add wire mesh or bricks to the holes – they may hurt tender paws.
2. Create a digging zone: Set up a children's sandbox or separate digging-approved pit and bury several dog treats and squeaker toys. Take your dog to the area and ask him to locate the buried treasure.
3. Replace the treats regularly and continue to encourage – and reward – digging in the spot.

Maureen Kochan is a DOG FANCY contributing editor.

For more fixes for dog-related damage to your home, pick up the July 2009 issue of DOG FANCY.