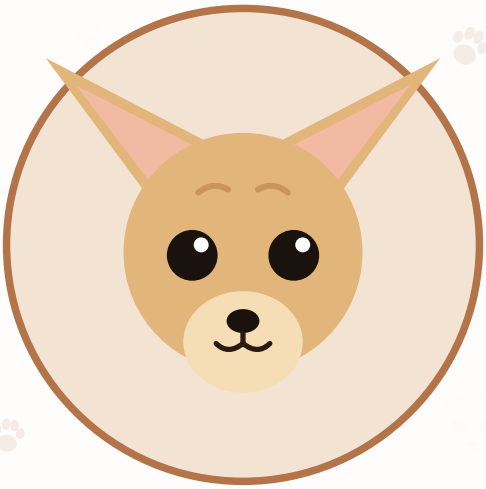


The Complete Chihuahua Guide

Loving & living with your Chihuahua.

Step-by-step training plans for real family life.

The Complete Chihuahua Guide

Before You Start

Congratulations. You share your home with one of the smallest dogs in the world, and one of the biggest personalities. Chihuahuas are loyal, clever, funny and fiercely devoted to their people.

If your Chi barks at every sound, snaps when strangers reach for them, shakes at the vet, has accidents indoors, or guards you on the sofa, you're not alone, and your dog isn't "bad." They're a tiny dog in a big world who hasn't been shown how to feel safe yet.

This guide shows them. Every chapter follows the same pattern:

- **Why it happens:** what's going on inside your Chi's head.
- **The method:** a named, step-by-step plan, with how long, how often, and when to move on.
- **If this happens:** fixes for the most common problems.
- **Practice games:** short daily games that build the skill.
- **Your action plan:** exactly what to do today.

> **Tiny dog, real training.** Chihuahuas are just as capable of learning as any big dog. Throughout this guide, you'll train your Chi with the same clear, kind methods you'd use for a Labrador, adapted for a small body.

> **A quick safety note:** if your dog has bitten, shows sudden pain, coughs or struggles to breathe, or becomes weak and wobbly, please see your vet.

Topics Included

1. The Chi Mind
2. Building Trust & Bond
3. The Tiny Terror Phase
4. Calm Daily Routines
5. Biting & Snapping Reset
6. Crate & Sleep Training
7. Home Alone & Calm
8. Focus & Recall Skills
9. Barking & Alarm Control
10. Leash & Walk Reset
11. Potty & Accident Fix
12. Fear & Shake Reset
13. Socialising & Confidence
14. Weight & Health Care
15. Multi-Pet Harmony
16. Lifetime Care Plan

Plus: 20 Popular Questions Answered.

The Chi Mind

In this chapter, you'll learn why your Chihuahua acts like a much bigger dog, why being carried everywhere can make problems worse, and the daily "Big Life, Small Body" plan that gives your Chi what they really need.



A Big Dog in a Small Body

Chihuahuas are named after the state of Chihuahua in Mexico. They're the smallest recognised dog breed, but they don't know that. Most Chis are:

- **Loyal:** many bond very strongly with one person.
- **Alert:** they notice every sound and every stranger.
- **Brave:** often too brave for their size.
- **Clever:** they learn quickly, good habits and bad.
- **Sensitive:** they feel the cold, notice your mood, and can be easily frightened.

Why Chis Feel Worried

Imagine living in a world where everyone is twenty times your size. Feet come out of nowhere. Hands reach down from the sky. Big dogs run over. For a Chihuahua, the world can feel unpredictable and a bit scary.

Many "naughty" Chi behaviours, like barking, snapping, shaking and guarding, come from feeling unsafe. When your Chi feels safe, many of these behaviours fade.

The Carry Trap

It's easy to carry a Chihuahua everywhere. But a Chi who is always carried:

- never learns to walk calmly past people and dogs
- may feel trapped when people reach towards them in your arms
- misses out on exercise, sniffing and confidence-building

Carry your Chi when they need to be safe (crowds, big dogs, busy roads, stairs for puppies), but let them use their own four paws as much as possible.

The Small Dog Trap

Owners of small dogs often let things slide: barking, growling, snapping. "She's only tiny." But a Chi who learns that snapping works will keep doing it, and can hurt people, especially children. Your Chi deserves the same clear, kind training as any big dog.



The Method: Big Life, Small Body

Every day, give your Chi four small "jobs." Together they take about 30–40 minutes.

Step 1: The Sniff Job (10 minutes)

Scatter breakfast in a snuffle mat, or hide kibble around a room. Sniffing is calming, confidence-building work.

Step 2: The Walk Job (2 × 15–20 minutes)

Two short walks a day on a harness, at your Chi's pace, with plenty of sniffing. Use a coat in cold weather.

Step 3: The Thinking Job (2 × 3 minutes)

Two very short training sessions a day. Chis love to learn tricks.

Step 4: The Rest Job

Adult dogs need around 16–18 hours of rest a day. Give your Chi a warm, covered bed to burrow into.

Step 5: Check the Results

After a week: Is your Chi barking less? Settling more easily? Braver on walks? Small changes mean it's working.

If This Happens

"My Chi refuses to walk." Check for cold, sore paws or pain. Try shorter walks and lots of treats.

"My Chi only likes me." That's common. Other family members can take over meals, treats and games.

"My Chi is scared of everything." Go slowly. See Chapters 12 and 13.

Practice Games

Game 1: Find It

Toss a treat and say "find it!" Then hide treats around the room.

Game 2: The Name Game

Say your Chi's name once. Reward when they look at you.

Game 3: Hand Target

Hold out two fingers. Reward when your Chi touches them with their nose. This gives your Chi a confident, fun way to approach hands.

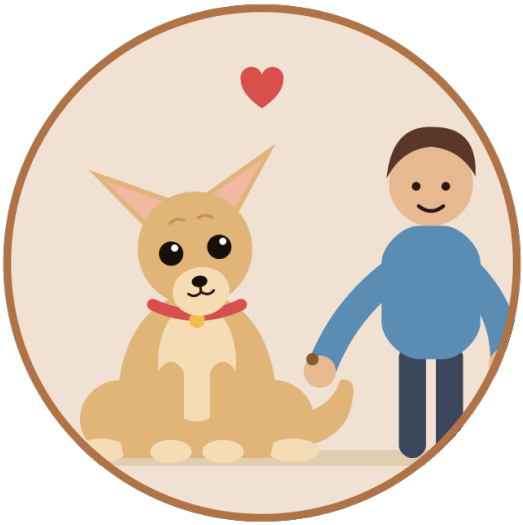
Your Action Plan

- ☐ Feed breakfast as a Sniff Job.
- ☐ Two short walks a day, on a harness.
- ☐ Two very short training sessions a day.
- ☐ A warm, covered bed for rest.
- ☐ Carry only when needed.



Building Trust & Bond

In this chapter, you'll learn why many Chihuahuas become wary of hands and handling, how to pick your Chi up safely, and the "Trust Builder" plan that helps your dog feel safe with you, at home, at the vet and at the groomer.



Small Dogs, Big Feelings

Chihuahuas are often picked up, cuddled and moved around without being asked. Imagine being lifted off the ground suddenly by a giant, several times a day. Many Chis learn to growl, snap or run away when hands come towards them, simply to protect themselves.

The goal of this chapter is to show your Chihuahua that you're safe, predictable and fair.

How to Pick Up a Chihuahua Safely

Lifting a Chihuahua the wrong way can hurt them, and many Chis hate being scooped up suddenly.

1. **Ask first:** say "up" and let your dog see you coming.
2. **Support both ends:** put one hand under the chest, behind the front legs, and the other under the bottom and back legs.
3. **Keep the back level:** lift your dog horizontally, like a loaf of bread, never by the front legs or under the tummy only.
4. **Hold them close** to your body.
5. **Put them down gently,** back legs and front legs at the same time.

Teach everyone in the family, especially children, how to do this. Young children shouldn't pick up a Chihuahua at all.

The Method: The Trust Builder

Step 1: Meals Become Paychecks (Days 1–14)

Measure your dog's food each morning. Use part of it through the day to reward good choices: lying calmly, coming when called, sitting quietly. Your Chi learns that you notice and pay for good behaviour.

Step 2: The Pet-Pause-Ask Test (Daily)

Stroke your Chihuahua for three seconds, then stop. If they nudge you or move closer, carry on. If they move away, lick their lips or turn their head, respect it. Your dog learns that you listen.

Step 3: Handling = Treats (Daily)

Touch one body part briefly, then give a treat: ear, paw, collar, tail, back. One touch, one treat, five times. Build up to holding a paw for two seconds. This is especially important for Chis, who need regular nail trims.

Step 4: The "Up" Cue (Week 1–2)

Say "up," pause, then lift your dog using the safe method, and give a treat once they're in your arms. Say "down" and put them down gently. Your Chi learns that being picked up is predictable, not a surprise.

Step 5: Choice Time (Week 2+)

Let your Chi choose to come to you for cuddles, rather than always being picked up. Sit on the floor and invite them over. Reward when they come.

Growls Are Information

If your Chihuahua growls, **never punish it.** A growl is a warning. Calmly give space, then work out why: pain, fear, being disturbed, or guarding.

> **Sudden grumpiness can mean pain.** If your Chihuahua suddenly growls when touched, especially along the back, or doesn't want to be picked up, please see your vet. Back pain can show up as a change in mood.

If This Happens

"My Chi growls when I move them off the sofa." Don't lift them. Toss a treat on the floor and say "off." Use ramps or block the sofa (Chapter 3).

"My dog hides from me." Sit on the floor and toss treats. Let them come to you.

"My dog only likes one person." Other family members take over meals, walks and treat games.

Practice Games

Game 1: Approach & Add

While your Chihuahua eats, walk past and drop a tasty extra near the bowl. Then walk away.

Game 2: Collar Touch

Touch the collar, treat. Hold for one second, treat. Build to three seconds.

Game 3: Lap Invitation

Sit on the floor. Pat your lap. When your Chi climbs on, give a treat and gentle strokes. Let them leave whenever they want.



Your Action Plan

- ☐ Teach everyone the safe way to lift a Chihuahua.
- ☐ Use part of daily food as Paychecks.
- ☐ Do the Pet-Pause-Ask Test daily.
- ☐ Practise handling for treats, five times a day.
- ☐ Teach the "Up" cue.



The Tiny Terror Phase

In this chapter, you'll learn why many Chihuahuas become bossy, snappy or barky as they grow up, why "small dog syndrome" is really a training issue, and the "Fair Rules Reset" that turns a tiny terror into a confident, polite little dog.



The Tiny Terror Phase

What Is the "Tiny Terror" Phase?

Many Chi owners notice a change somewhere between 6 months and 2 years old. The sweet puppy starts:

- barking at everything
- growling when moved or picked up
- guarding their owner, bed or toys
- snapping at visitors
- ignoring cues they used to know

This is often adolescence combined with something called "small dog syndrome."

Small Dog Syndrome Isn't About Size

"Small dog syndrome" describes small dogs who bark, growl and snap a lot. It isn't caused by being small. It's usually caused by:

- **No clear rules:** behaviours that would never be allowed in a big dog are laughed off.
- **Being picked up without warning:** the dog learns to growl or snap to stop it.
- **Fear:** the world feels big and scary.
- **Behaviours that work:** a growl makes the person back off, so the dog does it again.

The Method: The Fair Rules Reset

Step 1: Agree the Rules (Day 1)

As a family, decide the house rules: sofa, beds, laps, food. Apply them exactly as you would for a big dog.

Step 2: Ask Before Lifting (Days 1–30)

Say "up," pause, then lift your Chi using both hands (one under the chest, one under the bottom). Reward in your arms. Your Chi learns that lifting is predictable, not a surprise.

Step 3: Reward the Good Stuff (Daily)

Catch your Chi being quiet, calm, polite and brave, and reward it. Good behaviour that's noticed gets repeated.

Step 4: Stop Accidental Rewards (Daily)

- Don't pick your Chi up when they bark at a dog (it rewards barking). Calmly walk away instead.
- Don't let growling make people back off in a hurry. Plan ahead so your Chi doesn't need to growl.
- Don't feed your Chi from your plate when they bark at you.

Step 5: Rewind Any Slipping Skills

If a skill falls apart, go back to an easier level and rebuild over 3–5 days.

Guarding You

Many Chis guard their favourite person, growling when someone sits next to them on the sofa.

- For now, your Chi sits on a bed on the floor beside the sofa, not on your lap.
- When someone approaches, they toss a treat to your Chi.
- Over time, your Chi learns that people coming close means good things.

> **If your Chi snaps or bites,** please work with a qualified behaviourist, and see your vet to rule out pain.

If This Happens

"My Chi growls when I pick them up." Go back to "Ask Before Lifting," and check with your vet for pain.

"My Chi barks at visitors." See Chapter 9.

"My Chi guards their bed." Give them a bed of their own, and never reach in to move them; call them out with a treat.

Practice Games

Game 1: Up Means Treat

Say "up," pause, lift gently, treat. Say "down," put them down, treat.

Game 2: The Trade

Swap anything your Chi has for a treat. Give it back if it's safe.

Game 3: Sit for Everything

Ask for a sit before meals, walks and cuddles.



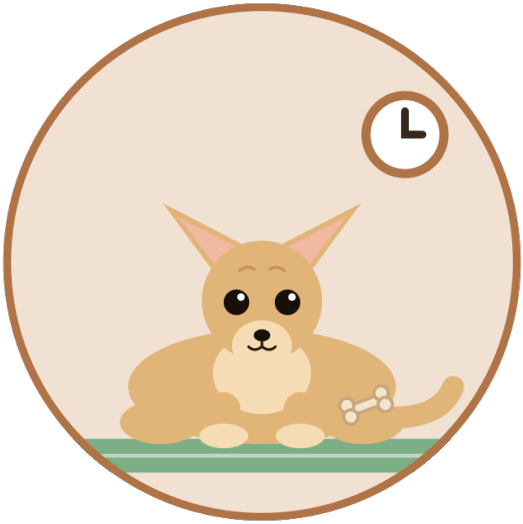
Your Action Plan

- ☐ Agree house rules as a family.
- ☐ Always say "up" before lifting.
- ☐ Reward calm, quiet behaviour.
- ☐ Stop accidentally rewarding barking.
- ☐ Use trades, never grabs.



Calm Daily Routines

In this chapter, you'll learn why many Chihuahuas are "on duty" all day, how much rest they really need, and the "Burrow & Rest Routine" that teaches your Chi to switch off.





Calm Daily Routines

The Little Security Guard

Chihuahuas are alert, watchful dogs. Many spend their day patrolling the windows, listening for the postman and barking at every sound. A Chi who is always on guard never truly rests, and a tired, stressed dog barks more, guards more and finds it harder to learn.

Adult dogs need around **16–18 hours of rest a day**, and puppies even more.

A Chihuahua-Friendly Day

- **Morning:** toilet trip, a sniffy walk, breakfast as a Nose Job.
- **Mid-morning:** rest in a covered bed or crate.
- **Midday:** toilet trip and a short training game.
- **Afternoon:** rest, then a chew in their bed.
- **Late afternoon:** a walk or a sniff game.
- **Evening:** dinner, a lick mat, cuddles, and the Burrow & Rest Routine.
- **Bedtime:** last toilet trip, then bed.

The Method: The Burrow & Rest Routine

Step 1: Set Up a Burrow (Day 1)

Choose a covered bed, a cave bed, or a bed with a blanket your Chi can tunnel under. Place it somewhere quiet, away from windows and the front door.

Step 2: Reward Going In (Days 1–3)

Toss a treat into the bed. When your Chi goes in, say "bed" and give another treat. Ten times, twice a day.

Step 3: Reward Lying Down (Days 3–6)

Wait for your dog to lie down in the bed. Reward between their paws. Keep sessions short.

Step 4: Reward Calm (Days 6–10)

Reward signs of relaxation: a sigh, curling up, head down, eyes closing. Place the treat quietly and say nothing.

Step 5: Use It Every Day (Days 10+)

Use the burrow while you cook, eat and work. Give a chew or lick mat there. Over time, your Chi learns that the bed means "off duty."

Block the Lookout Posts

Chihuahuas often climb onto sofas or window sills to watch the street. This keeps them on alert and risks injuries from jumping down. Block access to window lookouts, use frosted window film, and play quiet background sound.

If This Happens

"My Chi won't stay in their bed." Make it extra cosy, add a chew, and sit nearby at first.

"My dog only settles on my lap." That's fine sometimes, but practise the burrow too, so your dog can relax without you.

"My dog barks at the window all day." Block the view (Chapter 9).

Practice Games

Game 1: Treats for Nothing

Whenever your Chi is lying calmly, quietly place a treat by their nose and walk away.

Game 2: Blanket Burrito

Teach your Chi to go under a blanket on cue. Lift a corner, say "burrow," and reward when they tunnel in. A great way to settle.

Game 3: Lick and Relax

After dinner, give a lick mat in the burrow.

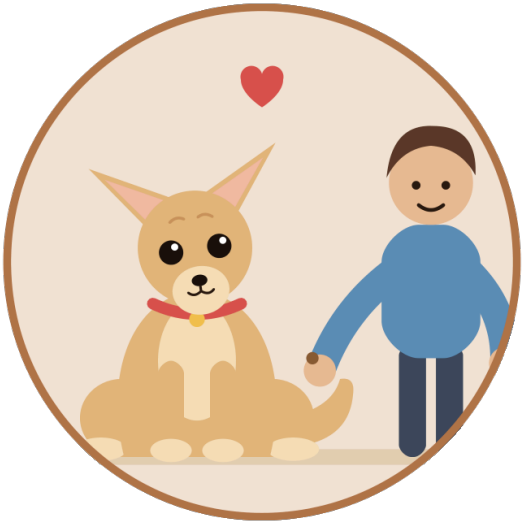
Your Action Plan

- ☐ Set up a covered bed or burrow.
- ☐ Practise the Burrow & Rest Routine twice a day.
- ☐ Block window lookouts.
- ☐ Plan rest times into the day.
- ☐ Reward calm moments.



Biting & Snapping Reset

In this chapter, you'll learn why many Chihuahuas snap, especially at hands, visitors and children, why punishment makes it worse, and the "Safe Hands Plan" that teaches your Chi that hands are friendly.





Biting & Snapping Reset

Why Chis Snap

Most Chihuahua bites are about **fear or discomfort**, not aggression for its own sake. Common triggers:

- **Hands reaching down** from above.
- **Being picked up** without warning.
- **Being moved** off a sofa, bed or lap.
- **Handling:** nail trims, grooming, the vet.
- **Guarding:** food, toys, beds or a person.
- **Pain:** a sore mouth, knees or back.
- **Puppy mouthing:** young Chis also mouth in play.

The Warning Signs

Before snapping, most Chis give warnings:

- freezing or going stiff
- lip licking, yawning
- turning the head away
- showing the whites of the eyes
- lifting a lip
- growling

When you see these, stop what you're doing and give space.

Never Punish a Growl

If you punish a growl, your Chi learns not to warn you, but they still feel scared. The next time, they may snap without warning. Listen to the growl, and change what you're doing.

The Method: The Safe Hands Plan

Step 1: Hands Bring Treats (Days 1–7)

Several times a day, let your Chi see your hand come near, then give a treat from that hand. Approach from the side, at their level, never from above.

Step 2: Touch for Treats (Days 7–14)

Touch your Chi briefly on the shoulder, then treat. Then the chest, back, ear and paw. One touch, one treat. Watch for warning signs and go slower if you see them.

Step 3: Consent Cuddles (Daily)

Invite your Chi to come to you. Stroke for three seconds, then stop. If they ask for more, carry on. If they move away, let them go.

Step 4: Ask Before Lifting (Daily)

Say "up," pause, lift with both hands, treat.

Step 5: Practise Handling (Weeks 2–4)

Build up slowly to nail touches, brushing and looking in ears and mouth, with treats at every step.

Biting & Snapping Reset

Visitors and Children

- Visitors and children never pick up your Chi.
- They don't reach for your Chi. Let your Chi approach them.
- Children sit on the floor and toss treats.
- Always supervise.

Puppy Mouthing

Young Chis mouth in play. Offer toys, plan naps, and calmly pause play if teeth touch skin. See your Bite Reset bonus.

> **If your Chi has bitten,** please work with a qualified behaviourist, and see your vet to rule out pain.

If This Happens

"My Chi snaps when I put the harness on." Use a step-in harness, and practise with treats one step at a time.

"My Chi bites at the vet." Practise handling at home, and ask your vet about calm, low-stress handling.

"My Chi snaps when moved off the sofa." Don't lift; use a treat to call them off.

Biting & Snapping Reset

Your Action Plan

- ☐ Learn your Chi's warning signs.
- ☐ Never punish a growl.
- ☐ Hands bring treats, from the side.
- ☐ Touch for treats, one spot at a time.
- ☐ No picking up by visitors or children.



Crate & Sleep Training

In this chapter, you'll learn how a crate can become your Chihuahua's favourite den, why it helps a tiny dog feel safe, and the "Den Builder" plan for peaceful nights.





Crate & Sleep Training

Why a Crate Helps a Chihuahua

- **A safe burrow:** Chis love small, covered spaces.
- **Toilet training:** most dogs avoid going where they sleep.
- **Back safety:** a crate stops your dog jumping on and off furniture when you can't supervise.
- **Recovery:** if your Chi ever needs crate rest (for example after an injury or surgery), a dog who already loves their crate will cope far better.

Adult dogs shouldn't be crated for more than about four hours at a time during the day.

Setting Up

- **Size:** big enough to stand, turn around and lie stretched out.
- **Cover:** a blanket over the top, back and sides.
- **Bedding:** soft bedding and a blanket to burrow into.
- **Location:** quiet, and for puppies, near your bed at first.



The Method: The Den Builder

Step 1: Treasure Hunts (Days 1–3)

Hide treats in the crate with the door open. Let your Chi discover them.

Step 2: Meals in the Den (Days 2–7)

Feed every meal in the crate. Close the door while they eat, then open it.

Step 3: Door Closed, You Nearby (Days 5–10)

Give a chew in the crate, close the door, and sit nearby. Build to 20–30 minutes.

Step 4: Short Steps Away (Days 8–14)

Leave the room for short periods, building slowly.

Step 5: Bedtime Routine (from Day 1)

Last toilet trip, a small chew, lights down, a quiet "goodnight." Puppies may need a night-time toilet trip. Keep it calm and boring.

Beds and Safety

Many Chihuahuas sleep in their owners' beds. If yours does, use a ramp or dog steps so they never jump down. A crate or a floor-level bed is safer for many Chis.

If This Happens

"My puppy cries at night." Put the crate next to your bed for the first few weeks.

"My dog barks in the crate." Check their needs (toilet, comfort, warmth), then wait for quiet before opening the door.

"My dog panics in the crate." Stop and use a pen instead. Speak to your vet if the panic is severe.

Practice Games

Game 1: Crate Dash

Toss a treat in and say "bed!" Reward again once they're inside. Repeat 5 times.

Game 2: Door Zen

Reward your Chi for waiting calmly while you open the crate door.

Game 3: Burrow Bonus

Hide a treat under the crate blanket. Let your Chi find it.

Your Action Plan

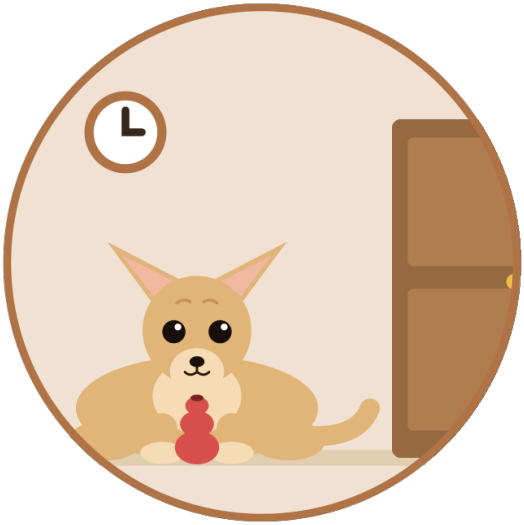
- ☐ Set up a covered crate with burrowing blankets.
- ☐ Do treasure hunts for three days.
- ☐ Feed meals in the crate.
- ☐ Use a ramp or steps for beds and sofas.
- ☐ Start the bedtime routine tonight.



Home Alone & Calm

In this chapter, you'll learn why Chihuahuas are among the breeds most prone to struggling when left alone, how to tell boredom from true anxiety, and the "Little Exits" plan for building calm, confident time apart.

If your Chi howls, chews the door frame or greets you like you've been away for a year, start here.



Why Chis Find Being Alone Hard

Chihuahuas often bond intensely with one person. Being close to their person is everything to them. That's what makes them loyal, and it's also why a Chi left alone can feel like something has gone very wrong.

Many owners accidentally make it harder:

- the dog is with them every moment at weekends, then alone for 8 hours on Monday
- goodbyes are emotional and drawn out
- the keys, coat and bag always mean "they're leaving now"

Boredom or Worry?

It helps to know which problem you have. Set up a phone or pet camera and record the first 30 minutes after you leave.

- **Boredom:** your dog settles for a while, then gets into mischief later. They're relaxed when you return. They need more exercise, brain work and things to do.
- **Worry (separation distress):** pacing, panting, whining, howling or scratching at doors within the first few minutes. They may drool, have accidents, or not touch food left for them. They need a gradual plan.

Many Chis are a mix of both.

The Method: Little Exits

The idea is simple: your dog only ever experiences absences they can cope with. Each success builds confidence for the next, slightly longer one.

Step 1: Independence at Home (Week 1)

Use your Off-Switch mat (Chapter 4). Ask your dog to settle, then take one step away and come back. Build to walking across the room, then into the next room for a few seconds. Reward calm staying.

Also use baby gates: let your dog be on the other side of a gate from you for short periods while they have a chew.

Step 2: Break the Departure Cues (Week 1–2)

Several times a day, pick up your keys, put on your shoes or your coat, then sit down and watch TV. Do this 5–10 times a day until these things stop causing your dog to follow you or get up.

Step 3: The First Real Exits (Week 2)

Give your dog a special food toy that they *only* get when you leave (a frozen stuffed rubber toy is ideal). Walk out of the front door, close it, and come straight back in after **10–30 seconds**. Come in calmly. Ignore your dog for a moment until they're calm, then say hello quietly.

Step 4: Build Up Slowly (Weeks 3–6)

Slowly increase the time, watching your camera:

- 30 seconds, then 1 minute, then 2, 5, 10 minutes

- then 15, 20, 30 minutes
- then 45 minutes, 1 hour and beyond

Only move up when your dog is calm at the current time. If they show signs of worry, go back to the last time that was easy.

Step 5: Mix It Up

Not every exit should be longer. Mix short and long absences: 5 minutes, 2 minutes, 15 minutes, 1 minute. This keeps your dog from bracing for a long absence every time you go.



While You're Training

During the weeks you're building this skill, try to avoid leaving your dog alone for longer than they can currently handle. A dog walker, a friend, doggy daycare, or taking your dog with you all help. One long, stressful day can undo weeks of progress.

> **Severe panic:** if your Chi injures themselves, destroys doors or crates trying to escape, or is in obvious distress for the whole time you're gone, please speak to your vet. Some dogs need medical support alongside training, and that's okay. Your Calm Protocol bonus has more help.

If This Happens

"My dog won't touch the food toy when I leave." That's a sign of worry, not lack of interest. Your absences are too long. Go back to 10–30 seconds.

"My dog is fine for 20 minutes, then howls." Stay at 15 minutes for another week, then build up more slowly, in 2–3 minute steps.

"My dog destroys things only when I'm out." Check the camera. If it starts straight after you leave, it's worry; follow Little Exits. If it's much later, increase exercise and brain work before you go.

Practice Games

Game 1: Door Peekaboo

While your dog is on their mat with a chew, step behind a door and close it for 2 seconds. Open it and calmly reward if they stayed settled. Build to 10, 20, then 60 seconds.

Game 2: The Fake-Out

Pick up your keys and jingle them. Then put them down and sit on the sofa. Put your coat on, walk to the door, and take it off again. The goal is total boredom with your departure routine.

Game 3: Scatter and Go

As you leave, scatter a handful of kibble on the floor or in a snuffle mat. Your dog is busy sniffing as the door closes, so the first, hardest moments pass without noticing.



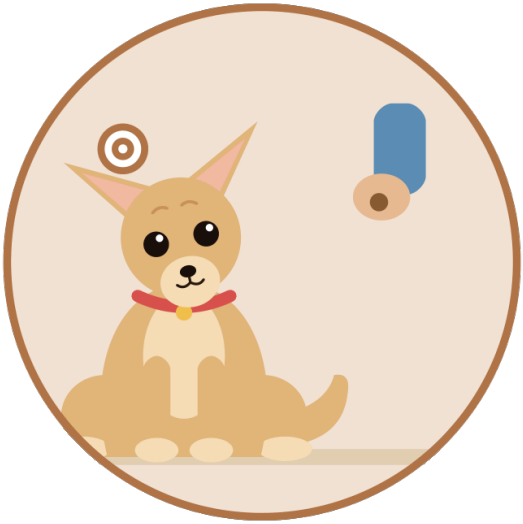
Your Action Plan

- ☐ Record your dog for 30 minutes after you leave to see what's going on.
- ☐ Practise independence on the mat and behind baby gates daily.
- ☐ Do 5–10 fake departures every day.
- ☐ Start Little Exits at 10–30 seconds with a special food toy.
- ☐ Arrange help so your dog isn't left longer than they can manage.



Focus & Recall Skills

In this chapter, you'll learn how to train a clever, sensitive Chi, why "say it once" matters, and the "Short & Sweet" method for teaching sit, down, wait, leave it and recall.





Focus & Recall Skills

Training a Clever Chi

Chihuahuas are clever and sensitive. That means:

- They learn quickly, but ask "what's in it for me?"
- They get bored with repetition.
- They tune out if training isn't fun.

The answer is short, rewarding sessions and plenty of variety.

The Method: Short & Sweet

Rule 1: Three Minutes, Max

Train for 3 minutes, a few times a day. End while your Chi still wants more.

Rule 2: Say It Once

Say each cue once. If your dog doesn't respond, make it easier next time.

Rule 3: Pay Well

Use small, tasty treats. Food is the fastest way to train most dogs.

Rule 4: Practise Everywhere

Kitchen, living room, garden, front of the house, quiet streets.

The Core Skills

Sit

Hold a treat at your Chi's nose and move it slowly back over their head. As their bottom goes down, say "yes" and reward.

Down

From a sit, move a treat slowly down to the floor between their paws. Reward when their elbows touch the floor.

Wait

Ask for a sit, show your hand like a stop sign, take one step back, then step in and reward. Build to more steps and more time.

Leave It

Hold a treat in a closed fist. When your Chi stops sniffing or licking it, reward from your other hand. Build up to treats on the floor.

Recall

Choose a fresh word ("here!"). Say it once, then reward with a jackpot. Practise indoors, then in the garden, then on a long line. Never call your dog for something they don't like.

> **Be realistic about recall.** Keep your Chi on a lead or long line in unfenced areas, and away from big off-lead dogs, until their recall is reliable.

If This Happens

"My Chi ignores me outside." Practise in quieter places first.

"My dog only works for food." That's fine. Mix in life rewards like sniffing and play.

"My dog gets bored." Keep sessions shorter and switch between skills.

Practice Games

Game 1: Name Game

Say your Chi's name once. Reward when they look at you.

Game 2: Hide and Seek

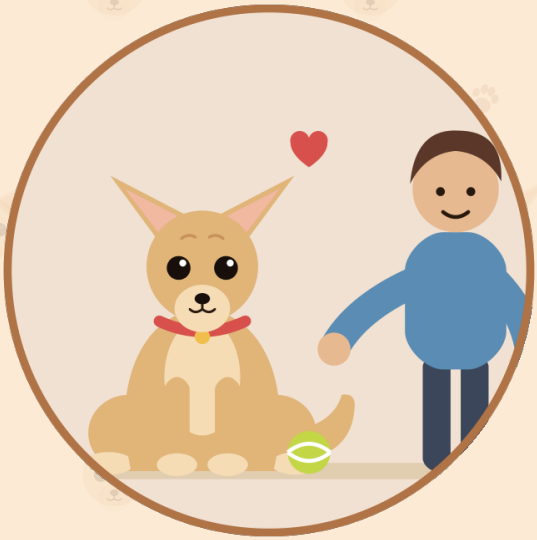
Hide behind a door and call. Celebrate when they find you.

Game 3: Sit Anywhere

On a walk, ask for sits in five different places. Reward each one.

Your Action Plan

- ☐ Train in 3-minute sessions.
- ☐ Say each cue once.
- ☐ Teach sit, down, wait and leave it.
- ☐ Choose a fresh recall word.
- ☐ Use a long line outdoors.



Barking & Alarm Control

In this chapter, you'll learn why Chihuahuas bark at things you can't even hear, the difference between alert, demand and frustration barking, and the "Thank You Protocol" that teaches your dog to tell you once, then stand down.

You don't need a silent dog. You need one who stops when you ask.



Barking & Alarm Control

Why Chis Bark

Chihuahuas are alert, watchful little dogs. Many feel safer making a lot of noise at things that worry them. So when your Chi barks at the postman, a car door or a leaf, they think they're keeping everyone safe.

There are three common types of barking:

- **Alert barking:** at noises, people passing, the doorbell. "Something's out there!"
- **Demand barking:** at you, for food, play or attention. "Do the thing!"
- **Frustration barking:** behind gates, in the car, on the lead when they can't get to something. "I can't reach it!"

Each needs a slightly different fix, but they all start with the same thing: **reduce how often your dog practises barking.**

Step Zero: Reduce the Triggers

Before training, cut down the number of times your dog barks each day:

- **Block the view.** Use frosted window film on the lower part of front windows, close blinds, or move the sofa your dog uses as a lookout.
- **Soften the sound.** Play quiet music or white noise near the front of the house.
- **Limit patrols.** Don't leave your Chi in the garden alone to bark at the fence.
- **Meet needs first.** A dog with enough exercise, brain work and rest barks less.

The Method: The Thank You Protocol

This method acknowledges your dog's alert, then teaches them that you'll take it from here.

Step 1: Teach "Thank You" Without Barking (Days 1–3)

In a quiet room, say "thank you" in a calm, friendly voice, then toss a treat on the floor behind you. Your dog turns to get it. Repeat 10 times. You're teaching: "thank you" means "turn around, food is behind you."

Step 2: Add a Small Trigger (Days 4–7)

Have someone knock very quietly on a door. Before your dog barks more than once, say "thank you" and toss treats behind you. If they turn to the food, great. If not, make the knock quieter next time.

Step 3: Build Up to Real Life (Weeks 2–3)

Start using it for real alerts. When your dog barks at something, calmly walk over, look at what they're barking at (this tells them you've checked), say "thank you," and toss treats behind you or lead them away. Reward quiet.

Step 4: Add a Settle

Once your dog turns away reliably, ask them to go to their mat after "thank you." Reward the down and calm. Over time, this becomes: **one or two barks, a check-in with you, then back to the mat.**

Barking & Alarm Control

Handling Demand Barking

If your dog barks *at you* to get something, the rule is simple: **barking never works.** Turn away, wait for a few seconds of quiet, then give what they wanted if it's appropriate. Be patient; it often gets worse before it gets better, because your dog tries harder before giving up.

Better still, teach them a polite way to ask, like sitting quietly, and reward that a lot.

Handling Frustration Barking

Frustration barking happens when your dog wants something they can't have, like getting to another dog. Increase distance, reward calm looks, and see Chapter 13 for a full plan for lead frustration and reactivity.

> **Never use bark collars.** Shock, spray or citronella collars may stop barking short-term, but they often increase fear and can turn alert barking into aggression towards the very thing your dog is worried about.

If This Happens

"My dog is too worked up to take treats." You're too close to the trigger or it's too intense. Block the view and practise at a lower level.

"My dog barks at every noise at night." Move their bed to a quieter room, use white noise, and make sure the crate is covered.

"My dog barks in the car." Cover their crate in the car, and practise short calm car trips with nothing exciting at the end.

Practice Games

Game 1: Doorbell Means Mat

Record your doorbell on your phone. Play it very quietly and toss a treat onto your dog's mat. Repeat until your dog runs to the mat when they hear it. Slowly turn up the volume over several days, then practise with a real ring.

Game 2: Quiet Pays

During calm moments, say "quiet" in a soft voice and give a treat while your dog is silent. You're labelling silence, so later you can ask for it.

Game 3: Window Watch

Sit with your dog near a window, a long way back. Each time a person or dog passes and your dog watches calmly, say "yes" and reward. If they bark, move further away. This builds calm watching instead of guarding.



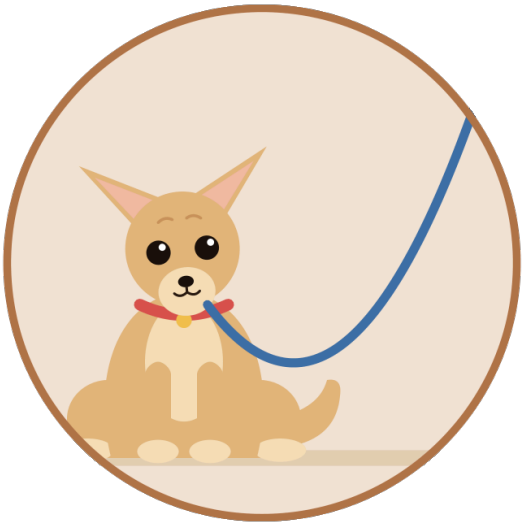
Your Action Plan

- ☐ Block barking views with window film or blinds.
- ☐ Teach "thank you" in a quiet room this week.
- ☐ Practise Doorbell Means Mat daily.
- ☐ Never reward demand barking.
- ☐ Stop unsupervised garden patrols.



Leash & Walk Reset

In this chapter, you'll learn why your Chihuahua pulls, stops or barks on walks, why a harness matters so much for their neck and windpipe, and the "Sniff and Stroll" method for calm, enjoyable walks.



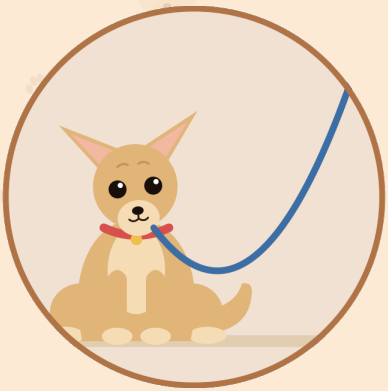
Leash & Walk Reset

Why Chis Pull (or Stop Dead)

- **Everything is interesting, or scary.** Smells, noises, people and dogs all grab a Chi's attention. They may pull towards things, or stop and refuse to move.
- **Prey drive:** squirrels, birds and cats are very exciting.
- **Short legs, fast feet:** Chis trot surprisingly quickly.

The Right Gear

- **A well-fitted harness,** not a collar, for walks. Pulling on a collar puts pressure on the neck, and many small dogs have delicate windpipes. Choose a small, well-fitted harness that doesn't rub.
- **A light, fixed lead** of about 1.8 metres.
- **A long line (5–10 metres)** for sniff walks in open spaces.
- **A raincoat** for wet weather.



Leash & Walk Reset

The Method: Sniff and Stroll

The idea is simple: your Chi gets to sniff, as a reward for walking nicely.

Step 1: Reward Next to You (Days 1–3)

At home and in the garden, reward your Chi for being next to your leg. Short sessions, lots of treats.

Step 2: Stop When the Lead Is Tight (Days 3–7)

On a quiet street, walk forward. When the lead goes tight, stop. When it goes slack, say "yes" and walk on.

Step 3: "Go Sniff!" (Week 2)

After 10–20 steps of nice walking, say "go sniff!" and let your Chi explore. Then "let's go," and walk on.

Step 4: Moving On From Smells (Week 2–3)

If your Chi won't leave a smell, wait a few seconds, then say "let's go" cheerfully and take a step. Reward when they follow. Don't drag them.

Step 5: Sniff Walks (Weekly)

Once or twice a week, take a slow sniff walk on a long line where your Chi chooses the pace and route. It's great for their brain.

Leash & Walk Reset

Off-Lead Safety

Keep your Chi on a lead or long line unless you're in a safe, enclosed space, away from big off-lead dogs. Check fences carefully; Chis can slip through surprisingly small gaps.

Weather

- **Rain:** a raincoat helps, and short trips.
- **Cold:** many smooth Chis need a coat in winter.
- **Heat:** walk early or late. Pavements get hot, and short dogs are close to the ground.

If This Happens

"My Chi refuses to walk." Check for pain first. Then try shorter walks, more sniffing, and treats for moving with you.

"My dog lunges at other dogs." See Chapter 9 and your Bark Fix bonus.

"My dog eats everything on walks." Practise "leave it" (Chapter 8).

Practice Games

Game 1: Follow Me

In the garden, walk in random directions with your Chi on a loose lead. Reward each time they choose to follow you.

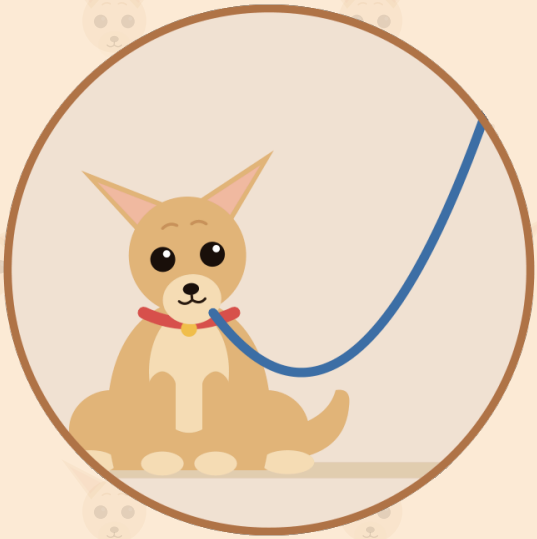
Game 2: Sniff Permission

Leash & Walk Reset

Stop near an interesting smell. Wait for your Chi to look at you, then say "go sniff!" They learn that checking in with you unlocks sniffing.

Game 3: The U-Turn

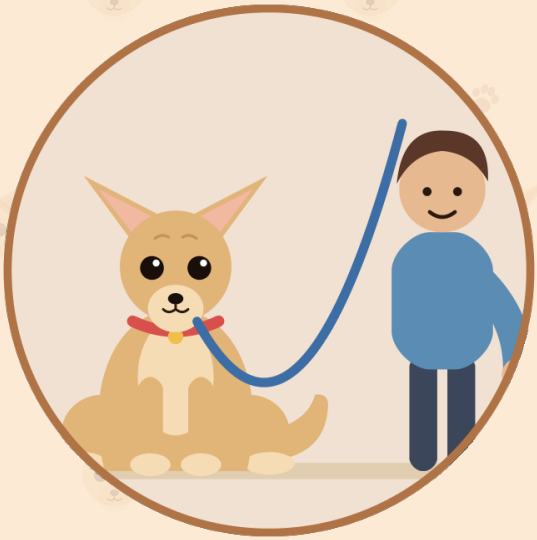
Say "this way!" and turn around. Reward as your Chi turns with you. Use it when you see a dog, cat or squirrel ahead.



Leash & Walk Reset

Your Action Plan

- ☐ Switch to a well-fitted harness.
- ☐ Practise rewarding next to you at home.
- ☐ Use "go sniff!" as a reward.
- ☐ Plan a weekly sniff walk on a long line.
- ☐ Check garden fences for gaps.



Potty & Accident Fix

In this chapter, you'll learn why Chihuahuas are known as one of the trickiest breeds to house-train, why many refuse to go out in the rain, and the "Potty Clock" plan that gets toilet training back on track at any age.



Why Chis Find It Hard

- **They're small.** A small puddle behind the sofa is easy to miss, so accidents go unnoticed and the habit grows.
- **They hate the rain and cold.** Short legs mean wet tummies. Many Chis simply refuse to go out in bad weather.
- **Tiny bladders.** Small dogs need to go more often than big dogs.
- **Smell keeps them coming back.** If an accident isn't cleaned properly, the smell tells your dog "this is the toilet."

The good news: with a clear routine, most Chihuahuas can be reliably house-trained.

> **Check with your vet first** if your previously house-trained dog suddenly has accidents, is going more often, or is straining. Urinary infections and other health problems can cause accidents.



The Method: The Potty Clock

Step 1: Set the Clock (Day 1)

Take your Chi out:

- first thing in the morning
- after every meal
- after every nap
- after play or excitement
- before bed
- every 1–2 hours for puppies, every 3–4 hours for adults in training

Step 2: One Spot, on a Lead (Days 1–30)

Take your dog on a lead to the same spot every time. Stand still and be boring. Say a cue like "be quick" when they start to go.

Step 3: Reward Within Two Seconds (Days 1–30)

The moment they finish, say "yes!" and give a tasty treat right there, outside. Not when you get back inside. Then have a short play or sniff as an extra reward.

Step 4: Supervise or Contain (Days 1–30)

Indoors, your dog is either:

- in sight (on a lead attached to you, or in the same room behind a gate), or
- in their crate or a pen for short periods.

Unsupervised freedom is how accidents happen.

Step 5: Watch for the Signs

Sniffing the floor, circling, going behind furniture, or walking towards the door. When you see these, take them out straight away.

Step 6: Give Freedom Slowly (Weeks 4+)

After two weeks with no accidents, give access to one more room. Add freedom gradually.

Accidents

- **Don't punish.** Rubbing noses in it or shouting teaches your dog to hide when they go.
- **Interrupt calmly** if you catch them, then take them outside.
- **Clean with an enzyme cleaner** made for pet accidents. Normal cleaners can leave a smell that attracts your dog back.

The Rain Plan

- Create a sheltered toilet area with a canopy or umbrella.
- Use a dog raincoat.
- Go out with your Chi, under an umbrella if needed.
- Make bad-weather toilet trips quick, with a great reward.
- Keep up the routine, even when it's raining.

Marking

Some Chihuahuas, especially un-neutered males, lift their leg indoors to mark their territory.

- Clean marked areas with an enzyme cleaner.
- Supervise closely and interrupt calmly.
- Belly bands can help in the short term while you train.
- Talk to your vet about whether neutering may help your dog.

If This Happens

"My Chi goes straight after coming back in." Stay outside longer, and wait until they've finished completely.

"My dog only goes on the carpet." Block that area, clean thoroughly, and take your dog out more often.

"My dog won't go in the garden." Try a short walk on a lead. Some dogs prefer to go away from home at first.

Practice Games

Game 1: The Toilet Treasure

Keep a jar of extra-special treats by the back door, used *only* for toileting outside. Your Chi learns that going outside earns the best rewards of the day.

Game 2: Bell Training

Hang a bell by the door. Each time you take your dog out to

toilet, touch the bell to their nose, say "outside," then open the door. Over time, many Chis learn to ring the bell when they need to go.

Game 3: The Boring Wait

Stand still and quiet in the toilet spot for up to five minutes. No games, no chatting. Once they've been, celebrate. Your Chi learns that the fun starts *after* the job is done.



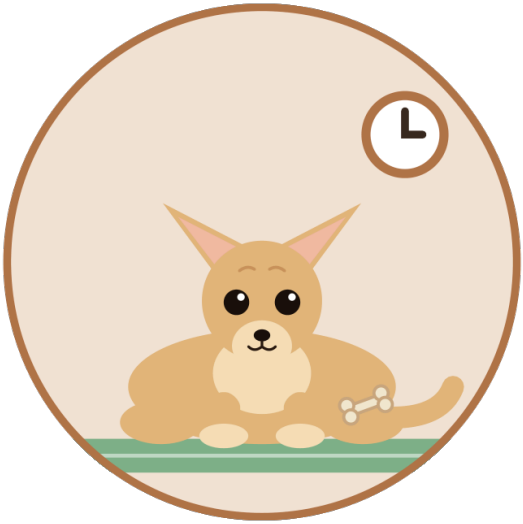
Your Action Plan

- ☐ Book a vet check if accidents are new.
- ☐ Start the Potty Clock today.
- ☐ Use one spot, on a lead.
- ☐ Reward within two seconds, outside.
- ☐ Buy an enzyme cleaner.
- ☐ Set up a rain plan.



Fear & Shake Reset

In this chapter, you'll learn why many Chihuahuas shake, how to tell cold from fear, and the "Brave Steps Plan" that helps your Chi feel safe and confident.





Fear & Shake Reset

Why Chis Shake

- **Cold:** tiny bodies lose heat quickly.
- **Fear or worry:** loud noises, strangers, new places.
- **Excitement:** some Chis shake when happy and excited.
- **Low blood sugar:** especially in tiny puppies.
- **Pain or illness.**

Cold or Fear?

- **Cold:** shaking stops when your Chi is warmed up with a coat or blanket.
- **Fear:** shaking comes with other signs, like a tucked tail, ears back, hiding, lip licking, or trying to get away.

See your vet if your Chi shakes a lot for no obvious reason, or if shaking comes with weakness, wobbliness, vomiting or not eating. Very young puppies who are weak and shaky may have low blood sugar and need help quickly.



Fear & Shake Reset

The Method: The Brave Steps Plan

Step 1: Keep Them Warm

Coats for walks, warm beds away from draughts, and blankets to burrow in.

Step 2: Find the Safe Distance

When your Chi is worried by something, move away until they can look at it and still take a treat.

Step 3: Pair It With Good Things

Each time your Chi looks at the scary thing calmly, say "yes" and reward.

Step 4: Let Them Choose

Let your Chi decide whether to move closer. Never push, carry or drag them towards something scary.

Step 5: Short and Sweet

Keep sessions short and end on a good note.

Comfort Is OK

It's fine to comfort a frightened dog. Calm words, a gentle hand or a safe place to hide won't "reward fear." What matters most is helping your dog feel safe.

Fear & Shake Reset

Common Chi Fears

- **Loud noises:** play recorded sounds very quietly during meals, and build up slowly.
- **Strangers:** let your Chi watch from a distance; never let strangers reach for them.
- **Big dogs:** keep a safe distance; avoid busy dog parks.
- **The vet:** practise handling at home and visit for treats only.

Practice Games

Game 1: Brave Box

Put a cardboard box on its side with a treat inside. Reward your Chi for exploring it. Build confidence with new objects.

Game 2: Sound Party

Play everyday sounds quietly while your Chi eats.

Game 3: Hand Target Walk

On walks, ask your Chi to touch your hand as you pass something new. It gives them a job and builds confidence.

Your Action Plan

- ☐ Keep your Chi warm.
- ☐ Find safe distances from scary things.
- ☐ Pair scary things with treats.
- ☐ Let your Chi choose.
- ☐ See your vet for unexplained shaking.



Socialising & Confidence

In this chapter, you'll learn why many Chihuahuas are wary of strangers and bigger dogs, what socialisation really means, and the "Watch From Afar" method for building a confident Chi at any age.



Why It Matters for Chis

Chihuahuas are brave, but they're also small. The world is full of giant feet, loud children and big dogs. A Chi who feels unsafe often deals with it by barking, growling or snapping first. That's why confident Chihuahuas are happier, calmer dogs.

Socialisation means helping your dog have **calm, positive experiences** with people, dogs, places, sounds and handling. It's not about how many things they meet; it's about how they *feel*.

The Puppy Window

Puppies are most open to new experiences until about **12–16 weeks**. Short, positive experiences during this time are valuable. But socialisation continues for life.



The Method: Watch From Afar

Step 1: Make a List

People (men, children, hats, beards, uniforms), big dogs, small dogs, cats, bikes, buggies, traffic, the vet's, grooming, different floors, stairs (carried safely), umbrellas and loud noises.

Step 2: Start at a Distance

Find a spot where your Chi can see one thing from your list and stay relaxed. Each time they look at it calmly, say "yes" and reward.

Step 3: Let Your Dog Choose

If your dog wants to move closer, let them. If they want to move away, let them.

Step 4: Keep It Short

Five to ten minutes, then go home.

Step 5: Tick and Repeat

Tick things off as your Chi becomes calm around them, and revisit them every few weeks.

Don't Let Strangers Swoop

Many people love Chihuahuas and want to pick them up or reach down to stroke them. That can be scary. It's fine to say, "Please don't touch her, she's in training." Let your dog decide if they want to say hello.

Big Dogs

Big dogs can injure a Chihuahua, even in play, and rough play can injure them. Choose calm, gentle playmates of a similar size, and avoid busy dog parks.

Reading Your Chihuahua

Signs your dog needs more space:

- lip licking or yawning
- turning the head away
- ears pinned back
- tail low or tucked
- freezing, a stiff body or a hard stare
- growling or barking

Practice Games

Game 1: Café Watching

Sit outside a quiet café with your Chi on your lap or on a mat. Reward calm looks at people passing.

Game 2: Surface Safari

Lay out different surfaces at home: a bath mat, a crinkly paper tray, a flat cushion. Reward your dog for stepping on them.

Game 3: Sound Party

Play sounds very quietly while your dog eats. Increase the volume slowly over days.

Your Action Plan

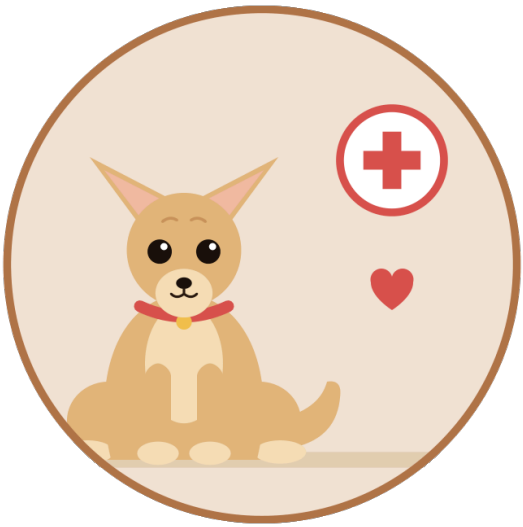
- ☐ Write your Chi's socialisation list.
- ☐ Practise Watch From Afar three times this week.
- ☐ Say no to strangers who want to pick your dog up.
- ☐ Choose calm, gentle playmates.
- ☐ Learn the signs your dog needs space.



Weight & Health Care

In this chapter, you'll learn the health issues that are more common in Chihuahuas, the warning signs to watch for, and the "Tiny Dog Health Habits" that help your Chi stay healthy.

This chapter is general information, not veterinary advice. Always speak to your vet about your own dog.



Common Chihuahua Health Issues

- **Dental disease:** tiny mouths often have crowded teeth, which collect tartar. Bad breath, red gums and loose teeth need a vet check.
- **Knee problems:** kneecaps that slip out of place can cause skipping or holding up a back leg.
- **Windpipe (trachea) problems:** some small dogs have a weak windpipe. A honking cough, especially when pulling on a collar or excited, needs a vet check. Use a harness, not a collar.
- **Heart conditions:** coughing, tiring easily or breathing faster at rest should be checked.
- **Low blood sugar:** tiny puppies can become weak, wobbly or sleepy if they don't eat often enough. Get help quickly.
- **The soft spot:** some Chis have a soft spot on the top of the skull. Handle their head gently.
- **Eye problems:** prominent eyes can be injured easily. Redness, squinting or cloudiness need a vet check.

See your vet straight away for breathing problems, collapse, weakness, a puppy who won't eat, or an eye injury.

Keep Your Chi Lean

A few extra treats can make a big difference to a tiny dog. Extra weight strains knees, the windpipe and the heart.

- You should feel the ribs easily and see a waist.
- Weigh meals and count treats.
- Weigh your Chi monthly.

Cold Weather

Chis feel the cold. Use a coat for walks in cold or wet weather, and give warm, draught-free beds.

The Method: The Tiny Dog Health Habits

Habit 1: Teeth Every Day or Two

Brush your Chi's teeth with a small toothbrush and dog toothpaste. Build up slowly with treats.

Habit 2: Harness Only

Use a harness for walks to protect the windpipe.

Habit 3: The Weekly Check

Eyes, ears, teeth, body, paws, nails and movement.

Habit 4: Safe Spaces

Use ramps or steps for sofas and beds, and block stairs for puppies. Falls and jumps can injure tiny legs.

Habit 5: Regular Vet Checks

Yearly check-ups for adults, often every 6 months for seniors, with a dental check every time.



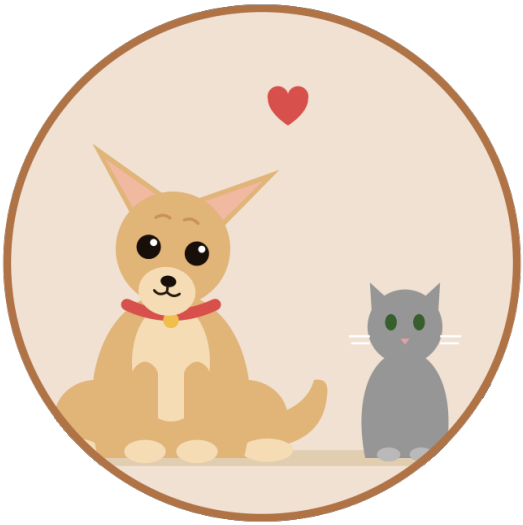
Your Action Plan

- ☐ Start brushing your Chi's teeth.
- ☐ Use a harness, not a collar, for walks.
- ☐ Check weight and shape.
- ☐ Keep a coat for cold weather.
- ☐ Book a vet and dental check.



Multi-Pet Harmony

In this chapter, you'll learn how to introduce your Chihuahua to other dogs and pets, how to keep the peace at home, and the "Peaceful Pack Rules."





Multi-Pet Harmony

Chis and Other Dogs

Many Chihuahuas love living with other dogs, especially other Chis. But they can also be bossy, guard their things, and play rough with bigger dogs, which isn't safe for a tiny dog.

Introductions

1. Meet on neutral ground, both on leads.
2. Walk side by side.
3. Let them meet briefly when both are relaxed.
4. Use baby gates at home at first.
5. Supervise for the first few weeks.

Cats and Small Pets

Chihuahuas were bred to hunt small animals. Introduce cats slowly, with your dog on a lead. Keep small pets like rabbits and guinea pigs well out of reach.



The Method: The Peaceful Pack Rules

Rule 1: Separate Meals

Feed dogs in separate rooms or crates.

Rule 2: Treasures Apart

Give chews and special toys only when dogs are separated.

Rule 3: Safe Spaces

Every dog needs their own bed or crate.

Rule 4: Supervise Play

Break up play every few minutes. Stop rough play, especially with bigger dogs.

Rule 5: One-to-One Time

Each dog gets their own walks and training time.

If This Happens

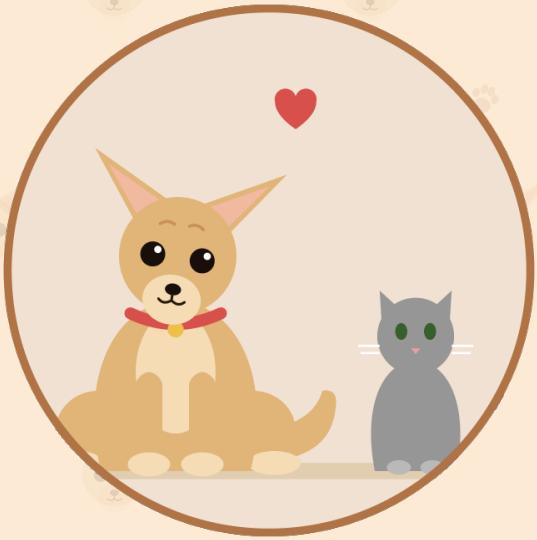
"My Chi bosses the other dog." Manage resources, and give each dog their own space.

"My dogs fight over toys." Pick up toys when they're together.

"My Chi chases the cat." Go back to the lead and gate stage.

Your Action Plan

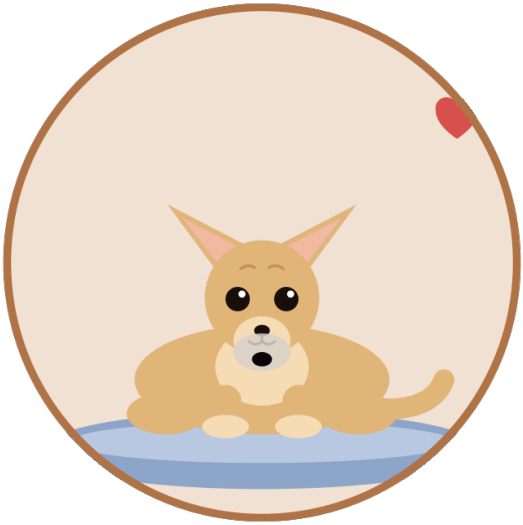
- ☐ Feed dogs separately.
- ☐ Give chews separately.
- ☐ Supervise play.
- ☐ Introduce new pets slowly.
- ☐ Give each dog one-to-one time.



Lifetime Care Plan

In this chapter, you'll learn how your Chihuahua's needs change from puppy to senior, and the "Care Calendar" that helps them live a long, happy life.

Many Chihuahuas live around 12–16 years. Good care helps you make the most of every year.



Puppy (up to about 12 months)

Vaccinations, parasite control and microchipping as your vet advises. Toilet training, crate training, socialisation and gentle handling. No jumping off furniture.

Adult (about 1–8 years)

Yearly check-ups. Lean weight, daily brain work, safe exercise, and regular dental care.

Senior (about 8+ years)

Many vets recommend check-ups every 6 months. Soft, warm beds, ramps everywhere, shorter walks, and easy brain games. Watch for changes in movement, appetite, thirst and behaviour.



Lifetime Care Plan

The Method: The Care Calendar

Daily

Walks, sniffing, brain games, rest, and checking how your Chi is eating and moving.

Weekly

The Weekly Health Check, brushing, and teeth cleaning.

Monthly

Weigh your dog, check nails, and keep parasite treatments up to date.

Yearly

Vet check-up and vaccinations as advised.

Keeping a Senior Chi Happy

- Warm, cosy beds, away from draughts.
- Ramps for everything.
- Short, gentle walks with lots of sniffing.
- Easy brain games and lick mats.
- Extra vet checks.

If This Happens

"My senior Chi is sleeping more." That's normal, but see your vet if it's sudden or comes with other changes.

"My older dog seems confused at night." Talk to your vet.

Some older dogs develop changes in their thinking that can be helped.

"My senior dog won't use the stairs." Block stairs and carry them safely. See your vet for any new pain.

Practice Games

Game 1: Easy Find It

Scatter treats on a soft rug for your senior Chi to find.

Game 2: New Old Tricks

Teach simple tricks like nose touches. Older brains love to learn.

Game 3: Sunshine Sniff

Slow sniff walks on soft ground keep senior dogs happy and moving.



Lifetime Care Plan

Your Action Plan

- ☐ Book your Chi's next vet check.
- ☐ Set up a Care Calendar.
- ☐ Weigh your dog this month.
- ☐ Add ramps or steps where needed.
- ☐ Plan brain games for every age.



20 Popular Questions Answered

1. Why does my Chi bark so much? They're alert and often worried. See Chapter 9.

2. Why does my Chi shake? Cold, fear, excitement or sometimes illness. See Chapter 12.

3. Why does my Chi snap at people? Usually fear or discomfort. See Chapter 5.

4. Should I carry my Chi everywhere? Only when needed. Let them walk as much as possible.

5. Why does my Chi only like me? Many Chis bond strongly with one person. Others can build trust with treats and games.



20 Popular Questions Answered

6. Is toilet training harder with a Chi? It can be. See Chapter 11.

7. Collar or harness? A harness for walks, to protect the windpipe.

8. Does my Chi need a coat? Often, in cold or wet weather.

9. How much exercise does a Chi need? Around 30–60 minutes a day of walks and play, plus brain games.

10. Can my Chi live with big dogs? With careful introductions and supervision (Chapter 15).



20 Popular Questions Answered

11. Why does my Chi guard me? Many Chis bond strongly with one person. See Chapter 3.

12. Why does my Chi have bad breath? Often dental disease. See your vet.

13. My Chi skips on a back leg. Why? It may be a knee problem. See your vet.

14. My Chi honks when excited. Is that normal? It could be a windpipe problem. See your vet.

15. Are Chis good with children? They can be, with older, calm children and close supervision.



20 Popular Questions Answered

16. Why does my Chi burrow in blankets? Chis love warm, cosy dens.

17. Can my Chi go off lead? Only in safe, enclosed areas, away from big dogs.

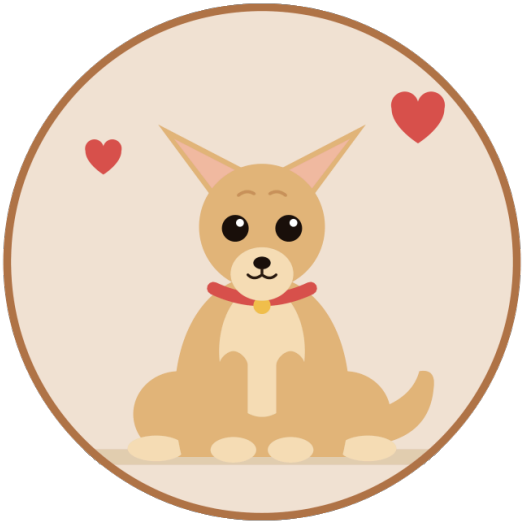
18. Why does my Chi tremble at the vet? Fear. Practise handling and do happy visits.

19. Is my Chi overweight? If you can't feel the ribs easily, talk to your vet.

20. When should I see a behaviourist? If your Chi bites, guards seriously, panics when alone, or isn't improving.



A Final Word



Take a moment to look at your Chihuahua. Maybe they're curled up under a blanket, watching the door, or sitting proudly on your lap.

Everything they do comes from a tiny, brave, loyal dog trying to make sense of a big world. None of the barking, snapping or shaking is your Chi trying to be difficult. It's a little dog who needs to feel safe.

Pick one chapter. Follow the method. Play the games. Tick off the action plan. Then pick the next.

Small steps, done every day, build a calm, confident Chi, and a bond that lasts a lifetime.