

3 year old border collie. Very high energy. Does lots of nosework outside (3-5x weekly). Runs up to 19 miles, goes backpacking, can clear a 5 foot fence from a standstill. Has excellent "sit to say please" and has never counter surfed when owners are home. In the current home for 6 months, unknown history prior to this. Fed 1 cup of food 2x daily. Owner works 10.5 hour days, with commute is gone for 11.5 hours per day. Owner is unsure if she can afford dogwalking. Dog is happily crate trained.

Dog has a counter surfing "problem." Notes:

- This might happen most often when the boyfriend comes home first, then leaves again without walking/feeding the dog. But it's hard to say - no tally yet. It's also unclear if boyfriend simply doesn't notice counter surfing evidence so he assumes it happens after he left.
- Dog gets 1-3 walks per day that allow for sniffing and decompression
- Dog is not fed directly from counters/plates, though is rewarded for lying several feet from eating humans. Food is generally tossed to dog.
- Dog is fed exclusively from puzzle toys or through training games
- Dog is given regular bully sticks, stuffed Kongs, etc.
- Owner has tried spraying bitter apple spray on recycling. This has no effect. Putting recycling up on counters has worked. So far.
- Dog does not come to greet the owner when he's counter surfed earlier in the day. This is generally how she is alerted, which then leads to a search of the house for evidence. Dog has been verbally scolded in moments of frustration. This clearly is not helping.
- There does not seem to be a correlation between amount of exercise and counter surfing activity.

Things that the owner has tried:

- Managing the counters. This has failed due to negligence on the owner's part and creativity on the dog's part (the dog is starting to pull down tupperware and spoons, not just food items)
- Closing the dog in another room. This resulted in scratches on a rented apartment's door.
- X pens or baby gates. The dog jumps over them with no issues.
- Increasing "it's your choice" and "4 on the floor" exercises
- Increasing stationing and relaxation work
- Filming the dog when the dog is left alone. This resulted in the owner learning that the dog spends most of his day sleeping by the door. The dog stood on his hind legs to check the counters at 3 hours. He checked the recycling at 3, 5, 6, 8, and 10 hours.

Midday breaks from work to walk the dog and bringing the dog to work are not options. The dog can get midday walks on Saturday and Sunday from the boyfriend to reduce time left alone. Owner is looking into a dogwalker for Monday and Tuesday. Owner is home Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday.

The counter surfing escapades now include:

- A 1 liter tin case of olive oil from the stove. This has been on the stove for 6 months
- Several bowls of vegetables and fruits from the countertop. All produce is now stored inside the fridge. It's currently safe there.
- Empty boxes of spinach. This particular day, the dog was found with the spinach in his crate. His full, stuffed Kong was next to the empty box.
- Empty tupperwares that had been rinsed.
- A pot on the stove that was storing cherry tomatoes. This was a glitch in the "all produce is in the fridge" protocol
- Generally knocking off and licking clean of literally anything on the counters.
- 80% dark chocolate from the top of a 6 foot bookshelf. Really unclear how dog got this one. Dog had to go to the emergency vet for this.
- Tampons from inside of a foot-operated trash can.
- A wooden spoon that he cracked in half
- Lots of empty plates

What solutions are there beyond crating the dog?? This is now getting dangerous and heavy practice of NILIF, it's your choice is not helping fast enough.