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12 Dog Behavior Problems Solved!



**The Stress Free Way
To Great Behavior
From Your Dog**

Author: Dan Scott

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From Your Dog

By Dan Scott, Author of “Real Food for Dogs”



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Please print this report, curl up in a comfortable chair and read every word carefully, because THIS could transform your dog's life – it might even save it!

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Introduction



The day you bring home your new dog or puppy is full of excitement and hope. Long before you ever arrive through the door, you have likely already envisioned the long walks in the park, the endless games of fetch and maybe even having your newspaper and slippers brought to you on cue.

Then reality collides with expectation and you find yourself chasing after your dog through the park, participating in endless sessions of tug of war over your favorite shirt and maybe even having your newspaper, slippers, curtains, furniture, cell phone, antique lamp and down filled comforter torn to shreds.

Even if you have had dogs all your life or are all new to the experience, it is anything but unheard of to sometimes acquire a canine companion that seems bent on getting the best of you. Sometimes it is the whole dog and its behavior, other times it is one simple issue that, for the time being, seems insurmountable. No matter what you try, how loud you yell, how much you beg, bribe, distract or how many times you banish the dog to the back yard, he or she will be at 'it' again in no time flat.

When bad dog behaviors include the destruction of property, things can become even more strained. Plus, there is a sadness and disappointment, as the friend and the relationship you had in mind gets shredded right along with your new leather sofa. Some owners will sadly resort to giving up their dog and their dreams to a rescue shelter.

This is a most dreadful way to handle such a situation as it can be easy to get into the habit of giving up one dog after another. Many rescues and shelters are already overflowing with dogs of all breeds, shapes and sizes who have yet to know a good home. The first step of responsible dog ownership is understanding that having a dog is a privilege rather than a right. Though it doesn't hurt, it still requires more than just having a big heart. It requires a willingness to understand how to share space with those of another species. With enough time, effort and devotion the vast majority of behavior issues can be rehabilitated into viable, loving relationships.

Admitting There's a Problem

All in all, the most common issues at the center of canine behavior problems lie in failing to establish pack order and laying down the rules of the house when the dog is first brought home. Many times, in the heat of bringing home a cute new dog or puppy, there is a whirlwind of excitement and the dog is given a great many freedoms. Unfortunately, many people do not know that how the canine operates in the wild is still the same way they operate as a domesticated pet. Simply put, dogs are not people and they will not become more human the longer they are around people anymore than you will become canine being around a dog. We are inherently what we are.

A dog being a dog can only interpret the world around him in the way he or she knows how- and will do so accordingly. As certain behaviors crop up, an owner may consistently or inconsistently chastise their dog. Mostly owners ignore a behavior altogether attributing it to being hyper, dumb, of a bad bloodline or worse, not expecting anything at all because, after all, it's 'just a dog'. The dog still continues interpreting the world around it in the way it knows how, expecting a certain response. Miscommunications continue to ensue until the owner has no choice but to start paying attention.

Understanding the Key to it All: Pack Order

The minute a dog is born, he or she will learn about the world around them through a filter of social order that differentiates between leader and follower. The mother is the leader, the pups are the followers. This pack order hierarchy delineates that the leader is first to eat, gets the best places to sleep and is the first to meet and greet new visitors, etc. Over time in the litter, pecking order is established and there will be a second in command and on down. The order is unchanging though it is normal for there to be challenges to it.

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The dog or puppy that enters a new home is still looking at the world through this filter of social order. Before a dog can get to living life in a calm manner and settle into its new digs, he or she must know: Who is in charge here?

You will not be established as the benevolent leader if you are:

- Allowing your dog to jump on people or furniture

- Sharing your food with your dog
- Allowing your dog to enter through a doorway before you
- Allowing your dog to tug or pull on its leash
- Offering food or affection as bribes in exchange for good behavior

Remember, the best food and best places to sleep are reserved for the top dog. By sharing either you are telling your dog: authority is his. Yet, suddenly you want him to get off the sofa. If you have already established that your dog has authority to sleep in the best places, why must he get off the sofa?

Even though you understand your desires, these types of situations actually cause great anxiety in a canine. The manner in which they establish themselves and function in the world has been disrupted. Whether it's for the short term or long term, until order is restored your dog will remain in great anxiety. As a dog cannot sit up and speak his or her feelings or pen them out, it usually manifests into one or more of the problem behaviors of:

1. Food Aggression
2. Leash Issues
3. Incessant Barking
4. Chewing
5. Fearfulness
6. Begging
7. Separation Anxiety
8. Obsessive behaviors

Many a dog owner has looked in desperation to find a quick fix to a behavioral problem. Unfortunately, it is unlikely the problem developed overnight, so there will be no way to fix it overnight either. Time and patience will be required to unlearn what has been learned.

Regardless of age, obedience classes should be a part of every dog's life with their owner from the beginning. These classes help establish dominance and help a dog feel safer by recognizing his or her place.

Dogs that are taken to obedience classes from the beginning grow up with an obedient mindset. They have no concept that there is any other way to act than through obedience. This is not the case for an older dog; something that can make obedience training a bit trickier if you decide to wait. Nonetheless, once your dominance is established, you can then begin living a balanced harmonious life with your dog.

It is important to note that some dog owners skip obedience classes because they misguidedly associate dominance with being mean. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Not only can dominance be established without an ounce of cruelty, dogs want and need leadership established in their life. It's their standard for living. Refusing or failing to do so should be considered and out and out cruelty. Leaving a dog in a constant state of anxiety is hardly the hallmark of responsible dog ownership.

If no order is established, a dog will have no choice but to try and balance out the situation by putting itself in the lead.

With obedience classes, you as well will learn to communicate with your dog via a firm and focused body language a dog instinctively recognizes. For dogs living with a family, it is important that the each member participate in the obedience training. Each individual must hold the same standards for the dog; otherwise the inconsistencies will keep your pet in a state of anxiety and behavioral problems will persist.

Dealing with Behaviors

When you notice that your dog is acting up, you do not necessarily need to take it personally nor should you assign blame to the dog. For whatever reason, your canine companion is experiencing some type of anxiety. Changes in the home, recent traumas, diet and medication are only part of a list of things that can cause problems for a dog. The main goal is to calmly restore balance to your dog's way of being so that he or she can feel safe again.

1. Food Aggression



Of the serious behavioral problems that require a dog owner's attention, food aggression ranks at the top of the list. This is largely because of the wide range of repercussions and consequences that can occur when a pet is hostile at feeding time towards its owner or other dogs or animals it shares space with.

While some dogs have slight hostility, others have way too much. Regardless, any amount is a cause for concern. Unless you plan on living under a rock for the rest of your life, it will be imperative to meet this problem head on and with full confidence. It is not doing your dog any good to ignore the problem and the frustration and lack of balance that your dog is experiencing will not right itself on its own. While there are triggers that can bait your dog into acting out, the underlying issue will lie with you as the dog owner.

In essence, a dog that becomes aggressive during feeding time is a dog that is experiencing a dominance issue. He or she may bare teeth, growl, put itself between you and its food dish or even snap at the hands and fingers that feed them. This is a sign that the dog believes

he or she is the alpha in your pack and that you, even though you are the one providing the food, are the subordinate. Remember, it is the leader of the pack that eats first and gets the best food. Sharing the food denotes authority and your dog has now declared it does not deem you worthy to share food with. No matter how unassuming your canine companion may be throughout the day, this behavior can have a dog and its owner treading on very dangerous ground.

In the wild, canines do not get fed on schedule and there is no way of knowing when the next meal will be. Therefore, the instinct that springs forth is to guard one's food very closely. What many dog owners do not understand is that despite the domestication of today's dog, this tendency has been around for millions of years and is still very much present.

When a dog displays food aggression, other issues are often at work as well. Not only is he or she confused about leadership roles, the dog apparently has not learned the behavior is inappropriate. This means there is a breakdown in communication between the dog and its owner. This must be repaired before other miscommunication issues begin to crop up. A dog can also have food aggressions when it fails to see its owner as a provider. If any success in solving this type of problem is to be had, a dog's mindset must be brought back to you as the alpha leader and the source of all things good.

A blatantly confused or frustrated dog that is comfortable acting out at will is one whose owner has mistakenly reinforced the behavior at some point. The good news is, with work, this can be reversed at any time. When the dog owner is ready to communicate the firm and

focused body language and demeanor that a dog instinctually recognizes, problems with food aggression can be addressed. As the dog owner and pack leader, leadership designates that all change is initiated by you on your terms at all times.

Get into your role as pack leader. Know it, live it and breathe it.

Keep in mind:

- You chose to be a dog owner
- Your dog is a dog, not a person
- He or she is relying on you to keep things in balance
- If there seems to be no pack leader, your dog will step into the role

If you refuse to take up leadership with your dog, be happy with the power struggle that ensues. There is no doubt that being a pack leader is a heavy responsibility. You decide everything and there is no leeway. Remember to not confuse leadership or dominance with being mean or all out cruelty. The cruelty is allowing your dog to feel unbalanced, stressed and confused then admonishing him or her for doing what comes natural. If you need help establishing dominance, obedience classes are the perfect place to start. Better yet, contact a dog trainer that specializes in aggressive behaviors. This will be especially necessary for a dog with mannerisms that make feeding time physically dangerous.

Your trainer will likely teach you to offer your dog food only after an approved behavior. As humans, we are taught to counter aggression

with placation. This does not work for dogs. Dogs recognize reinforcement through either affections, food or both. Distracting, bribing or pacifying a dog with either of these things after an aggressive fit only reinforces the negative behavior.

To curb food aggression in a dog, establishing yourself as pack leader and ultimate provider is a must. This instills in your dog that your presence around feeding times is a welcome, positive and healthy thing. The earlier this is established in a dog's life, the better.

Options for helping a dog out of food aggressive behaviors are:

- ***Own your dog's food and feeding time.*** As pack leader, you should not allow your dog to eat unless and until you are done eating.
- ***Never offer food or treats unless it is earned.*** Start with simple commands such as sit or stay. Also, always have your dog in the down position while preparing its meal. Before releasing the command, place the bowl on the floor, take several steps away and wait 10 to 15 seconds.
- ***Help your dog learn that having others around during feeding time is a positive thing.*** Hand feed your dog, offering bits of food and even going as far as putting your hand in his or her bowl. Similarly, put bits of food in your dog's bowl by hand. After he or she has finishes these small bits, place a few more in the bowl. Soon, the dog will be expectant of your handling its

bowl and its food. Also, pet your dog as it eats offering a soothing tone all the while. However, do not attempt these exercises if your dog exhibits extreme hostility and presents as a bite risk. That is when it is time to contact a professional that deals specifically with aggressive behaviors.

- ***Do not bully or intimidate your dog.*** This indicates that you are challenging your dog's authority. He or she will then act as canine nature dictates and up the aggression level. This simply will not work. Your dog must understand that there is no challenge to its authority because you *are* the authority.
- ***Make sure your family is involved.*** All it takes is one person to undo what your dog is trying to learn.
- ***Expect the issue to take time.*** Because of the danger involved with a food aggressive dog, expect to take baby steps into progress. A learned behavior takes time to unlearn. You as the dog owner must take time to deprogram as well. Some aggression issues can take months to conquer.
- ***Aggression takes energy. Get out and exercise.*** Many people will opt for a breed of dog without ever stopping to consider what their dog will require in terms of exercise. Some dogs need more exercise than others but all dogs need an appropriate way to diffuse pent up energy. Otherwise, that energy will be diffused in the most convenient way a dog can find for itself; most likely: chronic chewing, barking, digging and other destructive behaviors. Being aggressive takes energy. Use

up that energy appropriately before it has a chance to be used in negative way.

- ***Spay or neuter your dog.*** Unneutered and unspayed dogs can have various aggression issues due to mating and territory concerns. However, to spare your dog unnecessary trauma be sure he or she is not at the height of misbehaviors. Start obedience training and establish a strong level of trust first.
- ***Don't assume it is a breed problem.*** Breeds can have attributes, dogs can have personalities and the canine species has innate abilities across the board. None of these things are absolute. Do not do your dog the disservice of excusing his or her behavior for these reasons. Regardless of any of the above, your dog is still frustrated and feeling imbalanced and needs this attended to so he or she can have that well deserved good long happy life.

2. Mastering Leash Issues



Taking a canine companion on a daily walk could seem basic and mundane but it is actually one of the most important aspects of dog ownership. It is not only good physical exercise, it has a wealth of psychological benefits for you

and your dog. When performed correctly, it helps to solidify a healthy dynamic by creating a perfect interactive venue where your position as pack leader is established and consistently reaffirmed. Far too many dog owners do not realize the prime training opportunities they are throwing away by skipping the ritual of a daily walk. It is an aspect that is as vital as providing your dog with food and water.

First and foremost, all dog owners would do well to understand that the canine species is naturally migratory. As there is no regular feeding schedule, roaming in search of food and water is the only way wild canines can expect to get fed. While the domesticated dog in general is lucky enough to have a dependable feeding schedule, that innate tendency to roam is still very much alive. It is a daily walk that provides an outlet for dogs to diffuse this need as they wander, explore and sniff their environment. As dogs burn off pent up energy with good physical exercise, processing the information around them is what allows them to stimulate their minds. When there is no

opportunity to carry these activities out, a dog owner will likely have a bored pet that sooner or later becomes destructive.

As many dog owners are well aware, nothing ruins a walk faster than a dog that has bad manners on a leash. He or she may become hyper or insist on jerking, pulling, straining, choking or outright defying its tether. This is an issue that must be solved for the simple fact that ignoring the behavior or doing away with walks altogether means even nastier behavior issues in the not too far off future. As you have taken on the privilege of dog ownership, your canine companion is depending on you to be responsible and do the right thing.

Solving Leash Issues

Training a dog correctly always has to do with establishing a leadership role and it is no different when dealing with dogs that have leash issues.

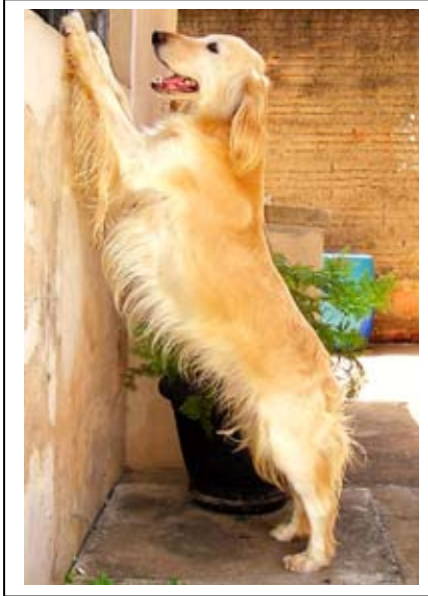
- ***A walk begins before you and your dog ever leave the house.*** Some dogs get quite enthused when they see a leash; however, hold off on leashing your dog on until he or she is calm. Should your dog become hyper while the leash on, sit in a chair and refuse touch and eye contact. You are the pack leader. Reinforce that no walks will be had until your dog is in a composed and obedient state. Keep the leash with you and move calmly and slowly allowing the dog to copy your state as leader.

- ***Be the first out the door.*** The pack leader gets to be first at everything. Your dog is simply invited to go on the walk with you.
- ***The name of the game is follow-the-leader.*** The only places your dog should be allowed to walk is either beside you or behind you- never in front. This is what establishes you as the pack leader to your dog. When your dog begins to strain on the leash, stop and immediately begin walking in the opposite direction. Again, reinforce that you are the decider and no walks will be had until your dog maintains an obedient state.
- ***Use the right leash.*** A six foot leash is the perfect length for ensuring you will keep good control of your dog during the walk.
- ***Make your dog earn free time.*** Only dogs that remain obedient during a walk should be allowed free time off the leash or on long leash ahead of you to sniff the ground and relieve themselves. Otherwise, you reinforce that nothing needs to change for your dog to get what he or she wants. Your dog's free time is always the minor part of the walk as reward for a longer obedient spell. Have your dog keep all its attention on you during this spell, no sniffing the ground, looking around or being distracted by neighborhood activities.
- ***Be the first in the door.*** Don't let all you are teaching your dog go down the drain after your walk. You are the pack leader always. You still need to be the first in the door and there needs to be a designated place for your dog to sit and wait while you

take off its leash. Your dog needs to remain in an obedient state for this to happen.

- **Once home, offer food water and praise.** Food and water after the walk represent the success of the hunt for your dog.
- **Be patient.** Conquering leash issues is one of the most trying behaviors that can take a good amount of time, effort and dedication to work through. However, the results will be very worth it for you and your dog. To ensure training does not hit any bumps and take longer than it needs to, involve the entire family so that your dog gets a strong consistent message.

3. Incessant Barking



Expecting a dog not to bark is like expecting a baby not to cry. Each can only communicate in the way they know how. The vast majority of dog owners actually appreciate their dog's bark. Sometimes barking ability can play a large role in why a person takes of canine companionship to begin with. However, when your dog seems to be obsessed with wearing out its very own vocal chords, there is no doubt things can get tedious fast- not only for

you but your surrounding neighbors as well.

There are some dogs that just like to talk and hear the sound of their own voice. Yet when a dog's bark interrupts the daily goings on of life- or the nightly goings on, such as sleep- it is time for you as the pack leader to change the behavior. As pack leader, you have the power to do this.

- **Chronic barking takes energy.** Underexercised dogs need a way to diffuse the anxiety and tension they feel when pent up energy has no place to go. If barking is the most convenient outlet, they'll take it. Exercise your dog regularly, consistently and vigorously. Activities such as running obstacle courses are excellent ways to exercise your dog's mind and body. At the

minimum, aim for a vigorous 45 minute throw and fetch session or a one hour walk each day. Be sure to vary your walking routes on occasion as well. This will give your dog more information to process and keep his or her mind properly stimulated.

- ***Do not correct the dog while agitated.*** No dog acknowledges the dominance of a pack leader that is out of control or aggressive. Chronic barking is understandably irritating; however, as pack leader you have the duty to guide your dog into the correct behavior while staying calm. Set the mood by refusing to acknowledge whatever your dog is barking at. You are still in charge and there is no need to worry.
- ***Do not bribe or distract your dog with food or affection.*** Anytime you want to reinforce a behavior in your dog- whether positive or negative- simply offer food or affection. Too many dog owners try to divert their dog's attention with snacks. While this can provide a few minutes of quiet, it actually reinforces the dog to stay in the habit of barking. When your dog associates barking with a yummy treat, he or she will always eventually return to the behavior. Instead, teach your dog a short, curt verbal signal. When you give your dog the signal to stop barking, insist that he or she give complete submission to your command. This may take several minutes. Many times, a dog will hear its owner's correction yet return to barking in the next blink. If necessary, use a body block to revert its attention back to you. Do this by literally standing in your dog's line of sight and refusing to move. This gives your dog time to refocus on the fact

that you are the pack leader and you are telling him/her to be quiet.

- ***Some breeds bark more than others.*** In the beginning, dogs were bred for work and there are some breeds that were bred specifically for their bark. Hounds were bred for their hunting ability and their bark. Some small dogs lived in large palaces where their piercing barks could alert guards to intruders. Nonetheless, this will not serve as an excuse for chronic barking. Simply put, your dog should not be interrupting the peace of everyone around them.

4. Chewing



Chewing is a natural habit for dogs that disperses tension and energy. Rawhide chews, rubber toys, nylon bones and millions of other items in a pet supply store tend to take up two to three

aisles just in itself. However, there are times when chewing become downright destructive and hazardous. Puppies are prone to chewing and mouthing as they explore the world. The occasional chewed up leather shoe should not be a total surprise.

However, an older dog with too much tension and nervous energy will chew relentlessly- through rawhide bones, electrical cords, furniture, wooden cabinets and even air conditioning units. In these cases, it is imperative for an owner to take action immediately; not only to save belongings but to stop your dog before he or she chews through something dangerous, such as a power cord, or ingests something that gets lodged in the intestinal track.

- ***Excess tension needs excess exercise-physically and mentally.*** Even if your dog has a great big yard to run around in, he or she still needs to be stimulated both physically and mentally. Some dogs thrive on routine while others will go nuts looking at the same thing day after day. Either way, introducing changes and an opportunity to partake in activities that they personally find fulfilling will help keep nervous energy to a bare

minimum. For some dogs, this can be as easy as alternating different routes when out for a walk. Other dogs get a kick out of participating in things such as agility courses, flyball, earthdog trials or even hunting.

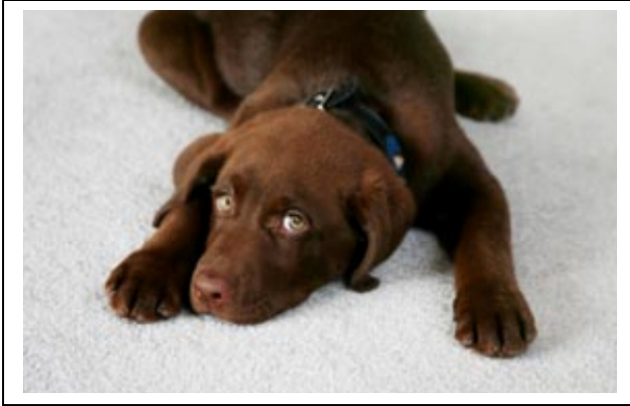
- ***Understand your dog's breed.*** Understand that dogs were first and foremost bred for work and the helpful traits your dog was bred for still exist. Some dogs, such as Border Collies and Australian Cattle Dogs are instilled with the need to herd, work and keep themselves and their minds busy. Huskies are meant to run, hounds were meant to put their noses to use and terriers were largely bred for ratting. By giving your dog something to do that suits what he was originally bred for, its energy will have a perfect outlet.
- ***Find what agitates your dog.*** If your dog is well exercised and there seems to be no other issue, get down to your dog's level and see if there is something in the environment that could agitate your dog. It can be a sound, a light, a smell or a vibration that is causing the problem. Just as well, check your dog's diet as he or she may be experiencing an allergic reaction to a chemical in its dog food; especially when fed a commercial food product. There may be an ear infection or other medical issue at hand.

Side note:

While it is normal for dogs to chew, make sure your dog has the appropriate chew toy for its size. Appropriate sized toys keeps large dogs from swallowing toys they can choke on. Treat dispensing toys, such as Kongs stuffed with homemade liver treats, are a great way to mentally stimulate your dog while allowing them to exercise their jaws productively.

While no chew toy is a hundred percent safe, avoid using toys that are made for children. They are often flimsy and can contain small parts or stuffing that could be dangerous if ingested. Most importantly, familiarize yourself with canine emergency techniques for choking dogs.

5. Fearfulness



Some dogs are just shy from the beginning; however, fearfulness is most common in dogs that are adopted from shelters. This is because there is a tendency for rescue and shelter dogs to experience abuse, separation anxiety or

other types of trauma. While some dogs are used to human contact, others are not and must learn new behaviors. More often than not, dogs actually have a great deal to unlearn what they know about human contact.

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A dog may have fears of objects, places and situations as well. The difficulty is not knowing how or why the fear became a fear in the first place. All that is known is that the dog now needs time to adjust to the stimuli in a new way. While this can take some patience, watching a dog gain confidence will make it well worth the effort.

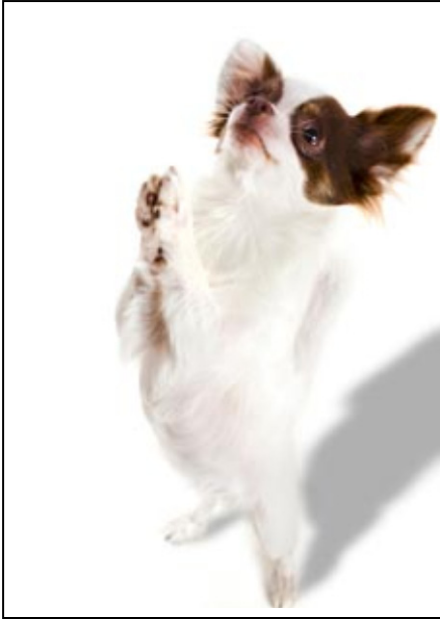
Being shy of a new dog, situation or person is quite understandable. Yet, fearfulness that keeps your dog from functioning in the real world is simply unworkable. To stay healthy and well balanced your dog must go out on a regular basis into the world around him. Otherwise, any experience will likely overwhelm him or her into an out of control mess. The situation can be especially complicated if the dog overreacts and hurts not only himself but someone else.

To help your dog overcome fearfulness:

- **Ignore fear and fear related outbursts.** It is often difficult to listen to a dog break down and bark or whine in fear; however, the human animal and the canine animal are on different levels when it comes to offering reassurance. Reassurance to a human means to comfort, soothe and placate. Reassurance to a dog means 'your behavior is accepted'. When a dog acts in a confident manner, then you can offer reassurance and tell him or her, 'your behavior is accepted'. Otherwise, be the center of calm for your dog. Make no acknowledgment of its fearful behavior. Praise only confident behaviors.
- **Socialize slowly.** Trying to force a fearful dog into socialization too quickly can overload its coping skills and reverse progress. However, you will need to be consistent with it and understand patience is the name of the game. What seems like progress may end up taking two steps back before more progress is made again.
- **Follow your dog's lead.** Because of the risk of defensive reactions, do not allow people to approach and touch your dog. Only your dog knows his or her comfort level and whether or not he wants to be touched. Simply ask that your dog be the one to make the first contact. If he or she is willing and able, fine. If he or she is not, that's perfectly alright as well. There is nothing to take personally; just a process that will take time to work through.

- ***Do not allow fearfulness to be an excuse for bad behavior.***
Should your dog react with aggression, it means he or she is feeling overwhelmed, frustrated and out of balance. Nonetheless, you must correct your dog for the aggression. When he or she is once again calm, then give praise and reassurance. Remember to offer attention only *after* the correct behavior has been conducted.

6. Begging



When begging becomes a problem, it is largely because the behavior has been reinforced somewhere. In nature, a dog is perfectly fine with allowing the dominantes in its pack to eat first. Everyone gets a turn eventually. However, because of the fat, sugar and carbohydrate content of your cooked food, you cannot share your provisions largely for health reasons. This is why your dog has its own food bowl.

- ***Do not be manipulated into losing control.*** For some dog owners, begging is understandably one of the most annoying problems. This is especially true if the dog is in the habit of pawing or whining in their search for a handout. Begging at the table through meal times is an unstable behavior brought about through lack of leadership. If you intend to establish yourself as dominate, you will need to maintain a firm, focused control.
- ***When it comes to reinforcement, dogs recognize two things: food and affection.*** Offerings from the table will only automatically reinforce your dog's begging in the way bacon treats and praise reinforces teaching your dog to sit. You will need to ignore your dog's begging behavior by making no contact or even acknowledging its presence.

- ***Crate train your dog.*** If you simply cannot cope with begging, use crates. Many individuals train their dogs to stay in their crates until dinner time is over. This cuts the stress and allows you to have a peaceful dinner uninterrupted.

If you do not have one already, offer a crate of appropriate size and allow your dog to investigate it. Leave toys or treats and comfortable bedding inside. During the acquaintance period, always leave the door open. When the time comes that your dog is comfortable entering and sitting in the crate with the door open, move to the next step of closing the door for a few minutes at a time. A treat hidden under the edge of the bedding at the back of the crate will help your dog to gain positive associations with entering the crate. Gradually extend the number of minutes over the next week or so. Should your dog start to cry with the door closed, do not open it until he or she regains his or her composure and settles into an obedient state. For some dog owners, this training exercise may require a good set of ear plugs.

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Once your dog acclimates to its new digs, it will be all but routine for your dog to head to its crate at dinner time.

Be patient and stick with it. Begging is a behavior that takes time. Rarely do dogs invest time in things that do not give an immediate payoff. While some dogs can be broken of this type of behavior within days or weeks, others may take months. Giving things time, staying focused and being consistent are necessary if you have any intention of breaking your dog of begging.

7. Separation Anxiety



The first thing to understand about separation anxiety is that a dog is a pack animal and therefore expects to be with or around others. Unfortunately, these days most dogs are expected to maintain the hearth and home on their own.

The second thing to understand is that stress and anxiety is nothing more than pent up energy. Once the dog experiences tension, a well of energy springs forth and he or she must express it, usually via barking, chewing or digging until the energy is adequately dispersed.

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Dealing with separation anxiety is best handled by consistently employing one or more of the following:

- ***Know that you will confidently deal with your dog.*** Allowing the dog to manipulate you into a lower emotion or vibration will not restore order to your dog. He or she must sense that you have every intention of leading things back into normalcy. For dogs, a pack leader always establishes the atmosphere quickly and calmly. An out of control stressed pack leader has clearly allowed him or herself to be dominated. Your dog will still see the situation as out of control and feel no leadership is present.

- ***Burn off that energy.*** Exercise everyday and make sure your dog is good and tired. A tired, well exercised dog will have less energy to contribute to long sessions of digging, barking and chewing. Be sure to use common sense in cases of illness and injury where vigorous exercise will do more harm than good. If your lifestyle means that you cannot walk your dog for at least an hour twice a day then a thirty minute constant throw and fetch session at the local park will do the trick, draining energy and allowing your dog to sleep calmly while you are away from home.
- ***Practice, practice, practice.*** For a week, practice leaving your dog by him or herself for five minutes at a time. Then increase the amount by ten minutes each week. This allows your dog to ease into spending time alone rather than learning all at once. Eventually he or she will learn your leaving is not a state of emergency and that you do actually come back.
- ***Leave without fanfare.*** There is no doubt you will miss your best friend while you are gone; however, many owners simply do not understand how much they are working up their dog with long animated goodbyes. A dog has no sense of time. In addition to this, you must remember your dog's nature as a pack animal is to not be separated. Therefore, for up to twenty minutes before you leave pay no attention whatsoever to your dog. If you must, say goodbye an hour before you go. Then make no contact with your dog- no petting or eye contact at all- and coast out the door when it is time to leave without saying a word.

8. Obsessive Behaviors



When obsessive behaviors are present, it can be a nightmare for both you and your dog. Whether it's barking, licking or chasing, the end result of an obsessive behavior left unchecked can be dangerous, if not devastating. Obsessive

behaviors are those which a dog carries out with striking intensity. During an episode, a canine's entire body language and gaze suddenly changes into that of a spellbound being. A dog will literally be unable to control itself and pay absolutely no heed to its surroundings. As pack leader, it will be up to you to keep your dog safe and help break the spell. Your dog will not be able to do it alone.

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To correct obsessive behaviors:

- **Know your dog's signs.** The sooner you are able to spot the signs of an oncoming obsessive episode, the sooner you can bring it to a halt. Many dogs stop what they are doing, become rigid and fixate their gaze. They will ignore your voice or may even pant, growl or whine ever so slightly.
- **Pay attention to your surroundings.** When out on a walk, avoid areas that trigger extreme episodes and try to spot the things your dog obsesses over before they do. Do your best to

move your dog out of the line of sight with the object and away from the area if necessary.

- ***Keep the intensity low.*** If your dog is prone to obsessive behaviors, make sure the intensity in which he or she participates in an activity stays at a nice even level. Should things start heading into dangerous territory, you can immediately step in.
- ***Exercise your dog vigorously and consistently.*** If the object or activity your dog is obsessed with is simply an outlet for its energy, exercise will help alleviate the problem.
- ***Correct an obsessive episode immediately.*** This may be a verbal command followed by a body block to put your dog back into the most submissive state possible. Calmly and assertively let your dog know it is time to focus on you. When the object of fixation is a toy, never grab at the object as this will only challenge your dog and intensify the obsessive episode. Have the dog let go of the toy on its own by calmly and assertively redirect your dog's focus to you.
- ***When all else fails, have extreme obsessions checked by a professional canine behaviorist and vet.*** Occasionally, a compulsion can be the manifestation of a neurological problem. Switching a to an all natural diet free of preservatives, additives and other chemicals has proven successful in ridding dogs of obsessive behaviors as well.

Hyperactivity- or the Fixated Dog

Regrettably, hyperactivity has become an umbrella term for dogs that have a lot of energy. In some cases, it is simply the unfortunate situation of a dog with an appropriate energy level paired with an owner who is unprepared to meet its needs. This is why it is imperative to do a good amount of research on a breed and its energy level before taking on ownership. It is also a good idea to spend time with a dog and observe its energy level before making a final decision to take it home.

However, there are some dogs that seem to have energy at all hours of the day, are easily distracted and are always at one thing or another, whether it's digging holes in the yard or jumping fences. Instead of one obsessive behavior, they seem to be constantly fixated. They may be anxious, destructive, whiny and seem to have a complete disregard for training and discipline altogether. While these types of dogs can certainly try their owner's patience, all is not lost. There is still a way to keep a happy positive relationship with a dog who likes to be on the go.

- ***Pay no attention to hyperactive outbursts.*** The number one way to reinforce your dog's behavior is to offer food or attention. Refuse any attention- physical, verbal or eye contact- during an outburst. Obviously, do not ignore your dog when he or she is in danger of hurting itself or others. Be firm and calm in your dealing with the dog. Do not raise your voice. As pack leader, you must set the tone as he or she will reflect your very own energy. Plus, no dog recognizes or heeds unnerved authority.

- **Take one-on-one obedience lessons.** A hyperactive dog can learn just as well as any other dog. However, he or she will likely need to be in an environment where the distraction level is extremely low. Even if it takes more times, obedience lessons are especially necessary for hyperactive dogs as they help establish your dominance and ensure problems can be addressed and solved in a much smoother manner.
- **Keep up with a regular exercise routine and a good diet.** Though most dogs do okay with a forty five minute walk each morning, you may need to offer an additional brisk walk two to three times per week and a hard thirty minute throw and fetch session at the park as many times a week as you can fit in can prove extremely beneficial. The more opportunity your dog has to get its energy out in an appropriate way, the better. If your dog has lots of energy but is well socialized, a doggy daycare during the day might be the perfect option.
- **Hyperactive dogs can also be hypersensitive.** There may be something in its diet that stimulates its system into overdrive; especially if it is eating a commercially prepared diet. Switching to an all natural diet may significantly improve your dog's condition by bringing about much needed internal balance.
- **Stimulate your dog mentally.** Many times, hyperactivity is more than just a physical manifestation; it can be psychological in origin as well. Dogs like to be mentally stimulated and keeping their mind busy can be a great way to divert their energy into something productive. Participating in agility courses is often the

perfect solution for the hyperactive dog. Keep in mind that competing professionally can only happen if your dog trains habitually and is willing and able to listen to your commands.

For the most part, hyperactive dogs will do best in low key environments with few distractions. A home that is disruptive, full of tension, anxiety and slamming doors will only escalate this type of dog's behavior issues. Just the same, there are circumstances when a dog can simply have tons of energy and do quite well with families with older children. This is because children are sometimes the only ones who have the energy to keep up with a hyperactive dog. However, the elderly and smaller children can be overwhelmed by a dog's hyperactivity.

9. Introducing Your Dog to a New Person For the First Time



Since it is difficult to live the life of a hermit these days, it is likely you will have to introduce your dog to a new person from time to time. Plus, if you enjoy having guests to your home, having a well trained dog is a must. Otherwise, it won't make

much sense to wonder why your invitations always get turned down. Most people simply aren't all that thrilled to visit a home with a dog that jumps up or barks obnoxiously.

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Dogs are fairly curious and meeting a new person is a chance to process all kinds of new information. However, this can often be over stimulating for a canine and lead to unwanted behaviors. Therefore, your dog should be relaxed and in a composed, obedient state when it comes time to meet someone new.

To introduce your dog to a new person for the first time:

- ***Save the introductions for later.*** If possible, ask your guest ahead of time not to acknowledge, pet or make eye contact with your dog until later. Your dog will learn that if it wants to satisfy its curiosity, it will need to be in a calm, submissive state.

Interact with your guest for at least 15 minutes. It is the pack leader who gets the pleasure of greeting new guests first and this shows that your visitor is welcome in your territory. When your dog is in a calm state, then allow introductions to be made. Ask your guests to keep the fanfare to a minimum and their voice and actions calm.

- **Exercise helps.** If you know you are having visitors ahead of time, take your canine companion on a brief but vigorous walk beforehand. This will cut down on the nervous energy that comes with meeting someone new.
- **Meet outside.** Meeting outside rather inside a house puts everyone on neutral ground and makes dogs less territorial. Plus, there is more room to disperse the energy. This is also an excellent idea for dogs that suffer submissive urination issues when meeting someone new.
- **Correct your dog when necessary.** When it comes to guests, jumping up should not be ignored. Immediately correct your dog; however, do not offer praise or attention unless and until the appropriate behavior is conducted.
- **Practice repeatedly.** With the help of a friend or family member, practice having guests over and help your dog learn how he or she must behave when the doorbell rings. Waiting until guests come to try and get your dog trained correctly is a poor strategy. Plus, most guests rarely enjoy being part of an unexpected training exercise.

10. Introducing a Dog to the House for the First Time



You've researched the breed, bought the toys, the leash, the crate, the shiny new bowl and dog-proofed your home just like all the articles tell you to. To say bringing home a new dog or puppy is exciting is quite the understatement. While the exhilaration is understandable, many new pet owners get too caught up in the high and neglect to do the things that will help a new puppy or dog feel truly welcome.

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Obviously, making sure your new canine companion has everything it needs is essential. What is also essential is remembering that he or she is a dog first and always. Though it will likely appreciate the nice new toys and food dish, the minute your new pooch enters the house, he or she will immediately be looking for the established pack order. If there isn't any, you can probably expect to be in for quite a ride over the next few months.

Bringing Home Your New Dog

- **Avoid the fanfare.** As hard as it may be, try to avoid too much excitement around bringing home your new dog or puppy. The experience and environment are all new for your dog and he or

she can easily become over stimulated by all the new information there is to process. While some dogs go with the flow, others may be utterly confused or fearful. Either way, you will be the pack leader and your new friend will be looking to you for cues. Exude a calming confidence that puts your dog at ease in his or her new surroundings. This is the first step to heading off negative canine behaviors.

- ***Start teaching the rules right away.*** Regardless of whether you have a puppy or full grown dog, its need to feel properly balanced does not magically start at some particular age. This need is present from birth. As such, setting down rules and limitations helps your dog achieve stability. This goes hand in hand with establishing yourself as pack leader. As the alpha, not only will you be able to better teach your dog the rules of your home, it makes it easier for the rules stick- as long as you stay consistent. Refrain from offering affection or treats until your dog performs the desired behavior.
- ***Keep an objective outlook.*** In a way, training puppies can be easier because they will not have any other lifelong habits or behaviors to come out of. This may not be the case for an older dog; especially if he or she has had no prior training. Regardless, both puppies and older dogs can and will provide their own training challenges. However, it is important to never humanize your dog and assume it is out to get the best of you. Your dog wants to achieve balance. They live for it. So stay patient just like a reliable pack leader would and be sure to complete a course in obedience training.

- **Get the family involved.** Your dog will have an easier time adjusting and learning its boundaries when everyone is on the same page. Making sure each person in the home has a responsibility with the dog's care is a great way to help foster personal relationships with a new canine companion. Keep in mind it is important to make sure these responsibilities are age appropriate.

Other tips and ideas to keep in mind when there is a new dog or puppy in the house:

- **Dog proof your home.** Remove tempting objects such as cords, shoes, breakables, toxic plants and any other objects that can be chewed or swallowed. If necessary, get on your hands and knees and look from your dog's perspective and see if there is something you might have missed.
- **Bring your dog home over a weekend or when you are able to be on hand consistently for a few days.** If you have a family, make sure all members are present so your new dog has a chance to meet everyone.
- **Allow your dog to explore its new home inside and out while on a leash.** Should he or she start in on a negative or unwanted behavior, you can offer a quick correction. Be consistent and always correct your dog for a bad behavior immediately. Dogs have no sense of time and helping them comprehend which behaviors are unacceptable means stopping them in the act.

- **Even with a housetrained dog, there can be a vast amount of exciting information to process in a new setting.** Do expect accidents over the first few days.
- **Never leave your new dog alone in the yard.** Even with a good solid fence, it is not uncommon for older dogs to sometimes feel the need to go off in search of familiar surroundings. Some dogs are extremely capable escape artists.
- **A dog does not have to be large to be dangerous.** No matter how unassuming or small, never leave your new dog and children unattended together.
- **Never allow a new canine companion on furniture.** Your dog is looking for the established pack order the minute it comes through the door. Allowing him or her on furniture will contradict the message that you are the one and only pack leader.
- **Begin crate training right away so your dog will have a place to retreat and feel safe in the event he or she feels overwhelmed.** If you are getting a new puppy, crate training in a separate room will reinforce positive associations with your being away from the home when the dog is an adult and prevent separation anxiety.
- **Your dog is a pack animal and expects to be one of the group.** Do not bring your new canine companion home and banish him or her to a dark basement or garage. This seriously thwarts the chances of successfully socializing your dog.

- **Refrain from excessive roughhousing.** This will raise the primal instinct of challenging authority in your dog. He or she must learn there is no need for challenge since you are the one and only pack leader.
- **Create a routine for your canine companion as soon as possible.** Feed at the same time, take daily walks at the same time, etc. Dogs love routine and this not only helps your new pet feel more secure it helps them transition into your pack quicker and much more smoothly.

11. How to Meet a Dog for the First Time



Of all the flora and fauna in the animal kingdom, dogs are one of the most majestic and highly regarded of them all. It is no wonder so many rush right up to pet and greet a dog when they see one; especially when it is a cute and fluffy Bichon Frise or an ever loyal Labrador. However, dogs do have their own boundaries and it is understandable that they don't always want to be petted or greeted by complete strangers. Unfortunately, they lack the language skills to state this and many people just don't stop to think that a dog might have its own limits. The result is sometimes unfortunate with a startled dog who accidentally snaps at a finger or two.

Other dogs are more than happy to meet new people. Sometimes too happy. They may become animated in their demand for attention. They may jump up, nip ankles or bark annoyingly. This is a situation where it is the human who has their limits. Luckily, the human has the upper hand with language and reasoning skills and does not have to resort to nipping to convey its disapproval.

To properly make the acquaintance of a new dog, it helps to understand how canines perceive the world and process the information around them. While we humans use our eyes, ears and

language skills in addition to the occasional handshake to meet someone, dogs use scent in conjunction with sensing both body language and emotional energy.

Remember, when meeting a dog it is proper etiquette to first seek the permission of the dog owner.

When meeting a new dog:

- **Let the dog make the first move.** Whether a dog seems standoffish, eager or indifferent to being greeted, he or she is the one that must be at ease with your presence. This means letting the dog approach you on its own terms- not the other way around.
- **Stay composed and confident.** As scent is the most important aspect for canines, the first thing a dog will do is gather information about you by using its nose. At the same time, it is just as important to keep a calm, relaxed attitude. Refrain from high pitched chatter or sudden movements. Do not touch the dog or make eye contact. Having patience and giving a dog time to get to know you will make the introduction go much smoother.
- **Wait for a calm, obedient state.** Do not pet the dog unless and until he or she is in a relaxed state. This is especially necessary when a dog is overly excited. Should this be the case, continue to refuse touch or eye contact until the dog is settled

into an obedient manner. This will identify you as an alpha leader; a role a dog recognizes as someone who calls the shots.

- ***Watch the body language.*** A friendly dog that is ready to be petted has a relaxed face and ears. The lips will be slightly back, almost in a smile. The eyes should be inviting and the tail wagging. As some dogs are shy about having them touched, pet the dog on the shoulders and back and avoid the head and the belly.
- ***Recognize aggression.*** Not all people like everyone they meet and the same goes for dogs. A dog who does not want to be petted may bark, bare its teeth, lower its head, stiffen its body and tail, lay back its ears, and lick its lips or all of the above. Do not pet a dog who growls, even if only slightly.

If a dog suddenly becomes unfriendly, refrain from direct eye contact. Maintain as calm a manner as possible and do not scream or make sudden movements. Stand tall and proud, turn your head to the side, yawn and blink slowly. If you can, let the dog be the first one to walk away. Never turn your back to the dog; rather, back away slowly or move to one side. Do not use objects to hit the dog.

Other tips to keep in mind when approaching a dog:

- **Refrain from petting dogs that are sleeping or eating.** Doing so can surprise a dog that may then impulsively snap or bite out of instinct.

- **Dogs often feel a strong duty to defend their territory;** therefore, do not pet a dog that is in a vehicle or behind a fence.
- **Beware of dogs that seem confused or scared;** or dogs that show signs of being sick or injured. Even as you attempt to calm a dog with gentle petting, frightened or hurt dogs are well known for reacting to touch with biting.

12. Claiming Your Space



From the very beginning, a dog is raised with rules and boundaries set by a one and only pack leader. Whether it's eating, sleeping or play, this pack leader makes all the decisions for the group and every member adheres to them. When a dog switches over to its human pack, it still expects this social order. He or she is looking for the alpha leader who will make the decisions with composure and unbreakable confidence. Unless you plan to let your dog be in charge of things and adhere blindly to the decisions it makes, this alpha leader should be you.

A balanced life with a dog is dependent on establishing to him or her that you own the space in which it lives. On top of this, you must claim your space in a way that your dog recognizes. This is done using eye contact and a body language that denotes poise and unyielding certainty. Dogs simply do not recognize any other type of leadership. To think of it, it is not likely you would have confidence and thereby follow a leader who was indecisive, contradictory or fearful either. Most likely, you would lose faith in his abilities and, for the good of the pack, try to take over yourself. This is exactly how the canine operates.

To assert ownership of your territory, use the tools of waiting and working.

- **Waiting.** In the wild, dogs do not make a move unless and until their pack leader does. They wait for their pack leader to move the group and wait for the signal to call it a day. Just the same, domesticated dogs depend on their mothers for the same type of guidance and direction. You, as the pack leader, will now take over the role and dictate when it is time for walks, when it is time to eat, when it is time to play or even when your dog will receive treats or affection. Making your dog wait is not cruel. Because the pack leader does everything first, dogs are used to waiting for everything. Use this tool regularly to establish and cement your role as the one and only alpha.
- **Working.** Too many dog owners give freely of themselves, food and affection without insisting on anything from their dog. This never happens in the wild. If there is one thing that will seriously compromise your role as pack leader, it is letting your dog find out it can behave however it chooses and still get what it wants. A dog should be made to work for its reward by following a command such as sit or stay before being offered a treat. Similarly, your dog should be required to put itself in a relaxed, obedient state before receiving affection. Offer your dog something to eat after it has completed a walk instead of before. Food and affection are two things that will reinforce both good and bad behaviors in your dog. It is important your dog associate receiving food or affection with performing a task or exhibiting a positive canine behavior.

7 Basics of Dog Psychology



Many times, the root of problems and power struggles between a dog and its owner is plain old miscommunication. Understanding the basics of dog psychology is the one thing that can help put an end to issues before they ever get started. It is important to understand that a dog is not a human and a human is not a dog. Both look at the world through a very particular filter. Luckily, we humans have the

ability to level the playing field.

- 1. *Your dog is not in the least concerned about what happened yesterday or what's going to happen tomorrow.*** *He is simply living in the moment.* This gives us a great opportunity to change negative behaviors quickly. Since you cannot correct your dog for what happened yesterday, you will need to be able to spend a good amount of time devoted to training and being in the moment with your dog as well.
- 2. *Your dog has one overriding aim and that is to seek balance and harmony.*** Dogs are sensitive animals that do not like chaos. If you as the pack leader fail to provide balance, your dog will take the initiative and do the best job he knows how. The problem is, you're both interpreting the world differently and his version of balance and harmony may not exactly match yours.

3. ***Your dog will see you as either the leader or a follower, period.*** Dogs can only look at the world through a filter of social order. There is no changing this. There is *one* pack leader and the rest are subordinates. Make sure you are seen as the one and not one of the rest.

4. ***If you treat your dog like a human child, chances are good he's your leader.*** Your dog just wants to be a dog and it's the only thing he knows! It's up to you to lead as the human.

5. ***Your dog has evolved from millions of years of pack living.*** If you don't lead your 'pack', he will do the leading for you! With this being unnatural to him, it will cause all kinds of unstable behavior. Give your dog peace of mind by letting him know his place in the pack.

6. ***Your dog talks to you through body language, energy and scent on a continual basis.*** You may not be aware of just what signals you are sending in return. It's impossible to lie to your dog. He's well aware of how you are feeling. Be calm, be assertive. Always.

7. ***Shouting at your dog is useless; it's your energy and scent he will be paying attention to, not your words.*** Just as you read your dog's body language, he reads yours too! There is only one pack leader in the group. If you are not in control providing stability, who is? Your dog is depending on you!