

Dog-Dog Meet & Greet



As nice as a dog may be, not all dogs will want to be visited by him, or he may not want to be visited by some - or any - other dogs. Teaching our dog appropriate body language around other dogs will lessen the chance of a problem, should you encounter off leash dogs in a dog park or on the beach.

BE KIND TO OTHERS

You might be good at keeping your dog out of other dogs' spaces, but there is a different way to invade space: *eye contact!* If this is an issue, keep track of your dog's staring habit and prevent her from staring at other dogs by using treats to keep her attention on you as you pass other dogs. Then ask your instructor for help with modifying this behaviour.



Reaction to Another Dog

RECOMMENDED: LOOSE LEASH & WALKING HARNESS

A tight leash hinders a dog from using his body language in social situations. ***Give your dog a loose leash!*** He should be able to back up, turn his head, lower his body posture, etc, as needed to communicate appropriately with the other dog. However, a loose leash combined with an inattentive owner can also allow problems to develop. Be a wise and trustworthy pet guardian and support your dog with your attention and a loose leash when he meets other dogs, but keep him out of trouble by not letting him meet other dogs that do not appear to have good social skills. Also ask your instructor about using a walking harness to help prevent neck and back injuries, as well as reducing stress in general.

SOME CAUSES OF ANXIETY OR SOCIAL CONFLICTS BETWEEN DOGS

- Genetic (inherited) traits, and adolescent transition period.
- Lack of appropriate socialization during the critical period of puppy (brain) development (3-12 weeks).
- Prior bad experiences with other dogs.
- Prior handling (inadvertent reinforcement, or punishment).
- Barrier (leash) frustration from being held back on a tight leash.

THE LANGUAGE OF NORMAL GREETING BEHAVIOUR

- Dogs approach each other using calming signals.
- Dogs "curve" when approaching each other.
- Timid dog stiffens and allows the other to sniff him, beginning with rear area.
- Confident dog holds still while allowing the timid to sniff him briefly.
- Dogs usually then walk off to urine-mark, and may return to interact more, or not.

THE LANGUAGE OF POTENTIAL TROUBLE

- Dogs approach each other head to head without using calming signals or curving.
- One or both dogs do not allow the other to sniff.
- One or both dogs use over-confident, rude or pushy postures before the greeting ritual is completed.

FIRST AID IF YOU SEE POTENTIAL TROUBLE: GO THE OTHER WAY

Until we can help you with a customized behaviour modification programme:

- Protect your dog and those around him by keeping him away from other dogs that spell trouble, so that the problem is not made worse.
- Protect your anxious or fearful dog from any and all fear-triggers.
- We need to slowly change his mind about the things he fears (desensitization & counter-conditioning).

*If your dog gets into trouble with other dogs on a regular basis,
ask your instructor about Cowichan Canine's Reactive Dog Programme
or a Behaviour Evaluation.*

