

Do's and Don'ts of Shy & Unsocialized Dogs

Do's

...Establish a relationship of mutual respect.

...Protect your dog.

...Recognize the behavioral signs of stress in your dogs:

Barking

Biting

Growling

Yipping

Whining

Yawning

Drooling

Salivating

Retreating

Defecating

Urinating

Lowering body

Turning head away

Pulling ears back

Laying belly up

Lunging at stimuli

Tucking tail

Ducking

Shying away from a hand

Hiding

Dilated pupils

...Use a crate and provide a safe place.

...Use a slow approach with your dog.

...Use a collar and a harness with either two leashes or a carabiner hooked from the collar and harness to a leash. Alternatively use a SENSE-ation Harness and a collar, hooking the leash to the "O" ring of the collar and front "O" ring of the harness.

...Interrupt your dog when stressed by redirecting him/her to positive behavior that you can reward and praise. For example, asking for a sit, down, etc.

...Keep your dog on a loose but controllable leash when it is in a stressful situation.

...Keep your dog at a distance from his/her stress level so that he/she will obey your command and focus on you in a relaxed fashion.

...Praise your dog whenever he/she is showing signs of overcoming a fearful situation.

...Take your dog for a walk within his/her comfort level. Start in your yard and then your neighborhood. Expand as your dog gets more comfortable. For example, go to parks, quiet shopping centers, vet's office, friends' homes, etc.

...Have people toss treats to your dog from a comfortable distance.

...Attend training classes with an appropriate trainer whose specialty is shy and reactive dogs, who uses positive, dog-friendly training.

Don'ts

...Tell your dog that “it’s OK” when he/she is afraid of something. Instead use a phrase such as “check it out.” Make sure you’re using a “happy” and encouraging voice as well.

...Unwillingly put demands on your dog.

...Pick up your dog to relieve its fear, unless your dog is in danger.

...Put your dog in a position that he/she feels threatened.

...Allow people approach your dog if he/she is frightened.

...Have people have direct eye contact with your frightened dog.

...Be afraid to tell people that your dog has space issues.

...Have your dog get too close to another dog unless your dog is friendly and you know that the other dog is dog friendly.

...Use physical punishment with any dog.

...Use harsh verbal punishment on a shy dog.

...Make a submissive or dominant dog feel trapped.

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