

Fearful Dog Training Plan

When trying to understand why a dog may be fearful, we must first recognize that fear is a perfectly normal behaviour in all animals. However, when this fear goes unaddressed, serious behavioural and health problems can occur. In some cases, fear can be caused by abuse and/or bad experiences. However, in most cases it is due to a genetic predisposition and/or a lack of socialization. This training plan will help you to recognize fear in your dog and begin the process of helping to alleviate that fear.

Recognizing Signs of Fear	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Panting, lip licking, drooling, whining • Trembling, tail tucking, ears back or flat • Cowering, wincing • Yawning, pacing • Moving slowly or stalling • Freezing • Not accepting treats • Hypervigilance (looking in many directions) • Hiding or trying to escape • Uncontrolled urination or defecation • Avoiding human contact • Destroying things, self-mutilation • Snarling, baring teeth, growling, barking
Force Free Method	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow your new family member to explore new things on their own terms, never force them to do anything unless it is for their own safety • Be your dog's advocate; provide them with a safe, controlled environment to help encourage them to be less fearful and more likely to explore new things on their own. If people want to meet your dog, politely ask them to let your dog approach them rather than them approaching the dog.
Avoid Triggers of Fear	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If your dog is fearful when outside on a busy street, keep your walks to your back yard until they become more confident. If you do not have this option, then only walk short distances in off hours when the streets are less busy • If walking by other people or dogs is a scary situation for your dog, create distance when passing by those scary things
Build Confidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use clicker training to build your dog's confidence by teaching them new tricks. Even learning sit, stay, come, and shake-a-paw will help your dog build confidence, the same way we do when we have worked hard at something and finally accomplish it • Have only positive experiences with things that create fear in your dog, introduce these things at a level the dog can handle, and surround the experience with delicious pea-sized treats
Patience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The most important thing to remember is that helping your fearful dog will take time, patience and understanding • Reducing a dog's fear will not happen overnight, but it is very rewarding to see them finally building confidence and enjoying life

