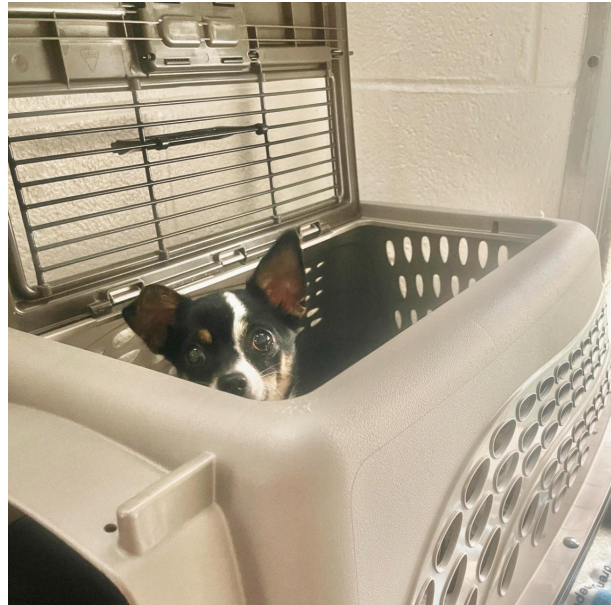




Confidence Building for Dogs Handbook

Dogs coming into a new home may be very scared of all the new noises, people, animals, sights, smells, and routine and, if you're reading this, then you very likely are either adopting or already live with a fearful dog.. We can use this protocol to help them ease into their new routine and realize that the world isn't as scary as they might think.

This handbook is designed to be easy to access, meaning you don't need to be an animal or behavior professional to understand the information or perform the training protocols in it. The first section does go over some technical terms to help you understand the techniques and mechanisms at play.



Regardless of your experience as a dog parent, if this is your first dog, your 100th dog, if you've worked with fearful dogs before or not, remember that behavior is fluid and it can and will change from day to day. One day you may think you're headed for a breakthrough and the next it seems like your dog is acting more fearful than ever before. That's ok. Just like with people, our mood and tolerance changes day to day. At various points in your training you may feel frustrated or defeated or that you have failed your dog, and that's completely normal. Take a break and come back to it later. Just know that your dog is trying the best and their hardest, just like you are, and nothing that they are or are not doing comes from spite, being mad at you, being stubborn, or trying to be dominant.

If you need further assistance with your dog, please contact us at behavior@alexandriaanimals.org and we will be happy to help!

Desensitization and Counterconditioning

Desensitization is the process by which an animal becomes **less** affected by a stimulus. Through systematic desensitization, you can help an animal become less stimulated by or fearful of specific events or actions that would prompt undesirable behavior.

1. Establish at what point at which the animal becomes distressed by the stimulus and begin exposing them to it **just below** that point, where they are showing no reaction yet (they may not even be aware of its presence at this point). For example, if an animal is fearful of thunder or fireworks, find a recording and play it at a quiet enough volume that they are

not showing any signs of distress yet. If they are fearful of people, position them at a distance away from a person such that they can see them but are not showing any signs of stress.

2. Continue exposing them to the stimulus for several days (or even more, depending on their reaction) at the same level of intensity.
3. **Gradually** increase the intensity of the stimulus (by moving closer to it, staying in place longer, turning up the volume on a recording, etc) in increments so small that **the animal does not even detect the increase in intensity**.
 - a. For **desensitization**, allow the animal to carry out and engage in normal behaviors during the process. No action is required on our part with this process, as the goal is simply to expose the animal to increasing levels of the stimulus so slowly that they don't even notice they're being exposed to it, until the stimulus blends into part of the surroundings and the cat no longer reacts to them. If the situation allows it, you can give them their favorite interactive toy, play their favorite game, play calming music (classical music has been proven to have a calming effect on cats and dogs), or use a pheromone plug in/spray or collar during the desensitization process.

Counterconditioning (using classical conditioning to create a **new** emotional response to a trigger) is often paired with desensitization, as desensitization will effectively desensitize an animal to a stimulus, but counterconditioning goes one step further and creates a **new association** with the stimulus (a stimulus that was previously scary to the dog is now exciting). The key difference with counterconditioning is that we are actively **changing an animals' mind about how they feel about a certain stimulus by giving them something they like exclusively in the presence of the stress-inducing stimulus**. This will form a positive association with the stimulus to replace the negative one.

1. First, it is critical for counter conditioning that you have identified the animal's highest-value reinforcer, and that they do not have access to it outside of this training.
2. Begin in a quiet, non-distracting environment, if possible, where the animal is otherwise comfortable and relaxed. Determine at what intensity of the stimulus the animal begins to show any signs of distress. You should be as far away from the trigger as possible, or in a situation where the trigger is at the lowest intensity you can possibly get it.
3. Begin giving the high value treats the moment the animal sees/hears/enters the stimulus. If the animal goes over threshold **immediately** and you have no time to get the reinforcement to them, try engaging them with play or treats before the stimulus so that they are more likely to be in a **positive** mindset when exposed to the stimulus. If they are still reacting as soon as the stimulus is present, just try to find the point where they show the least amount of stress/fear and start from there. **The most important part of counterconditioning is finding the correct starting point so that you can increase the intensity gradually.**
 - a. The point of counterconditioning is to create an **association** between a trigger and a reinforcer, **NOT** to address any particular behavior—meaning that the animal's behavior is irrelevant. Don't wait for the animal to perform a certain behavior before giving the reinforcer. The reinforcer **always** happens in the presence of the trigger, regardless of the animal's behavior. Changing the way an animal **FEELS** about a trigger will most likely change the animal's **behavior** (for example, changing fear to excitement means a dog won't have a reason to bark or lunge anymore, or a cat won't have a reason to hiss or bite anymore).
 - b. Some examples of starting desensitization set-ups:
 - i. If an animal is fearful of people, other animals, or certain spaces: start far enough away from the trigger that the animal **isn't reacting**

- ii. If an animal is fearful of sounds: start by playing a recording of the sounds at the **lowest** volume the animal can hear
 - iii. If an animal is fearful of a crate: start with just rewarding the animal for being **near** the crate
- 4. Remove the stimulus (move away or have the stimulus go out of sight) and stop giving the animal reinforcement.
- 5. After a minute, introduce the stimulus again and repeat the exact same procedure several times.
- 6. When the animal is expectantly looking to you for treats when they see/hear the stimulus or if enter the stressful situation and show no signs of distress, it is time to **increase the intensity** of the stimulus (get closer, play the sound louder, stay in the situation longer, etc) by the **smallest amount possible** (one second, one inch/foot, etc)--or until the animal becomes uncomfortable again and starts showing signs of stress.
- 7. Now repeat several times.
 - a. If, at any time the animal begins to show fearful behaviors, you should go back to the intensity that you were last successful with and repeat more.
- 8. Repeat steps 1-4, gradually increasing the intensity of the stimulus with each session until it is at the desired intensity (usually the intensity at which the stimulus will be encountered in the animal's daily life). Only go as fast as the animal will allow. If you try to go too fast, you may end up **sensitizing** the animal to the stimulus, which will cause them to be **more** afraid and create more work for yourself in the future.
- 9. **ALWAYS** end trials with success! Give a jackpot reward--playtime, favorite enrichment, bully stick, etc--after sessions to maximize the animal's excitement for learning!

Important Note!

- D/CC training is all about building a **new** response to a distressing stimulus. As such, all exposure to the stimulus you are attempting to desensitize/counter condition the animal to must be avoided during the training process. If you progress too quickly, or the animal is exposed to the fearful stimulus in a non-controlled way and is **over** their threshold (see infographics at the end of handbook), it will likely set you back a step or two (or even more, depending on the animal). Once an animal encounters a trigger **beyond** their threshold (beyond what you've exposed them to in the training environment), you have switched from management/training to damage control, and the only goal is to get the animal out of the situation with as little damage done as possible.



1. Monsters ALWAYS cause Very Good Things
2. ONLY Monsters cause Very Good Things
3. Monsters must keep their DISTANCE, then, over many repetitions GRADUALLY get closer so that the dog is comfortable all the way through.

It is important to have the LOVE of the Very Good Things be stronger than the FEAR of the Monsters.



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Conditioning a Fearful Dog to Your Presence

1. Approach your dog and drop treats near them.
 - a. It doesn't matter what **behavior** the dog is showing (growling, barking, etc)—this is about creating a positive **association** with you!
2. After dropping treats, walk away and out of the dog's sight for approximately 10 seconds.
3. Return and repeat the process for a total of 5 times per session.
 - a. If your dog does not eat the treats, end the session, and try again later.
 - i. Try higher value food, or a less stressful/distracting environment. Or, the dog may just need more time.
 - b. If your dog does eat the treats, but only after you've walked away, end the session and continue with classical conditioning until they do eat in front of you.
4. Once your dog is eating in front of you, push to Capturing Social Behaviors.

Troubleshooting:

- Be sure to observe your dog's body language. If you try pushing and see fear or stress signals, then drop back to the previous step. ***Don't push further until you see relaxed and social behavior on each step.***

IMPORTANT NOTE

- ★ **ALWAYS** respect any request your dog makes for space (as seen in the stress signals illustrated above), or your dog will never learn to trust you. And remember not to take it personally or punish these signals (including growling/snarling/snapping)—**this is how dogs communicate, and removing these warnings could result in a dangerous dog who bites without warning!**

“Treat Retreat”

Treat Retreat is an exercise for shy, fearful, or socially awkward dogs that allows them to **build a positive association with strangers on their own terms**. Even if these dogs will approach strangers and take treats from them, they may learn to approach strangers in expectation of food, they may become frustrated if there is no food, or the stranger may interpret the dog as “friendly” and attempt to pet them, which may cause the dog to panic. The Treat Retreat protocol involves **tossing the treats to the dog (or even behind the dog)**, so that the dog can retreat on their own and never has to leave their comfort zone, and teach them to move **away** from a scary stimulus instead of **towards** it (a much better choice!). Giving the fearful dog distance (or allowing them to create distance) is as much of a reward as the treat. Each time the dog shows any interest in a person (**anything from just simple eye contact** to a physical approach), they should toss them a treat, and then continue to allow **them** to make the next move.

DUNBAR ACADEMY

Treat & Retreat

Use food to teach a FEARFUL or ANXIOUS dog to feel comfortable and confident around you (or any person), without pushing the dog too far, too fast.

A dog who is afraid of people will be more stressed the closer a person is. There is a certain distance at which the dog will be comfortable. Any closer and the dog will become alert, then fearful, and finally defensive, at which point the dog will start to growl, bark, snap, lunge, and even bite.

THE BASIC STEPS

STEP 1

Stand in place or sit in a chair. Allow the dog to move freely.

STEP 2

Toss a piece of kibble over the dog's head

STEP 3

The dog will have to move away from you to get the kibble

STEP 4

Toss three high-value treats towards the dog

STEP 5

The dog will move toward you to get the treats

STEP 6

Repeat steps 2-5 over and over again until the dog is completely comfortable moving towards you at this distance.

WHY IT WORKS

Every piece of food the dog eats comes from you, is eaten in your presence, and gives the dog a reason to like you. Luring the dog away, as well as towards you means you can repeat this exercise without bringing the dog too close, too quickly. Using extra tasty treats helps the dog feel extra good about moving towards you.

As you repeat these steps the dog will gradually start to feel more comfortable about approaching:

NEXT STEPS

Start luring the dog a little closer with each approach. Watch the dog's body language and if the dog starts to look uneasy toss the next piece of kibble far away to lure the dog back to a very comfortable distance to keep it easy and enjoyable.

The dog should again be happy and comfortable approaching at this distance

Troubleshooting:

- Is your dog not eating? End the session and try again later. They may just need more time (or higher value food like cheese or fresh meat!).
- Keep sessions short, approximately 5-10 minutes per session.

Tip:

- You should **always** reward any calming/social behavior, not just during this exercise! These behaviors include:
 - ◆ Soft eye contact
 - ◆ Squinting/blinking
 - ◆ Shaking off
 - ◆ Play bowing
 - ◆ Licking
 - ◆ Sitting/lying down/rolling over on side or back

Touch aka Hand Targeting

The touch is a very simple and often very useful cue. If a dog is fearful or hand-shy, then teaching this trick is a great way to build confidence or trust and teach them that touch is a **good** thing!

Teaching the Behavior

1. Hold your hand out (palm facing them) as close to your dog's nose as they're comfortable with (an inch or less is best, but if they give any stress signals, hold it further away). If they don't immediately touch your hand, as most dogs usually do, just wait at least a minute—they usually eventually will touch your hand.
 - a. **Do not move your hand closer to the dog!** This will cause you to **lose** trust, instead of gain it. The point of this exercise is for the dog to learn that **choosing** to touch pays off.
 - b. Be as non-threatening as possible—kneel or sit down, look away, etc.
 - c. If they don't touch after a minute or so, and don't express any interest in your hand, try moving your hand around or moving it **away** from them to trigger a chase drive. If they still don't touch your hand, start with just rewarding any time they **look** at it.
 - d. If they get up or move away, just wait for them to settle, reset, and try again.
2. Once they touch your hand with their nose, mark (click or say "yes") and reward, giving a treat from your opposite hand. Continue to offer your hand 5 times total and keep track of how many times your dog is successful. After 5/5 successful targets, move on to the next



step.

3. Repeat, gradually moving your hand further and further away from the dog and alternating hands. Once the dog is reliably touching your hand with their nose, then you can add the verbal cue “touch” **just before** they touch your hand. If your dog targets your hand 4/5x or less, drop to moving your hand closer, or remain at the same distance if you’re already as close to your dog as they are comfortable with you being.
4. When the dog is consistently touching your hand without hesitation, you can start rewarding additional body contact. **Any time the dog makes contact with you, be it their paw, shoulder, hind end etc., mark (click or say “Yes!”) and reward.**

Troubleshooting

- Be patient and wait for your dog to touch your hand. It can take several seconds to a minute at first sometimes.
- If the dog has learned to touch but doesn’t touch your hand when you hold it out, try moving backwards **away** from the dog in a playful manner. A lot of dogs like to chase and will be more intrigued if you move **away** rather than **towards** them.
- Give lots of breaks and do very short sessions (5 minutes or even less) so the dog doesn’t get bored or frustrated.

Petting

It’s the conundrum as old as time itself: We want to pet every dog but not every dog **wants** to be pet. We can use counterconditioning (as explained above) to help them learn to **enjoy** being petted. This will help your dog feel more comfortable with petting and, hopefully, help them open up more to receiving and even soliciting interactions.

Teaching the Behavior

1. Sit on the ground with your side towards your dog looking away from them. If your dog is extremely fearful, you may have to lure them to you with treats, but ideally your dog should be **comfortable enough to approach you on their own** before beginning this protocol.
2. When your dog is within an arm’s length of you, slowly put your hand on them briefly and gently.
 - a. Places most dogs prefer to be touched/petted:
 - i. Chin/neck/side of face
 - ii. Chest
 - iii. Base of tail/rear
 - b. Places most dogs do **not** prefer to be touched/petted:
 - i. Top of head (don’t put your hand **over** their head—this looks very scary from their perspective!)
 - ii. Paws/legs (these are very sensitive and important to dogs!)
 - iii. Tail
3. After approximately one to two seconds, move your hand away and offer them a treat.
4. Continue to repeat steps 2 and 3 until your dog relaxes their body and face and is no longer showing fear of your reaching toward or touching them.
5. Now you can begin petting for longer than a couple seconds at a time, **gradually** building up to a minute or two (in increments of a **few seconds at a time!**) and petting them all over their body, again moving your hand around to different areas **very gradually**.

Tips

1. Always remember to present the stimulus **first**, and **then** reward; in this case: reach, pet, **then** treat.

2. Practice this protocol in the same place each time (same room, same yard, same office, etc.). Then, once your dog is comfortable with petting, try moving to different locations, and try switching hands if you're prone to using the same hand each time.
3. Be sure your dog has a way to remove themselves if needed. Never block escape routes and **always allow your dog to leave or not participate** if they want.

Troubleshooting

- Is your dog consistently being avoidant of you? Be sure you're not facing them head-on or leaning over them. **Consider whether your treats are high-value and rewarding enough to outweigh their fear of being pet.** You may also want to drop back to a previous protocol such as Touch to practice some more.

"Pet, Pet, Pause"

After working with your dog to desensitize them to being petted, "Pet, Pet, Pause" is the best way to gauge their feelings about being petted. Respecting their feelings and allowing them to **choose** when they want to interact with you is **hugely empowering** for them, and will help build a very **strong relationship**.

How to Play:

1. In a calm, quiet environment, slowly and gently pet your dog **once**. Pause.
2. Then slowly and gently pet your dog **twice**.
3. Stop petting again and observe their behavior and body language closely.
 - a. Did they get up and move away from you? Scoot closer to you?
 - b. What are their ears, eyes, mouth, and tail doing? Refer to the list of signs of stress in the Desensitization/Counterconditioning section, or the body language chart at the end of this handbook.
4. Respect the choice they make and either continue playing the game or stop.
5. At the end of the game (whether it was five minutes or five seconds—it's their choice!), offer enrichment.

Teaching Fearful Dogs to Walk on Leash

Leash walking does not come naturally for dogs—having something tighten around their neck is a scary experience at first! This means the first step to leash walking is to desensitize the dog to the leash being around their neck. Hopefully they have been wearing a collar at least, so the feeling isn't completely foreign. (Note: if the dog is already panicking about a leash being around their neck, try attaching a leash to a harness first, so that the pressure is not on their neck.) Begin by attaching the leash to the dog's collar (or harness) and allowing it to **drag around on the floor behind them** in the home (or wherever your dog is most comfortable—maybe this is outside or in their favorite person's room). **Do not even attempt to pick up the leash at this time**—just put it on and take it off calmly and gently. Always supervise this time to ensure that the leash does not get caught on anything, and give your dog treats or play with their favorite toy as you do so! **Make leash time fun, and the fun ends as soon as the leash comes off.** Make sure that the leash is light and made of fabric so that it does not make scary noises that will cause your dog to startle and perpetually run away from it. **Never use a retractable leash for this reason!**

After a few desensitization sessions, attach the leash and this time practice your dog following you around the house, getting treats every time they come to you, or walks with you, as you move around. If

you have a fenced in yard, open the door and allow your dog to go outside with the leash attached (or come inside if they've been outside). After a few more sessions practicing this, see if you can pick the leash up. If your dog suddenly shows signs of fear when you pick it up such as: crouching, dropping their stomach to the ground, ears back, tail tucked, eyes wide, drop the leash and continue practicing without holding it until they are not fearful when you pick it up. The first few times you hold the leash, **allow your dog to lead the way**, and simply follow them, holding the leash with **plenty of slack**. Applying pressure suddenly may cause them to panic and become frantic or "pancake" on the ground, both creating negative associations with the leash. If you notice your dog seems as though they are trying to get away from you, creating a tight leash, back up to the previous step of allowing them to drag the leash while you practice picking it up and holding it. If you push your dog too hard too fast, you will have extra work to do to further desensitize them.

The most important part of teaching a dog to walk on a leash is to never yank, drag, or "correct" your dog with the leash. **This is a good way to teach them to fear the leash!** If your dog won't walk, gently encourage them with treats, toys, or whatever motivates them. Try using a playful, excited, high-pitched tone of voice. High pitched tones have been proven to increase dogs' excitement levels, and therefore their activity levels. Try making playful, bouncy movements and tapping the ground (mimicking a dog's play bow), as if you're about to play with them. You can also try creating a trail of treats by tossing treats onto the floor as your dog walks to eat them. If they need something a little more motivating than treats, try luring them with a long-handled spoon with peanut butter or cream cheese on it.

Also, teaching your dog to "check in" (look at you) is one of the most beneficial behaviors you can teach for helping your dog have better leash skills (and build their confidence)! The more they are looking at **you**, the less they will be able to pull towards (or be scared of) distractions in the environment. Every time your dog looks at you—**even if just for a fraction of a second!**--mark the behavior and reward with a high value treat. You don't have to wait for perfect eye contact to start with—just as long as your dog turns their head toward you, that's a good start. Gradually, as you reward this, your dog will look at you more and more, and you can start rewarding direct eye contact, and then waiting for a second or two before rewarding to get more, longer eye contact. **Remember to start practicing new behaviors in a non-distracting, familiar environment, like your home!**

Most dogs will begin to walk on leash on their own in time, as they learn to trust people. So just be patient and loving and let the dog know they can trust you!

Safe Haven

A safe haven is an important place for your dog to have within the home. This can be a place to help fearful dogs feel more comfortable, give reactive dogs a temporary place to be removed from triggers, or just a place that your dog can go to during the day when they feel like being alone.

Creating a Safe Haven:

Create an area for your dog to go to that enables them to be able to remove themselves and be alone. The area should be somewhere that is quiet and more removed from the rest of the home and should be a very comfortable place such as a bed, pillow, crate (if they like their crate), etc. You can feed their meals, and give toys that they get exclusively when they are in their safe haven. When introducing them to the new safe haven space give them lots of treats and feed them incrementally to help build a positive association with the space.

For Fearful Dogs:

Many fearful dogs will benefit from having a safe haven to be able to have space to remove themselves

if/when they feel overwhelmed. This could be during a thunderstorm, when there are new and unfamiliar people over, if there's a lot of activity in the home, or during any time that the dog is feeling stressed. The area should be somewhere that is quiet and more removed from the rest of the home and should be a very comfortable place such as a bed, pillow, crate (if they like their crate), etc. You can feed their meals, and give toys that they get exclusively when they are in their safe haven. When introducing them to the new safe haven space give them lots of treats and feed them incrementally to help build a positive association with the space. Once they have acclimated to this space keep access to it open for them at all times and they should start going to it on their own when needed.

For Reactive Dogs:

Creating a safe haven can also be a key part of a reactive dog's management within the home. If your dog is reactive to certain stimuli it can sometimes be impossible or unavoidable to avoid their triggers (novel people coming to the home, children, people at the door, etc.). If/when these triggers occur, lead your dog to their safe haven (ideally, before they begin reacting. Example- set your dog up in their safe haven before your guests come over) and give them either their meal or treats through a puzzle toy, a long lasting chew, or toys that they will play with by themselves. We want to set them up to be able to keep themselves entertained and busy the entire time they're in the safe haven should they not fall asleep.

- **Space Guarding:**

If your dog guards space on the couch, chairs, bed or other furniture then creating a safe haven in the same room near you may be beneficial. If/when your dog does climb up on the furniture lure them off and then onto the safe haven with high value treats. In this instance, you don't need to worry about the area being quiet and removed, but it should still be very comfortable and enticing as we want your dog to want to and enjoy going there to provide a better alternative than jumping on the furniture. This area should also only be for your dog and them alone.

- **Item/Resource Guarding:**

If your dog guards resources such as food, treats, toys, etc. then creating a safe haven for them to eat or relax with their favorite toy may be a good part of their management, especially when visitors come over. You can feed them and give them chews, toys, or anything else they may guard in their safe haven to avoid either yourself or anyone else accidentally coming between your dog and their resource.

Puzzle Toys/Enrichment for Confidence Building

Puzzle toys or food-dispensing toys can be a great way for a nervous dog who is food-motivated to build confidence. **Solving puzzles helps dogs build confidence by allowing them to use their natural problem solving skills and learn that they have control over their environment.** There are lots of toys that all vary in their degrees of difficulty. Start with something easy, like a ball with a big hole for treats to fall out of as it rolls, or a cardboard box with a handful of treats in it and some shredded paper scattered on top, and let the dog figure out how to get the treats. As they get better and faster at these puzzles, you can buy or make new toys that are harder (smaller holes, more complex moving parts, etc). Licking/chewing is also a calming and stress relieving behavior, so lick mats (lickimat.com) are a great way to provide an outlet for this natural behavior—simply put some creamy food (wet dog food, peanut butter, cream cheese, yogurt, etc) on the mat and freeze it for a few hours so it lasts a while (you can use a large plate or frisbee as a cheap alternative). Bully sticks are also a great resource for calming.

Puzzle Toys/Feeding Enrichment

First thing's first: the only bowl your dog should have is their water bowl. Other than that they should be fed exclusively out of puzzle feeders or, at the very least, slow feeders. There are many different kinds of puzzle toys and they run the spectrum from very easy to very difficult (check out nina-ottosson.com or kongcompany.com). It may take some trial and error to see what difficulty level works best for your dog.

To help save some potential money feel free to do an online search for “DIY puzzle feeders for dogs” and you’ll find an array of different options for toys to make from things that are probably already lying around the house, or destined for the next garbage pickup. Snuffle mats are also an excellent feeding option, especially if your dog is scent driven and likes to use their nose, which you’ll learn more about below. Once you have your dog’s difficulty ability figured out try to have a selection of different toys so that you can rotate them throughout the week.

Scent Enrichment

A dog’s sense of smell is their superpower. We all know this but it goes so much further than we even realize. From across a football stadium a dog will be able to smell a spritz of perfume. When a dog stops to sniff a tree that another dog has marked, they’re able to determine age, gender, altered status, which direction the other dog came from and went, time decay, and so much more, just from a few sniffs. And in order to be able to process all of that information, a dog has a much larger portion of their brain dedicated to taking in and decoding scents that they pick up. So for us, we can smell something and think “ah, that’s nice” and then be on with our day, but for a dog they smell something and are using literal brain power to decipher its meaning. Going for sniffy walks or to areas on a long leash (20 foot +) so dogs can decide where to go and what to sniff helps them gain a better sense of their environment and feel more safe in it and build their confidence about their surroundings.

Because of this, providing opportunities and allowing your dog to sniff goes a long way in helping provide extra mental stimulation and tiring them out. When on walks allow your dog to stop and sniff for as long as they like. You can also bring the outdoors inside by picking up some leaves, grass, pinecones, or anything else and put it in a container to bring in for your dog to sniff. Once they’re done you can toss it back outside. Leaving the window open, or briefly opening a window for 5-10 minutes if weather is less than ideal, can also help give your dog a “news flash” on what’s going on outside. You can make scent tubes by using old paper towel or toilet paper rolls, dropping in some dried herbs, and then folding the ends to keep it in to give your dog something new to sniff each day. You can also buy or make a “snuffle mat” (think carpet with a high pile so treats can get down in between the fabric) and let them sniff out food/treats.

Chewing

Dogs are natural chewers and, when given the proper outlet, can be an excellent source of enrichment, mental stimulation, and stress relief. Be sure to have plenty of appropriate chew toys that can help keep them occupied and be enriching for them throughout the day.

Toys like stuffed animals and vinyl squeaky toys, while fun and pretty cute, are not good toys to have for dogs who like to chew. The materials they are made of (even the “indestructible” or “fire hose” stuffed toys) are too soft and flimsy to hold up to a dog chewing on or tearing them up, and they will typically only last a few mins. You can still get these toys for your dog as a “once in a while treat” for them to be able to have and tear apart, which is also pretty fun for dogs to do. I’d also recommend raiding the clearance bin at a pet store for these toys, so your dog’s 5 minutes of fun doesn’t end up costing \$15+. Luckily, there are several good chew options for dogs, in the form of both toys and treats, which can be easily obtained through local pets stores or online. Recommended treats and toy companies are listed below in no particular order. With toys, look for ones that are made from a hard rubber material. It will likely take some trial and error to find which treats and toys your dog likes and what their chewing strength is. Where applicable, be sure to check that company’s sizing chart to determine which size is best for your dog. If in doubt, or if your dog falls on the cusp or in between sizes, choose larger for them to help avoid choking hazards. All treats should be thrown away when pieces become too small. Please also be on the lookout for treats/toys that recommend that they

should only be used when a pet owner is present.

Treats:

- CET chews
- Bully sticks
- Antlers
- Pig ears
- Cow ears
- Beef trachea
 - Pro Tip: leave in an uncovered container or with the bag open for several days to make them a stronger chew)
- Himalayan Pet Supply is a company that also makes a lot of very good chew treats

Toys:

- Kongs (Different colors mean different chewing levels. Pink and blue are for puppies, purple is for senior dogs, red is for average adult dogs, black is for power chewers and made of the strongest material.)
 - They can be stuffed with food and frozen to increase interest too!
- Starmark Everlasting Treats (probably the most expensive option but the toys are very tough, durable, and worth the extra expense)
- Nylabone
- Bullymake

You can also think outside the box a little and find fun toys at a sporting goods store. Lacrosse balls make great chew toys, and hockey pucks can also be a satisfying chew. Baseballs and softballs are surprisingly soft and stand no chance against a dog's teeth, so those should be avoided (they also make a huge mess).

Resources for enrichment:

- Ninaottosson.com (Outward Hound)
- Kongcompany.com (select "Interactive & Tug" category)
- Lickimat.com
- Himalayan Pet Supplies (they have great bully sticks/chews)



DOGGIE LANGUAGE

starring Boogie the Boston Terrier



ALERT



SUSPICIOUS



ANXIOUS



THREATENED



ANGRY



"PEACE!"
look away/head turn



STRESSED
yawn



STRESSED
nose lick



"PEACE!"
sniff ground



"RESPECT!"
turn & walk away



"NEED SPACE"
whale eye



STALKING



STRESSED
scratching



STRESS RELEASE
shake off



RELAXED
soft ears, blinky eyes



"RESPECT!"
offer his back



FRIENDLY & POLITE
curved body



FRIENDLY



"PRETTY PLEASE"
round puppy face



"I'M YOUR LOVEBUG"
belly-rub pose



"HELLO I LOVE YOU!"
greeting stretch



"I'M FRIENDLY!"
play bow



"READY!"
prey bow



"YOU WILL FEED ME"



CURIOUS
head tilt



HAPPY
(or hot)



OVERJOYED
wiggly



"MMMM...."



"I LOVE YOU,
DON'T STOP"



Body Language of Fear in Dogs



Slight Cowering



Major Cowering

More Subtle Signs of Fear & Anxiety



Licking Lips
when no food nearby



Panting
when not hot or thirsty



Brows Furrowed, Ears to Side



Moving in Slow Motion
walking slow on floor



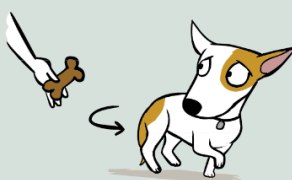
Acting Sleepy or Yawning
when they shouldn't be tired



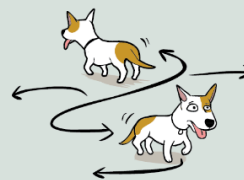
Hypervigilant
looking in many directions



Suddenly Won't Eat
but was hungry earlier



Moving Away



Pacing



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