



LEAD REACTIVITY

Walking a dog that lunges at other dogs while on a lead is not a pleasant experience.

Lead aggression can be embarrassing, scary and unsafe, especially if a dog is lunging, barking, pulling and whining when he or she spots another dog while out on a walk.

- When off-lead and in their own environment, dogs naturally greet from the side (in an arc) and sniff each other. They don't approach head-on and make hard eye contact (unless they were to fight) and greetings typically last only a few seconds.
- When dogs meet on lead they are often approaching head-on and therefore unable to turn their bodies. This forced body language (and our own tension) tells our dogs that we want to fight with another.
- Most dogs don't want to fight, so they display a number of behaviours designed to prevent it; distance-increasing behaviours such as barking, lunging, or growling - anything to make the threat go away.
- If you decide to "let the dogs say hello" the problems often get worse, as on-lead, dogs feel trapped and unable to get away from each other.
- Owners often have their dogs on a short/tight lead, thinking this will help if anything happens. Unfortunately, a tight lead tells your dog you're

stressed, therefore also making your dog more stressed. As a result, both dogs may start barking, switching from their flight instinct, to fight.

- Many owners don't recognise "rude" behaviour in their dogs, thinking they are just overly friendly. Charging or jumping on another dog is extremely rude behaviour and often the result of a lack of socialisation at/past puppy stage. If a puppy never experiences corrections for "rude" behaviour, they may continue this inappropriate behaviour in adulthood.
- When an adult dog inappropriately greets another, the other dog may react with a loud bark or growl. This can be embarrassing and it may be assumed that the reaction means your canine companion is aggressive, whilst actually, the other dog's inappropriate behaviour was the issue in the first place.
- Many people correct their dog for any perceived display of aggression but this is counter-productive for several reasons:
 1. This teaches your dog that other dogs, and potentially other people, cause punishment. **Any punishment - shouting, snatching at the lead, grabbing your dog, or reprimanding, increases their anxiety level.**
 2. Correcting a dog for growling or barking may prevent them from growling or barking in the future. Growling and barking are warning signs. If your dog is afraid to bark or growl, it may lead them to bite without warning when they're stressed or uncomfortable.
 3. Correcting a dog who is highly aroused or stressed, may cause them to redirect their aggression to the handler.

REDIRECTIONAL TRAINING

- Start by always having cooked chicken or your dog's favourite treats to hand, so you can get their attention when you need it!

- If you see a dog and your dog starts to react, walk in a different direction and keep moving this direction further away from the dog until they settle - holding a treat in their eye view at the same time. **Changing direction takes their attention away from what they are reacting to**
- Once they stop reacting, ask them to sit and repeat a training word, search as "wait" or "stop". **Using a training word means when you ask them to wait or stop, means they know exactly what you want them to do.**
- Give them the treat. **This shows them they are rewarded when they sit quietly.**
- Each time they see a dog, do exactly the same thing.
- Gradually as they improve and reactions reduce in time, reduce how far you move away, keeping their attention on you and the treat.
- Also try it every now and then without a treat so they don't expect a treat each time! This also shows they are listening to you.
- Once reactions have settled, you can work on improving socialisation.

SOCIALISATION

- Have a friend walk past you with their dog, in the opposite direction - not close enough to make contact - essentially walking both dogs in a circular motion and gradually getting closer.
- Any time you get a reaction, just move away and do the training again.
- Once this can be done comfortably, have the dogs walk directly towards each other rather than passing by in opposite directions.
- When they're a few meters away have them walk in a circle and gradually meet. **Use treats to reward good behaviour.**

- When they are close enough to meet, allow them to sniff each other and then walk away a few feet and do the meet again.
- Gradually extend the time they are meeting for. This will help them become more comfortable and realise that other dogs are not a threat.

