



- **Fears and phobias:** Dogs that are not socialised and habituated effectively at a young age can develop fears of certain people, objects or experiences (especially loud noises such as fireworks). Thorough habituation of puppies should prevent common fears developing, but if your dog is already frightened of noises or situations some positive, reward-based training will help him cope. For more severe phobias, your vet or a reputable behaviourist will be able to help.
- **Aggression:** Dogs may show aggression for many reasons, usually because they feel threatened or that their 'resources' (e.g. toys, food etc) are in danger. Dogs that are in pain or ill may also growl or even bite so we must always be aware of how our dogs are feeling and be sensitive to this. You can prevent aggressive behaviours with proper

socialisation of puppies, and by learning to read your dog's body language. If your dog has already started to show aggression, you should consult your vet or a reputable behaviourist. Try to avoid situations where your dog is likely to react aggressively, but if this is unavoidable, consider getting your dog used to wearing a muzzle.

Getting advice

If you need to have your dog assessed you should ask your vet to refer you to a reputable behaviourist.

Be a responsible owner and neuter your dog – it's simply the best choice for you and your pet.

If you are interested in rehoming a dog, supporting Dogs Trust or for more information and factsheets about all aspects of dog ownership, please visit www.dogstrust.org.uk or contact:

**Dogs Trust
17 Wakley Street
London
EC1V 7RQ**

Tel: 020 7837 0006

**Reg. Charity Numbers: 227523
and SC037843**

Good Dog Behaviour – An Owner's Guide



Every dog owner wants a well behaved, happy dog. However, we all need to put in some effort to achieve this! The way that a dog behaves is more to do with how it is brought up than anything else, including its breed. It is particularly important that puppies up to the age of 16 weeks (the socialisation period) are introduced to a wide range of situations.

How to prevent common behaviour problems

Socialisation & Habituation

Getting your dog used to new experiences, places, other animals and people is very important in order to prevent your dog being scared of them in the future. Habituation is essential for all puppies and you should start as soon as possible with unfamiliar objects in your house. Once your vet says your puppy can go to public areas you can get him out and about and meeting people and other dogs in safe environments - this is the best way to raise a happy, friendly dog that you will be able to take anywhere.



Training

You should start training your new dog or puppy as soon as he has settled into his new home – whatever his age. Using rewards in training will help your dog to link good behaviour with something nice happening, and will encourage him to behave well again and again! This is much more effective than punishing him for doing something ‘bad’ which will make him scared of you and will not encourage a good relationship between you.

Beating boredom

Some dogs just have to be busy – all the time! If they don’t have enough to do to occupy themselves at home they will get bored and they may resort to destructive or antisocial behaviour to amuse themselves. You can prevent your dog getting too bored at home by leaving ‘challenges’ for him such as hiding treats or Kong toys filled with food and encouraging him to use his nose to find them. When you take your dog for walks, use games or toys to exercise him further. Why not try retrieving games or hide and seek to use both his mind and body to the full? If your dog is really energetic



Photo by Andy Catterall

you can also look for activity clubs in your area and try out agility, flyball or obedience training to make full use of that mental and physical energy.

Understanding dog behaviour

Understanding why dogs behave the way they do will help you predict and manage your dog’s behaviour, so you will always feel in control of any situation.

- **Training:** Dogs need to be properly trained (and housetrained!) to avoid problems developing. Attending a good training class and being consistent with your training will lead to a happier, better behaved pet!

- **Attention-seeking:** Some people consider that ‘Attention Seeking’ is a problem behaviour in itself, often manifesting itself as barking or whining at you, jumping up at you and even mouthing or trying to bite you. In fact this type of behaviour is a symptom of what is really going on inside your dog’s head – he may be feeling constantly bored or frustrated or anxious. It is important to find out why your dog is behaving like this and to fix the root cause rather than just trying to eradicate the ‘attention-seeking’ behaviour.