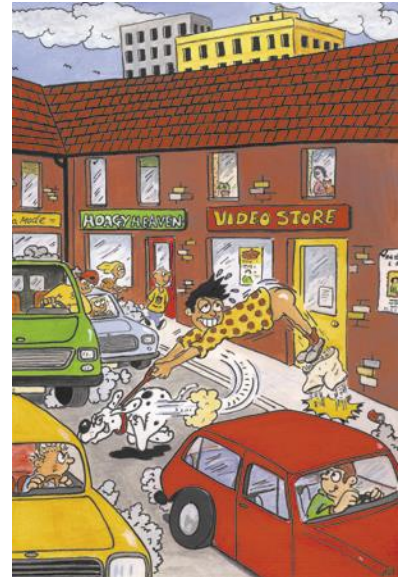


## CONTROLLING PULLING, LUNGING, CHASING, & JUMPING UP

### *Why do dogs tend to pull, chase and forge ahead?*

Dogs tend to pull ahead and lunge forward for a number of reasons. The primary reason for most dogs (at least initially) is that they are exploratory, playful and social, and they are motivated to investigate new areas, new odors and new people or new dogs as well as areas where exciting things have been found in the past. The more they pull, the faster they get where they are going. As you pull backwards in an attempt to restrain your dog, he/she is likely to resist by pulling forward even harder, since most dogs tend to pull against pressure. Although perhaps not a scientifically accurate term this is often referred to as an opposition reflex. Dogs that are aggressive to stimuli (e.g. children, other dogs), and those that have the urge to chase or heel (e.g. joggers, cyclists) may pull ahead in an attempt to chase. Dogs that are fearful or defensive may be more aggressive when restrained by a leash since they are unable to escape and more likely to defend their personal space or their family members (defensive or protective aggression). Those dogs that are fearful or otherwise reluctant to leave home may be pulling and forging ahead on their way back home.



### *How can pulling and forging ahead be controlled?*

It is a shame when owners are unable to engage in the simple joy of walking their dog due to extreme leash pulling. The dog should be taught through obedience training, lures and rewards to respond to the 'heel' command. Training should begin in an environment where success can be ensured. Using a control mechanism (leash and collar, leash and head halter), and highly motivating rewards, the dog should first be taught to walk at the owner's side. During the first few training sessions distractions should be avoided so that the rewards and motivation keep the dog's interest and attention. If the dog begins to pull ahead, pulling backwards on the leash and a neck collar, leads to resistance from the dog, causing the dog to lunge forward more intensely. It is best to take 1-2 steps at a time and keep your dog in the correct position, rather than trying to accomplish a long walk. If the dog pulls the leash taut, stop and wait till the dog returns to a slack leash position before rewarding and continuing. As the dog learns *where* to be in relation to the owner, gradually walk a few more steps. Set the dog up to succeed. This can often be accomplished using a food reward held at thigh level to keep the dog's nose in position.

The head halter is one of the best means of gaining immediate control. It is discussed in detail in our handout on 'Management devices in dog training' and our handout on 'Excitable and disobedient dogs'. When the dog is wearing a head halter and pulls ahead, a pull on the leash will cause your dog's head to turn toward you. Then as you pull upwards and forward, the dog will pull backwards into a sit. Quickly

release tension and reward. Continue along your walk and anytime the dog begins to pass you pull forward and upward and your dog should begin to back up. It is not necessary to get a 'sit' with each pull, only a dog who stays beside or just behind you with a slack leash as you walk.

In order to teach the dog to walk by your side, this should start from the time you exit your front door. Have your dog 'sit' and 'stay' and then open the front door. If the dog begins to run out pull up and forward so that the dog returns to the 'sit', and release. Walk slowly forward so that you are between the dog and the door, slowly lengthening the leash while the dog remains in place but leaving no more than an inch or two of slack. Provided the dog does not forge ahead, step through the door and then allow the dog to follow up to (but not past) you. Proceed onto the porch and down onto the yard with the dog following. Any time the dog begins to step or forge past, the leash can be pulled up and forward so that the dog backs up, and released immediately when the dog is in place. Although the dog could be made to sit each time it pulls forward, the goal is to have the dog back up just far enough that it remains at your side. The tension on the leash is then released and the dog is encouraged to walk forward. In short, pulling tends to lead to tension, while walking at your side earns release (i.e. a slack leash). If the dog "puts on the brakes" and will not follow, a tendency is to pull ahead, but, as mentioned, dogs tend to resist by pulling in the opposite direction. To get the dog up and following, loosen the slack on the lead and encourage the dog to follow verbally or with food prompts. Once you have the dog successfully heeling in



the yard with no distractions, you can proceed to the front yard and the street while there are still no distractions. With practice, strong motivators and the use of the head halter, the dog can then gradually be walked in the presence of stimuli that might otherwise cause lunging and forging, such as other dogs, cyclists, or children playing.

Another solution is to use "no pull harnesses" (see our handout on 'Behavior management products'). These devices fit around the dog's body and around the forelegs so that when the dog forges ahead the forelegs and body can be controlled. Although these harnesses do not provide the level of control afforded by the head halter, compared to head halters, they require little or no training and do provide immediate control of pulling.

#### ***My dog chases and I am worried he will get hurt. What can I do?***

Chasing and running after prey, nipping at heels and herding are normal dog behaviors. These behaviors are more strongly motivated in some breeds of dogs than others. In addition, some dogs may be motivated to chase intruders (people, other dogs) from their property and, when the intruders leave, the behavior may appear to the dog to have been successful. This usually results in the dog continuing in the "chase" behaviors. In order to control chase behaviors, it is necessary to train the dog to do something different than it was doing before. It is not enough to yell "no" and punish the dog. This alone will not stop a behavior that has a strong motivation, but may cause the dog to be more anxious or fearful about the "stimulus" which would INCREASE the problem.

First, let's talk about prevention of chasing behaviors. Once you have witnessed the young dog engaging in an inappropriate chase, now is the time to start training. Get a leash on the dog and teach it to sit and stay. Then present the dog with the distraction that it would normally chase and reward the dog for good behavior. Remember, when off the leash the dog may revert to its old habits. Therefore, try to avoid those situations until you feel confident that the dog will behave.

Once the dog has been engaging in chase behaviors for some time, it will be more difficult to stop the behavior. The very fact that the object the dog chases runs, is reinforcement enough. A program of differential reinforcement or response substitution is necessary to teach the dog the desired and acceptable response when exposed to the stimulus. If there is fear or anxiety when exposed to the stimulus desensitization and counter-conditioning is needed to change the dog's attitude and emotions to ones that are positive. (These terms are discussed in detail in our handout on 'Behavior modification, desensitization, counter-conditioning, differential reinforcement and flooding')

Treatment by differential reinforcement involves teaching the dog to 'sit' and 'stay' for rewards and then gradually introducing objects that the dog chases. It will be necessary to first start with objects the dog is least likely to chase and progress to more tempting items. If the problem is severe, a consultation with a behaviorist may be necessary. Control with a head halter and leash often is the most practical and most successful at ensuring that the dog will 'sit' and 'stay' in the presence of the stimulus. The use of highly motivating rewards (favored food treats, favored toys) can also be used to lure the dog into a 'sit' and given as a reward for staying.

### ***My dog charges the door and jumps on people who enter my home. What can I do?***

Another behavior that causes problems for owners is door charging. Door charging is the behavior of the dog speeding to the door whenever anyone knocks or rings the bell. To deal with this problem start by teaching the dog to 'sit' and 'stay' for a food reward in the entry area. This is best done with the dog wearing a headcollar and on a leash. Gradually phase out food treats when the behavior is learned and can be reliably repeated. Next you may need to practice with family members entering the home. Finally, when the dog has mastered the task with people he knows, practice with visitors, keeping the dog on a leash and making it 'sit' and 'stay'. Always require your dog to 'sit' before it gets petted and you can go along way to eliminating jumping behavior. If the dog has never even practiced the task without distractions, how can you expect the dog to perform the task when visitors come over? If door-charging behavior is coupled with aggression, you should seek the help of a behaviorist.



### ***How can I prevent my dog from jumping up on others and me?***

For many dogs, jumping up on people is part of their greeting routine. Often, owners have tried to discourage this behavior using methods such as squeezing the front feet, stepping on the dog's toes, or kneeling the dog in the chest. Yet the behavior continues. For some dogs these techniques provide an uncomfortable but acceptable form of attention. For others, the technique leads to increasing anxiety as people arrive at the door. Therefore in both cases the problem is gradually being further aggravated. If that is the case with your dog, then it is important to think about what might be motivating the dog to jump up and what is the reinforcement for the behavior continuing.

Usually the motivation for the jumping up behavior is to greet people. Many dogs like to greet "face to face", like they do with their canine counterparts. Some people, however, find this objectionable. Correction therefore must not be directed at punishing the problem, but rather finding a means of teaching the dog an appropriate greeting posture. This usually is a sit/stay, which can then be rewarded with food and attention. Once the dog has perfected this at the doorway, when there are no people coming or going, its time to begin practicing with family members, before progressing to visitors. Make the dog sit and stay while people come and hand the dog a treat. If the dog gets up, then put him back in the sit and try again until the dog remains sitting through the arrival. Often placing a "treat jar" by the front door with a bell on

it will help. Once the dog associates the bell on the jar with a treat, and a treat with a sit/stay, the dog will be more likely to perform the task.

Another way to train this behavior is to set up visitors to come to your home. You will have better control of your dog if you use a head collar and a leash for this exercise. Have the first person come to the door and instruct your dog to 'sit' and 'stay'. Then, let them in. Hopefully with some effort you will get your dog to continue to sit. Have the person enter, give a treat and sit down. After five minutes, have them leave by the back door, come to the front and enter again. This second entry should go easier as your dog will have just seen the person. If you can repeat this 4-6 times for each visitor, the dog will have plenty of opportunity to learn the new task.

Once you understand the motivation, and have trained a new task, you need to be sure you have identified all the reinforcement for the behavior. If the dog succeeds in getting any attention for the jumping behavior, then the dog will continue to jump. Attention may be petting, pushing away, (which resembles play behavior), and even mild reprimands can be reinforcing for a dog that really wants attention. To change this behavior you need to remove ALL reinforcement. This may mean that you do not look, speak, touch or interact with the dog IN ANY WAY when it jumps on you. Walk by the dog, give a command such as 'sit', but do not interact with the dog. Alternately, you could try punishment to see if you can disrupt the behavior just as it begins.

To use punishment for jumping up, you need to be able to QUICKLY AND HUMANELY interrupt the behavior. This is often best done with some type of device that makes a loud noise. Shake cans, ultrasonic trainers, rape alarms, and air horns, all make loud noises that will often startle the dog. As soon as the dog hesitates, you need to give the dog an alternative command so that the dog can do the proper thing and then reward the dog with praise. So, as you administer the noise, you say "SIT" and when the dog sits you reward it with praise and food treats if available. Many dogs soon learn that to avoid the noise, they need to sit and will do so to greet you. Then have the person leave, and re-enter the home. Use the device and command if the dog does not immediately sit, and a good sit and reward as soon as the dog does sit. Continue to have the person leave and re-enter until the dog sits for its reward without hesitating. Another efficient but costly means of immediate interruption is to use a citronella spray collar. Bark activated collars are useful if the dog barks as people arrive at the door. Alternately a remote collar can be used to interrupt the jumping and the desirable response reinforced e.g. sitting.

Another method that is consistently successful at deterring and preventing the jumping up, is to leave a leash and head halter on the dog during greeting. All it takes is stepping on the leash or a quick sharp pull to prevent or disrupt the jumping up. Again, be certain to reward non-jumping behavior.

Some people like to allow the dog to jump up on them at certain times. You must never allow the dog to choose the time. Ideally you should teach your dog to jump up on command such as "give me a hug" or "come up here". This way, you have the behavior under verbal control and you decide when the dog will be allowed to jump up.