

DOG LIFE



Fear in dogs

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This topic is generalized to give you some insight. For detailed analysis of fear behavior, it is best to seek a professional trainer/behaviorist to help and guide you.

Fear comes in many forms. It could be psychological, genetic, manmade, learned or a reaction to discomfort, noise, visual stimuli or the unknown. All fears fall into one of the categories listed.

There are several ways to fix or modify fear through desensitization or confidence building. Of course there is medication that your vet can prescribe, but it doesn't always work. In general, many of those dogs given medication may have to have their medication increased. The reason for that is the dosage effect becomes weak from prolonged use. The dosage has to be increased or the medication changed. Your vet will guide you.

Depending upon many factors and variables, fear can be controlled or modified through rehabilitation and programming of the dog's mind. Most of the time fear has a common cause and a common denominator. Once the cause is found, then gradual steps can be taken to alter both cause and the underlying denominator. For some types of fear, sometimes nothing can be done. Fear has no age. Sometimes you see it from the beginning and sometimes you see it later. To avoid most fears from a young age, build confidence and find a professional dog trainer.

Timid or shy dogs have a greater tendency to show fear, because they lack confidence. With proper training and professional guidance that can be

overcome. Fear from verbal or physical abuse is manmade. Sometimes owners get frustrated because their dog did something wrong and they will lash out verbally in an aggressive way, or they might raise their hand. The best solution when owners get upset is to walk away for 10 minutes or so, giving enough time to cool down. Harsh punishment does nothing but create fear. The lack of professional obedience training is the root of verbal and physical abuse in dogs, causing fear. As with children, certain noises or the unknown can cause insecurity in a dog, and from there the fear kicks in. When you notice that your dog is afraid or shows insecurity toward anything, don't force your dog to not be

afraid. The best way to fix any type of fear-related issues is by seeking the guidance and help of a professional trainer. Fear issues are not simple, nor is there a quick fix. There are many variables that play a role in every situation of fear. The younger the dog is, the quicker the fear can be corrected, modified or eliminated. In an older dog it might take some time to overcome. Sometimes you can't do anything but avoid what the dog is afraid of.

There are many different approaches in diagnosing fear behavior. The common denominator in curing or modifying fear is by making sure your dog trusts you. Never use treats in trying to get the dog to overcome fear.

Always remember that fear is the

strongest emotion in every living animal, including humans. So to overcome a specific fear, you must first understand the cause and root of that behavior. Once you know, you can then take the steps in desensitizing, correcting, modifying, eliminating or having your dog tolerate the fear to a certain degree. Every dog's fear is not the same as another's. Every dog's home and environment are not the same, and certain daily activities also can cause certain ongoing fear.

The best way to handle fear is by having a professional trainer/behaviorist with years of experience help you. The longer you wait, the worse it gets. Don't think that a dog will outgrow fear-based behavior. People ask me how long it takes. The answer is, "No one knows." The gravity of the fear and the age of the dog will dictate how long. Plus the contribution made by the owner in working with their dog plays a huge role in the speed of overcoming fear.

Something to know: If your dog is prone to bladder infections, what helps is cranberry juice mixed in its water. I personally would use it daily as maintenance. Depending on your dog's size, add accordingly. Best is to ask your veterinarian for guidance if unsure.

Have a woof woof of a month.

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