

Dog Aggression



Does My Dog Love Other Dogs?

Just like people, dogs have different levels of tolerance for other dogs.

As a dog matures, he or she will often quite naturally become less social and tolerant. There are many developmental changes that happen between sexual and social maturity, and most dogs will continue to display these changes until two to three years of age. Proper facilitation of dog-dog introductions and friendships can change your dog's sociability for the better over time, and bad experiences can quickly make things worse. Good leadership and direction is important to set your dog up for success with their species.



A dog's social tolerance changes over time and is flexible and manageable!

#respectfordogs

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Dogs have a range of sociability preferences with other dogs. Some dogs prefer to be alone, others are pretty selective on their friends, and some are social butterflies. When working with your dog and any dog issues they may have- it's important to understand they may never like all dogs. However, with behavior training and safety measures, they may be able to coexist peacefully with another dog in a household or in the same general area.

Since aggression can stem from a place of anxiety and/or fear, adding any punishment to your training or management is more likely to make the reactions worse than better. **It is best to work with a certified dog trainer in any aggression issues.** For more information on choosing the right trainer, review our [behavior resource guide](#). Additionally, especially if dog issues are a new behavior, it is always important to **check in with your veterinarian** to explore any underlying medical conditions that may be contributing to the aggression.

The following tips below are only to be used for temporary support, until an appointment with a certified, professional dog trainer can be made.

Guidelines for managing dog aggression issues:

SAFETY FIRST

- The most important and first step is to manage the safety of the household. Keep dogs separate at all times possible if an altercation has occurred. The most common method for separation of resident dogs is called crate-and-rotate. This method involves having one dog crated, primarily in a separate room as well, when the other dog is out and about. When using crate-and-rotate, it is crucial that the entire household understands the importance of separation, as well as participates/communicates efficiently so the dogs do not accidentally interact.
- Muzzle Training is also a very useful skill for your dog to have when dealing with aggression issues. Muzzle training sometimes has a general misconception of negative connotations, but this skill is useful for a dog who is dealing with aggression. Muzzles can make a situation a lot safer and can allow for more training opportunities for your dog. It's important to remember that even if your dog is sporting a muzzle comfortably, that does not mean that exposure to the trigger (dog or humans that your dog reacts poorly to) should not be avoided. Please continue to avoid interactions that your dog has reacted poorly to. To help properly choose and fit the right muzzle for your pup, a certified dog trainer can be very useful. For more information on muzzle training, go to <https://muzzleupproject.com>.
- If your dog has had altercations with dogs outside of the house, we highly recommend you avoid any activity that involves your dog having contact with any other dog (i.e. avoid dog parks, off leash walking, play dates, etc.). If you are having difficulties with your dog lunging on leash at another dog, please review our [reactivity overview](#) and [leash reactivity](#) guides.
- Sometimes, even the best management plan can fail and your dog may become involved in a dog altercation. If an altercation does occur, it is important to use methods of separation that keep yourself and other people safe. **Never use your hands or body to attempt to disengage dogs in a fight.** Trying to pull dogs apart not only puts you at risk, but also may cause some dogs to bite down harder. Use loud noises (yelling, clapping, banging pots, slamming a door) to try to interrupt the fight and separate as quickly as possible once the fight stops. If loud noises do not disengage the dogs, then water or even a long item like a broom can help separate the dogs. After separation, please contact a veterinarian or emergency vet clinic for any injuries that may have occurred. For more information on defensive handling, visit <https://aggressivedog.com/webinars>.

*If any bite, injury, or other emergency happens while working with your dog- please separate and contain the dog as quickly and safely as possible. Call 9-1-1 for medical assistance and call Animal Law Enforcement at 719-302-8798 for assistance with a dangerous dog.