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Hallam's Happy Hounds Behaviour and Training
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Walking with your dog

Most dogs walk fine on a lead, whether that be on a collar or harness. They are ok with other dogs in the vicinity and greet well after observing dog manners and their species-specific behaviours.

Then there are the dogs that when they see another dog even at a distance cannot cope with the 'stimulus' and bark, lunge, whine, spin or redirect and nip the handler.

Where do you start?

Training is often the way forward. Foundation behaviours are often not proofed without the stimulus present (the other dog, human or car). These foundation behaviours if proofed and repeated sufficiently will give access to an automatic behaviour due to the work that you have put in prior to this situation. (Read Proofing a Behaviour)

At times, due to the 'environment' – narrow path, entrance and exits onto fields or play areas, car parks it's just a case of holding onto the dog.

The handler reacting and using no, stop, their name, down, sit and the dog isn't doing it is actually poisoning all those cues as the dog is ignoring you. I have found through working with these situations that saying nothing is actually better and waiting for a 'break' in the behaviour that you can say 'GOOD' and reward that behaviour.

If a dog doesn't take food or a toy, they are conflicted. So wait and see when they do, is it when you increase distance, you just stand and observe, the dog walks away, the dog stops and sniffs...all this needs to be monitored so you gain information to best help your dog. A journal or a page on your phone to track this like SuperNanny™!

What to do?

The basic motto is 'reward behaviours you do want' – 'observe and redirect behaviours you don't want'

I know how it feels to have a badly reacting dog that looks like he's going to kill a dog that gets close. It's stressful, it's embarrassing, it's annoying and it's upsetting. I get it, truly I do! My Bear used to see another dog when on a lead and literally jump up to the full extent of a 4 foot lead and yank my shoulder out. I have worked with him for 8 years now and he still has his moments when he really doesn't like the signals of the other dog...he has a Phd in observing other dog behaviours. What I have learned during this is Bear is just being a dog – yes, his behaviour is inappropriate in our world, however, he's just doing himself. It is therefore my job to manage it, understand his anxiety (I was his greatest resource) and increase my communication with him and get some of it under 'cue'.

Allow your dog to see the other dog. If you can (after practicing throwing skills) throw treats over their head on the floor, to some dogs this is sufficient to break them from looking at the other dog



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to searching for the treats. At this time – the dog means good grub and you have started your positive associations (see the sheet on this)

If the reaction is strong, when there is a break in their behaviour, you can increase the distance as being that close can be too much for your dog. Work in car lengths or tree lengths or lamppost lengths so that you can see if the behaviour is worsening or getting better through your training at home.

The Happy Greeters

But my dog is ok once he goes over and says hello. That's fabulous – you have an aroused greeter then 😊 however what is not great is that if they go over to the dog that doesn't like dogs, or create because they can't say hello to every dog then there is a situation that we are creating frustration. What works best with frustration then? well it's working with the dog to listen to commands, you are not going over to every single dog, you may walk past some, you may walk past the friendly ones too (good practice) and then avoid the others.

Hand touch exercise is good for focus, but so is good lead walking where you have the dog sniffing and you call them and they come and then say walk on...walk on becomes the cue to walk forward with you. This all needs to be done with no distractions first – practice on your street, your garden or in a quiet field so that your training becomes fluid.

Once you do let your dog go up for a sniff, gain a control behaviour prior to this such as a stand wait, or a sit stay, and then you can say 'Say Hello!' limit the sniff to about 3 seconds. A study found that in a dog park the maximum time a dog spent sniffing was 11 seconds....so they sniff and go. At about 3 seconds with an enthusiastic greeter using the hand touch gain the dog's attention and call the dog away. You can allow a sniff again, and it's best if you are both moving forward so the dogs have other things to sniff.

The long line can also help with the dogs that see other dogs and bolt over to say hello. A dog that bolts over to say hello is not under your control, so is an infringement of the Dogs Act so care is needed. What I will say is that by having a good strong 30m long line of a bright colour (www.dragonleads.co.uk) you can keep Princess under control so that as she is sniffing and doing her recall well you can then reward reward reward in longer distances. Always keep the distances changing too so the dog doesn't anticipate that it will be 3 metres continuously....it may be 2, 3 6 3 4 8 etc. If Princess then sees the dog at a distance allow them to look, give them time to take it in, watch body language at this time, then Princess Come and a tasty morsel in an outstretched hand will bring her back to you. You can then shorten the line so that you have a little more control if needed. This is good to practice when meeting up with friends and dogs if they know them as they will gain their friends scent profile and recognise the dog as one of their familiars. By gaining controlled behaviours here you will gain them with a strange dog too.



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Should you not Princess to go over, but you are going to give more distance to the other dog, you may then allow her to take it all in, call her, and rather than coming to you for the treat you toss it forward with a get it cue and she finds it in the grass or on the floor. This builds up different types of recall, and also gives Princess information that you just want her to go this way.

So what does the perfect walk look like?

This is very different to the individual owner and the dog. In general it is with a nice smile in the lead from your hand to the harness/collar/head-collar. The dog responds to cues during the walk. During a charity walk preparation, my dogs had to just walk, no sniffing as we would not get anywhere, so what I did was put the sniffing under a cue (so at a corner or a particularly interesting tree) I'd say 'Go Sniff', they would have a good sniff here, then my cue to move them forward is simply borrowed from horse training 'Walk on'. 'With me' is my 'heel cue' as sadly with the number of dogs that I have 'Heel' is impossible, so the 'With me' worked better as a looser heel command.

The 'With Me' is as follows

- Dog is sitting on your left or right by your side.
- Before you go to move off, pat your leg on that side the dog is sitting on, and say with me.
- Move off with that leg
- If dog stays by the side of you reward every few paces (it may be just one at first)

Another method is the 'food bowl' follow

- A food bowl and a pocket full of treats
- Pop a treat in the food bowl
- Dog is in a sit position on your left or right side.
- Before you move off, say whatever cue you want to follow. At this point the 'bottom' of the dish is the 'picture' that the dog has been trained to watch (all those times at feeding time) and having it on the same side as the dog, on your hip, means that the dog has a target to follow.
- Move off (obviously you can't tap your leg) but before moving say your cue and stride off with the leg on the side of the dog. A few paces and drop the bowl so they can get their bit of chicken or other tasty treat. Reload and redo. Build up your steps, be unpredictable (see proofing the behaviours) once the dog is following so it may be a 3, 4, 2, 6, 5, 10 steps before treating. Oh and don't forget to MARK the behaviour when they are walking by the side of you.



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The STOP and FREEZE!

To understand that this is a behaviour is an instinctive behaviour. Why might it happen? It can be that at a certain place with certain conditions that the dog has frozen due to something that is scary, what can happen then is this is like a sticky block to their furry butts.

They get to a certain spot and they do it again, what you then have is an environment that becomes the cue for the behaviour. In this situation you can start playing prior to the behaviour so that a different 'emotion' is in action then move past the point where they get sticky butt, or alternatively you can use a different route until their memory of that 'environment' shifts.

Play and freeze are opposite in the 'emotional brain' of the dog so where one is the other isn't.