



BUILD CONFIDENCE IN SHY/FEARFUL DOGS

FIRST 3 DAYS

DECOMPRESSION AND REST

Create a dog room or pen just for your new furry friend to relax in. They will be very overwhelmed for a few days-weeks. Give them at least 3 days to just decompress without the expectation for doing anything else. **NO WALKS** unless they seem to enjoy the outdoors, if they do ensure they are on a double leash system in case they do get spooked by anything. Only take them outside to potty. Provide lots of chew toys, bones, toys, and a comfy bed for them. Chewing is a stress relieving behavior for your pup.

Don't force interaction with your new pup just yet. Make your presence super positive, provide a lot of treats. You can sit in there with them if you'd like but don't force them to be pet if they do not want pets.



POSTIVE REINFORCEMENT

Don't force interactions but spend time in the same room with your new pup. Reward any relaxed or curious behavior. EX: Do they lie down around you? Do they lean in for a sniff? These are all behaviors we want to reward and encourage.

Avoid sudden movements and maintain a soft voice around your pup at first. Reach out to offer a treat but don't give any pets. If they won't take a treat from your hand toss or gently place it close to them.

Don't push anything too fast. Build confidence in your pup by showing them they can explore without necessarily triggering attention from you. **Respect your pups stress signals.** Teaching them that their body language can control their environment and how people interact with them is a huge confidence builder.

RESPECT BODY LANGUAGE

Knowing and understanding your dogs body language can help you build a more comfortable space an environment for your dog. Dogs are rarely unpredictable when they snap or run away, they have generally given multiple stress signals beforehand that were ignored or unnoticed. Knowing how your dog expresses when they are uncomfortable is very important when it comes to socializing and building confidence in the future.



Cowering



Lip Licking



Panting



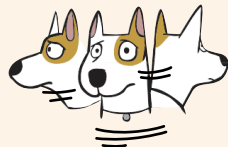
Brows furrowed, ears to side



Walking in Slow Motion



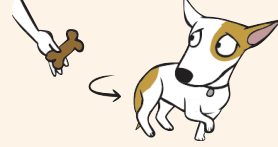
Yawning



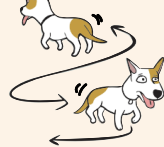
Hypervigilant



Won't Eat



Moving Away

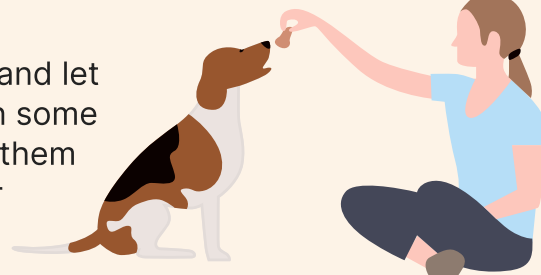


Pacing

HAND FEEDING

Build your bond with your dog and help them relate you to positive things by hand feeding their meals to them. This may take them some time to be able to trust you enough to eat in front of you but keep trying. Keep hand feeding them until they get excited to see you for meal time.

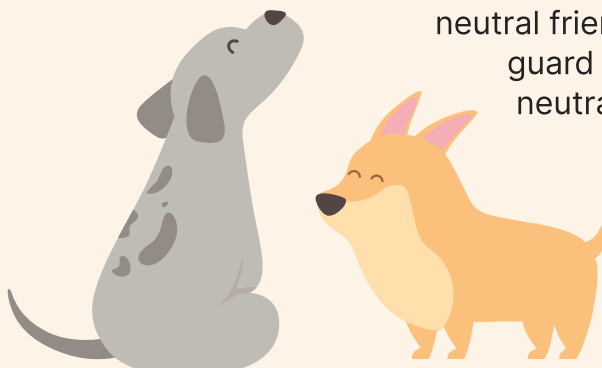
At first don't apply any pressure just hold out your hand and let them eat from it. Slowly over time you can start to add in some basic training skills to help them build confidence. Have them sit, lie down, reward them for being pet, reward them for moving around if they are hesitant to do so.



FIRST 3 WEEKS

FIND CONFIDENT FRIENDS

In more severe cases shy dogs may benefit from having a confident neutral friend or sibling to learn from. A neutral dog does not guard it's space, belongings, or people. It's important the neutral dog doesn't overwhelm the shy one.



Neutral dogs are great for timid dogs to be around, they are the calming presence to an anxious and sometimes frantic world. If your shy dog watches your neutral dog interact with something scary they may be more likely to investigate it themselves.

START BASIC TRAINING

Once they're a more settled start basic training to with your dog. This will help us build a foundation for more complex behaviors when socializing in the future.

Commands to teach:

- sit
- lie down
- shake
- up (on objects)
- off (off objects)
- walk/smell new textures and objects

Dogs build confidence by succeeding and getting behaviors "right" we can tell them this by marking and rewarding. Having them learn and regularly try new behaviors and things that are in an environment they can and will succeed in will build their confidence immensely.

Over time we'll ask them to do these basic behaviors in scarier environments.



START EXERCISE



Once your pup is more comfortable moving around indoors you can start to venture outside with them. At this stage stick to very quiet parks and trails. Go at your dogs pace. Sniffing is a relaxing and de-stressing behavior for your pup.

Long lines are a great and safe way to give them some freedom. Long lines come in a variety of sizes (10ft, 25ft, 50ft, 100ft). Don't worry about walking in a perfect heel, let your pup explore and encourage them to interact with their environment. Just like in humans exercise produces serotonin and allows your pup to work off any pent up anxiety they've built over the week.

FIRST 3 MONTHS

OBSERVATION

Find time to sit and watch different areas with your dog. Allow them to observe and smell as they want. Let them process their environment in whatever way they need to, this builds environmental confidence to your dog and allows for them to understand different noises and stimuli from a safe distance.

If your dog is showing stressed body language provide them with more distance from their triggers. A stressed dog is not learning, think about if you were afraid of spiders. Would you become less afraid being thrown into a pool of them?



DECOMPRESSION WALKS



Decompression walks are structured purely to benefit your dog. This is a walk setup all for them to have fun and destress. Find a quiet trail or park with little to no triggers. You may have to drive or go out early in the morning, later in the evening. We want this to be a time for your dog to build confidence and not have to encounter anything that scares them. This allows them to reset their mental state and will allow them to handle scary stimuli with more confidence.

BE PATIENT AND GIVE LOTS OF LOVE

The most important thing about shy and timid dogs is to be patient. Behavior modification takes time but it truly changes the way your pup sees the world. Your patience and love will make a world of difference for them. They take a lot of work in the beginning but these dogs will reward you with endless love and devotion, they are some of the best dogs you will ever have in your life.

Remember they're not giving you a hard time, they're having a hard time.

