



## **Boundary Exercises**

We can teach and encourage a more respectful and patient dog by giving *gentle, clear and consistent* boundaries at home.

**To be the centre of your dogs attention outside of the house we need to start with simple steps inside the house.**

**You are the centre of their world:** Ask them to think about, and work for, the lovely things we give them such as treats, access to fun and most importantly our attention.

### **Personal Space:**

Most dogs need to be reminded to give us our personal space and we dog lovers are pushovers for affection! It is important to respect your own personal space as it teaches your dog to respect the space of other people and dogs.

1. Don't let your dog jump all over you or your furniture unless invited! Stroking and fussing dogs is great but next time you find yourself doing it ask yourself who started it.. you or the dog?
2. *Invite* your dog into your space rather than stroking the dog when it sits or leans on you. Feel free to gently shoulder the dog off you then ask it to sit and wait before inviting them onto your lap.
3. Don't let your dog follow you everywhere. Close doors behind you occasionally and build up separation times slowly. Train them to relax when alone by leaving them something to think about like a stuffed kong. Never return to whining or scratching.
4. Let sleeping dogs lie. A dogs bed is his safe space, give it due respect.

### **Food Manners:**

#### **Food Bowl**

1. Get your dog excited about their dinner but ask them for a sit or wait before you put the bowl down or let them eat.
2. Give them the space and respect you 'de expect while eating, don't take the bowl away or let kids or other dogs interfere.
3. If your dog walks away from its dinner pick up the bowl and don't feed them again until next meal time. But remember you can use discarded dinner as training treats!

### **Begging**

- Begging is just rude. If you don't loom over your dog while they are eating they shouldn't have their head on your lap while you are.
- Dogs naturally wait for others to finish eating to see if there are any scraps left over. But we can still teach them to wait patiently away from our plates or table by ignoring them when we are eating or standing up and backing them out of our personal space repeatedly.

### **Sharing**

Sharing is caring. Don't take toys or treats away from your dog, teach them to share with you by swapping and rewarding your dog for dropping things.

### **Taking Toys:**

- Invite your dog to grab a tugger or toy with you and have a game
- Keep the toy low sweeping it left and right to keep the game friendly and controlled.
- Stop moving the toy, and look the dog kindly in the eye and say "thank you" or "drop" calmly teasing it out of the sides of their mouth.
- When the dog lets go, treat and praise them then give them the toy back.
- Your dog will now have learned its worth sharing with you!

### **Taking Treats:**

- **If you give your dog high value chews, bones or pigs ears let them keep them.**
- Taking these things away repeatedly will encourage the dog to guard. Instead surprise your dog occasionally by approaching while hes chewing and dropping a second tasty thing next to the first!
- Your dog has now learned you're a giver not a taker.

### **Theft & Distraction!**

If your dog has something you want don't chase them. They may even have stolen it just to get your attention. Distract them away from it by getting excited by something else or swap them by putting a treat down before taking the item away.

### **Guests and greetings:**

It's your house!

- Allow dogs access to you, your guests, or your space when they are calm and considerate, praising them beautifully when they manage it.
- If your dog is getting over excited restrict their access using a door or baby gate until they calm down then give them lots of chances to re-enter calmly.

**Door Exercise:**

- When the doorbell goes, say thank you to any barking then use confident body language to 'goal-keep' your dog towards its bed.
- Ask them to sit and wait.
- Go to answer the door and when they get up gently and repeatedly usher them back to a particular spot to sit and wait.
- Repeat this consistently until you can open your front door or invite guests in without them being mobbed by the dog!
- When your dog has waited patiently you can invite them to say hello rather than let them collide into guests. They then naturally start to approach your guests with more respect.
- Breathe and try not to get frustrated, be calm and consistent and you will crack this in one session.

**Attention seeking:**

*It's easy to get frustrated with a nagging dog but often when your dog is trying to get your attention it is asking what to do. We need to teach our dogs that at home we love it when they go to bed or lie down calmly, chewing or playing with their toys. Talk to your dog when they make good decisions and ignore inappropriate attention seeking. Your eye contact is very powerful.*

**Playing:**

Play behaviour has evolved so animals can practise fighting and flirting without injury. Wrestling with your dog will only get them into trouble with other dogs as it teaches bad play etiquette! Encourage your dog to use toys for play not teeth and limbs.

1. Be the one that starts the games.
  - If you see your dog has grabbed a toy to tease you with, turn aside grab your own toy and invite them to play with you, if they refuse ignore them and enjoy your own toy they will quickly want yours instead!
2. Be chased don't chase.
  - Dogs love playing chase but we never want them to know we couldn't catch them if we tried. Always run away from your dog and get them to enjoy catching you.
3. Stop the game before the dog gets bored and keep them wanting more.

**Maintain boundary respect and control:**

After we have introduced these gentle boundaries, use every opportunity to challenge your dog's brain with tasks. Ask for sits or eye contact for doorways, crossing roads, coming in or outside and during play to make sure your dog remembers to be patient and ask you before making decisions.