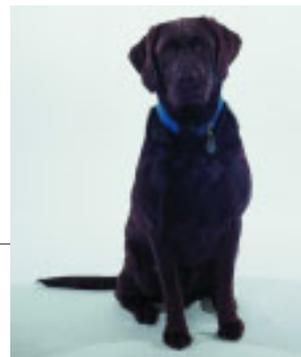


10 situations to avoid if your dog is dominantly aggressive



1 If your dog barks, growls, or ignores you, try to shift its attention to an exercise or a task it knows well. If this doesn't help, walk away from the dog, or sequester it in another room. Banishment and withdrawal of attention are the most potent forms of correction because they remove a dog's ability to control the situation. Dominantly aggressive dogs are usually anxious and rely on interacting with and manipulating people to reassure themselves. Removing these options can help prevent misbehavior.

2 Don't abruptly reach for your dog or its collar or pull the dog's legs. First have the dog sit and stay. Then leash the dog or, preferably, use a Gentle Leader® Head-collar (Premier Pet Products, Richmond, Va.). Head collars allow you to safely control a dog. When fitted correctly and used properly, the head collar allows you to gently but firmly close a dog's mouth if the dog becomes aggressive and keep it closed until the dog calms down. This keeps you safe and stops the dog from becoming more aggressive. If wearing a head collar makes your dog more aggressive, the dog is not ready for one. Instead, use a lasso-type leash to take the dog for walks. Never jerk a collar or leash or use it in a forceful manner.

3 Don't disturb your dog when it's resting, sleeping, or lying in front of a door or on the sofa or bed. Don't step over the dog. Always ask your dog to come to you and then to sit and stay. Don't shove the dog off a sofa or bed or push it away if it paws at you. Always tell your dog your intentions and then ask the dog to come and sit and stay for any attention.

4 If your dog scratches you or jumps on you or others, don't push it down. Instead, fold your arms, and turn away. If the dog then spontaneously sits, praise it.

5 If necessary, place a head collar on your dog for walks. Warn your neighbors that it isn't a muzzle but that your dog is undergoing behavior modification.

6 Don't play aggressively with your dog (slapping or wrestling with it). Play only with toys. Play tug of war with a soft sock toy only on the following conditions: Start the game with your dog sitting, and ask the dog to take the toy. The dog should take the toy only on command and relinquish it when requested. Don't fling the dog around the room on the toy. Finally, you must always win the game: The dog must sit and give

you the toy. If you can't meet these conditions, don't play tug of war with your dog.

7 Don't let your dog sleep on the bed, especially if your dog reacts aggressively when disturbed there. You might even have the dog sleep outside the bedroom. This will minimize the potential for an inadvertent threat when you are sleepy and least able to anticipate problem behavior.

8 If your dog is aggressive when fed, feed it in a separate room with the door closed. If you have children, lock the door. If you allow table scraps, place them in the dog's dish. Don't allow the dog to beg at the table. The dog must sit and wait at all times before approaching its dish.

9 Never physically punish your dog. If it growls or lunges, softly tell it "no," and disrupt the situation. Use a word and tone that the dog associates with a less desirable behavior but not as a threat. People who have yelled at the dog a lot in the past may not be able to shout "no" without provoking the dog. Watch your dog to see what elicits the best response. You can disrupt a bad situation by asking the dog to come into another room and sit or by leaving the dog. If the dog is wearing a head collar, pull the collar shut gently and say "no," and then quickly lead the dog away from the inciting event. If it's necessary to remove the dog from the room or from a situation, wait for the dog to become calm, then practice a few sitting and staying exercises, and emphasize relaxation. If the dog is too reactive, avoid it until it's calm.

10 Warn your friends and neighbors that any aggressive dog is potentially dangerous. When people visit, leave your dog in another room. If you wish to introduce the dog, wait until the gathering has quieted down, and make sure the dog is wearing a head collar. If the dog mingles successfully (sits or rests quietly), praise it. If the dog cannot wear a head collar and walk around quietly, don't allow it to mingle.

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