

Resource Guarding



Resource guarding is when a dog becomes possessive of something specific, such as food, toys, or even people. The canine may growl, lunge and even bite or attack if attempts are made to take the item from them or even getting in proximity to the item. This can be directed at both people and other canines. Resource guarding tends to become progressively worse if ignored and is more common between dogs. A good way to test for resource guarding is to use an access-a-hand or a stick to reach for the dog instead of your own hand to prevent a bite.

If the issue is a specific item, use positive reinforcement by repeatedly replacing the specific item the canine has with something of equal or higher value, then return the specific item back to the canine, therefore, in essence, rewarding the relinquishment of the item possessed.

The same method holds true when dealing with a canine that displays resource guarding toward other dogs. First, practice “trading” items with another dog present, as stated above. Then working within the problem canine’s threshold, begin giving the traded item to the other canine, highly reinforcing the problem canine for the other canine having possession. In the beginning, keep the duration of the possession short with the other canine. Duration can be extended as the dogs threshold grows. When choosing a control dog for these training sessions it is favorable to select a neutral dog. This will make the dog being trained less likely to feel the “need” to protect the item.

If the canine shows signs of resource guarding a person then positively reinforce the proximity of other people. Remember to work within the canine’s threshold. If practiced frequently, eventually place the reward on a schedule of variable reinforcement, the dog will willingly relinquish whatever item it possesses in a belief that it will be getting something better.

Food Bowl Aggressive canines

week one: (7 days)

- Start with a hungry canine by not feeding for 24 hours.
- Hand feed one kibble at a time for every meal
- If the canine displays any inappropriate behavior (growling, curled lip, etc.) remove the food immediately and do not feed until next scheduled feeding session. Do not use any corrective measures.

You will need 7 full days of successful hand feeding sessions before proceeding to week two.

week two: (7 days)

- Place the bowl of food with kibble on your lap and allow the canine to eat as long as they demonstrate appropriate behavior.
- Start out with low level praising.

- Do not force touching too soon, but if the canine can handle it proceed with mild touching. No sudden movements.
- Again, the same rules apply for appropriate / inappropriate behavior. Again, you will need 7 days of successful feeding sessions before proceeding, otherwise start over at week one.

week three: (7 days)

- The food bowl returns to the ground. The canine must allow you to be in and around his space while eating.
- Approach the canine and pet (starting at the rear) while eating.
- Gradually over the week (don't push too fast) continue touching the canine, the bowl, and remove the bowl (always returning it for good behavior).
- The same rules apply for appropriate / inappropriate behavior.

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