

Important things for all dogs:

Exercise

Every dog needs physical exercise to stay behaviorally healthy. You should provide your dog with at least 30 minutes of aerobic exercise EVERY day (broken into two sessions). Some ideas for you to try include: playing fetch with a toy, ball, frisbee or whatever else your dog may chase; playing the recall game (having the dog run back and forth between two people); or throwing a ball or treat up the stairs several times in a row ("doggie stairmaster). Without this outlet your dog has tons of bottled-up energy that may come out as inappropriate behavior. A walk around the block is not adequate exercise for a dog.

Enrichment

Dogs also need mental stimulation to stay healthy and happy. You should provide your dog with enrichment activities everyday. Some ideas include:

1. Feed ALL meals in feeder puzzle devices so that he must work for all his food. You can purchase commercially available feeder devices or use an empty soda bottle or wiffle ball.
2. Hide kibble around the house for your dog to hunt and find - "Find It" games.
3. Scatter kibble in the yard or inside the house for your dog to forage for (Food Scatter)
4. Fill or line the inside of a hollow toy (Kong, sterile bones, etc.) with a soft food substance (peanut butter, cheese wiz, cream cheese, liverwurst, yogurt, canned pumpkin, etc.).

Positive Reinforcement Training

Positive reinforcement training will improve not only your dog's behavior, but also your relationship with him/her. Training sessions should be no longer than 5 minutes at a time to keep your dog from getting bored or frustrated. You can do as many 5-minute sessions in a day as you like, but do at least one. Remember to always sound positive and upbeat. Training should be fun for both you and your dog. If you feel you are getting frustrated, stop the session. ALWAYS end a session on a positive note by having your dog do something he/she knows and reward him/her for it. Everyone in the family should participate in the training, including small children.

NO PUNISHMENT

It is never a good idea to physically punish your dog. This will simply make him/her defensive and afraid of you. You should especially NEVER physically punish a dog that is showing fear or aggression. This **WILL** make the problem worse. Fighting aggression with aggression will always backfire on you. Even strong verbal corrections are sometimes harmful. Your dog will associate your punishment with the person or thing that he is already uncomfortable with. This will not help the problem. A stern "NO" or a Time-out are the most effective forms of punishment.