

Training Plan: Handling for Dogs

Time: Session dependent on dog's behavior; max time for session should be 10 minutes.

Supplies: High-Value Treats, bait bag

Goals: To help dogs become comfortable with handling

Instructions:

Let the dog approach on their own, and always give them space, creating an option for them to move away on their own. Proceed only when the dog appears relaxed, lingers, and takes food. For easily aroused dogs, stop and take a break or exit at any point the dog begins to jump up on or mouth you.

Level 1:

1. Feed the dog treats from your hand 10-15 times in each of the following positions before moving to the next:
 - a. Feed while standing or kneeling in front of the dog
 - b. Feed while standing or kneeling on the right side of the dog
 - c. Feed while standing or kneeling on the left side of the dog

Level 2:

1. Present a hand, and simultaneously offer treats over your hand with the dog's chin hovered over your hand
2. Do this until the dog appears comfortable approaching your hand when it's presented

Level 3:

1. Present a hand, wait for the dog to approach, then offer treats by feeding while the dog's chin makes gentle contact with your hand for 2-5 seconds
 - a. Avoid moving the hand touching the dog's chin to achieve touch, instead move the treats!
 - b. Slowly increase duration and add massaging
2. Do this until the dog appears comfortable with gentle contact with your hand

Level 4:

1. Present a hand and wait for the dog to approach, then gently massage the dog's chin for 1-2 seconds before offering treats by feeding from your opposite hand while massaging for 2-8 seconds
 - a. Slowly increase duration
2. Do this until the dog appears comfortable with your hand approaching and massaging their chin



Level 5:

Repeat all of the above levels on different areas of the body (e.g. chest, shoulder, hip). Change the appearance and position of your hand for other areas of the body (e.g. use a flat open palm for the chin and a flat palm held vertically with a thumb up for the shoulder). Then, use the Collar Grab Behavior Plan.

Reminders:

- If at any point the dog appears uncomfortable or becomes highly aroused move back to an easier level, take a break or stop
- Continue to follow all touching with high value treats