

## Dog-Dog Aggression

Dog to dog aggression can cause problems; small annoyances or big blow outs. Depending on the severity of the condition, you may be able to manage the environment to keep your feisty fido under control, or you may have to take stronger action.

The first step is to determine the problem. You know your dog has a problem with other dogs, but what exactly is the problem. What does your dog do? Does he bark at other dogs, does he pull at the leash, does he go completely crazy? Or does he do them all?

Next, you need to figure out the trigger. All reactions have a trigger, your friendly pooch isn't always going crazy. So you need to know what sets him off. Is it big dogs, small dogs, black dogs, white dogs? Some triggers may be easy to determine, others may take same time and detective work to figure out.

Next step is to determine the acceptable distance from the triggers. Now that you have knowledge of what your dog reacts to and how he reacts, you need to learn the distance that tolerance turns into intolerance. If your dog reacts to big dogs, you need to know that at 50 feet he can look at a big dog and get focused, but he won't erupt until the big dog is 35 feet away, at which point his focus turns into chaos.

Now that you have clear information on what and how your dog reacts, you can start to teach him a better alternative.

There could be innumerable reasons why your dog reacts the way he does, but other than exercising your mind on a puzzle that you will never know the answer to, it really doesn't matter. What does matter, is that right now your dog has some issues, and you want to help him learn other ways of dealing with those issues.

Whatever reason your dog first started reacting to other dogs is irrelevant, but every time he continues to react the behavior is getting stronger. You will need to implement a combination of managing his environment (not putting him in the position to have blowouts), as well as teaching him alternative responses to the triggers.

How long will it take? That depends on many factors; What is your goal? How determined are you to change his behavior? How severe is the reaction? How many triggers does your dog have? How much time are you able to put into retraining? How consistent is the training? How long has your dog been reactive?

There are no easy, quick answers, but if you are prepared to really work at this problem, then you can help your dog learn a different, better alternative to his reactive behavior.