



## Behavior and Training Department Other Resources

### Abandonment Training for Aggression

#### Knotted Leash Walking

The object is to teach the dog that you will NOT back him up if he lunges or attempts to attack another dog. You do this by telling him that you're going to leave him, and that he, also, has the option of leaving.

#### Practicing – Step 1

1. Pick a word that tells the dog you're going to go – “hey,” “bye”, “oops,” “run,” “yuck” or “oh, oh.” Most trainers prefer not to use the word “no” since that has a variety of emotions already attached to it.
2. Use a 6-8 foot leash. Knot the leash about 18 inches to 2 feet from the clasp that goes on the dog. Assuming the dog is on the left, hold the knot with your left hand. With your right hand, hold the loop at the end of the leash. He should be able to walk beside you and about a foot behind or ahead of you *without pulling the leash*.
3. As you walk the dog, watch his head and other body language very carefully. As soon as he loses attention in you – walks a little ahead of you, or to the side, or even looks away – give your signal (see above), and let the *knot go*. *Hold on to the looped end with your right hand, and change directions*. The dog should catch up to you, and when he does, **reinforce heavily – lots of praise, maybe a jackpot of treats**.
4. Do this many times. For it to work, it must be as automatic as you putting your foot on the brake of your car.

#### Practicing – Step 2 (if necessary)

1. If the dog doesn't start watching you pretty carefully, add some drama. Follow the instructions for Step 1,
2. If and when loses attention in you – walks a little ahead of you, or to the side, or even looks away – give your signal (see above), and **throw the leash** at the dog. This shouldn't hurt! It's a tactile signal only, based on the experience that dogs focused on something else do not hear you. As soon as you've thrown the leash, back up quickly and call the dog repeatedly, in an excited manner. **DO NOT STOP BACKING UP UNTIL THE DOG HAS COME TO YOU**. Praise the dog lavishly for coming. You may want to save some extra special treats for this behavior only.

#### Abandonment Training For Real

(to be practiced only with an experienced trainer)

Be very familiar with your dog's precursors to aggression (raised hackles, staring, ears forward, growling, etc). You need to be able to predict exactly when your dog will blow.

As your dog approaches another dog (or the other dog approaches yours), when you see the EARLIEST precursor to attack, say your cue word, throw the leash and back up – this time RUN! Praise when the dog gets to you. You are giving him the alternative of running away, you are telling him YOU are running away, and you are praising him for avoiding the fight.

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