



Classical counterconditioning to stimuli

Initial training: No walks should be taken until these training goals are accomplished.

- 1) Identify your dog's favorite treat or activity. Use only the most favored reinforcer for training.
- 2) Establish the following distance gradients
 - A. when your dog first notices another dog, person or object and does not react
 - B. when your dog first shows the lowest level of aggression/reactivity to the stimulus.
- 3) Fit a Gentle Leader head collar.
- 4) Begin Nothing in life is free and regulate receiving attention- see handouts
- 5) Teach the following commands
 - "**Watch me**" dog calmly looks at you, receives a treat
 - "**Back out**" turn around and walk quickly but calmly in other direction, while leading with a treat and then giving the treat
- 6) No walks until "Watch me" and "Back out" are mastered.

Stage 2: Walking

- 7) Your dog must always wear the Gentle Leader head collar on walks
- 8) Always carry the appropriate high value treats
- 9) When another dog, person or object approaches:
 - At distance A:** command "Watch me" and give reward regardless of your dog's behavior.
 - At distance B:** "Back out" and give reward regardless of your dog's behavior
- 10) If you unexpectedly encounter another dog, person or object close enough to stimulate your dog's reactivity, do an immediate "Back out" with reward and quickly leave the area.
- 11) Do not allow people to pet your dog
- 12) Do not allow your dog to greet other dogs

Goals: As with all behavior modification programs, progress may be gradual. Look for the following changes to assess your dog's progress.

- Gradual decrease of distance B
- Your dog looking to you for food reward when he sees another dog, person or object

Some improvement may occur within one month. Set backs can be common especially if you encounter the stimulus at high levels. Improvement will continue for several months. Even with this program your dog may never be able to greet or be in close contact with other dogs or people, but may be more manageable and controllable on leash walks around other dogs or people.