

NOTICE

Does your pet suffer from travel sickness?



We are looking for a small group of dogs and cats that suffer from travel sickness to include in Australian trials of a new international non-sedating medication for travel sickness in pets. Overseas studies have shown the medication is free of side effects.

The trials in Australia are being conducted by Sydney Animal Behaviour Science. If your pet suffers from travel sickness and you would like to be part of this ground breaking study, please contact 02 9949 8511 to see if your pet is suitable.

We look forward to hearing from you!

Because of their pack nature, multiple dogs in a household will automatically generate a pack culture and encourage pack behaviour between them, which if uncontrolled will escalate into them acting and behaving in a way which they feel is appropriate, rather than in a way which YOU feel is appropriate.

Their interaction with each other will be entirely governed by them, which can lead to leadership challenges, disagreements and fights.

Managing a multi dog household successfully starts with individual management of each dog, which comes about by you developing and maintaining an individual relationship with each dog. Any attempt to manage them or curb inappropriate behaviours as a group can be extremely difficult and in most cases, ineffective.

It is necessary for you to take back control of the 'pack' so that a mutually happy and agreeable life for all can be re-established.

Very simple, things like one on one time with each of them, eg walking them individually on a daily basis (even a quick walk around the block for each), will greatly assist in developing a sound foundation from which to start. Understanding the current relationship between each of your dogs will also help in clearly defining their roles within the family unit. Make sure that you govern decisions and that they are not making any of the major ones. Watch that you are not encouraging them to be competitive with each other over a resource – be it food, a toy or even your affection. Educating each of them in the basics like sit, drop, stay and come, will go a long way in helping manage their impulses. Consistent rules need to be established, implemented and maintained. Change starts and finishes with you.

They will determine the relationship that they have with each other, but you are the one that must determine how they act and behave as a group.

Sit Happens

Tips and Techniques for Training Your Pet

Trudi Thorpe – dogLOGIC

Trudi Thorpe runs a dog behaviour and training company dog-LOGIC based in Sydney. As Trudi says "DOGS, DOGS, DOGS... A childhood obsession that I never grew out of." She devises and implements individual behavioural strategies and obedience techniques based on 18 years of studying dog problems and problem dogs.

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Ask Trudi a question regarding behaviour by emailing behaviour@urbananimal.net

Dear Trudi,

We have three dogs – Jack (6 year-old Jack Russell x foxie), Benson (4 year-old maltese x shih-tzu) and Dom (1 year-old mini poodle). The older two have always got along reasonably well with a few scraps here and there, but nothing major. Dom belonged to our son who recently took a 3-year contract in the UK with work – so we kind of inherited him. He has been here for around about 3 months and although they all seemed to get along fine to start, things have been going progressively down hill of late. I tried to stop things escalating right from the start by telling them 'no' or shooing them away from each other, but the incidence of fighting has increased between all of them to the point that I just don't know what to do anymore.

Robyn

Hi Robyn

You sound like you have your hands full there!

Dogs develop relationships with each other in much the same way as we do. They are social animals that live in a family unit and as such, need a stable pack structure to feel comfortable. They manage to achieve this through ritualised behaviours designed to communicate their wishes to each other in a peaceful but clear way. That means that if one dog wants the others to know that he is in charge at any one time, he will let them know through a look or a body gesture that, to them, is clearly defined but to the untrained human eye may go unnoticed. The other dog may appear accepting and so may roll over or move away. Because their subtle but complex method of communicating is so different to ours, it is very easy for us to misinterpret what it is that they are trying to tell each other or even to decipher which dog is in charge at any one time. What makes things harder is that the dog that is dominant is not necessarily the older or bigger dog. It could just as likely be the smallest or youngest.



Photo by Animax

Dear Trudi,

I am writing to ask some advice on any preventative measures that you may have on avoiding the possibility of food possession in a puppy. We lost our last dog to old age earlier this year and just as he was a darling of a dog by most accounts, he quickly became the hound from hell when it came to dinnertime. He was EXTREMELY food possessive and no one escaped his wrath should they get to close while he was eating – he was frightening. I can't recall when it started, and because he acted like that for as long as I can remember I guess we all just learned lived with it. We now have a new 8 week old puppy of mixed origin called Rowdy and although he is not showing any signs of being food possessive at this stage, there is absolutely no way I could go through with that again.

What do you suggest?

Nicole

Hi Nicole.

As the saying goes, 'prevention is better than cure' and whilst you had a bad experience with your last dog and his food, it's great that you are setting both yourself and your new puppy up for success, right from the start.

The theory behind training your pup against food possession or resource guarding, is having him understand that all interaction between you, your family, him and his food is good.

The key to success is creating a solid foundation right from the start that incorporates trust and positive reinforcement.

It is really important that the whole family gets involved in this exercise, taking turns to feed him this way so that he associates good, with ANYONE that touches his bowl.

Start by dividing each of his daily meals into two equal portions and put the first portion into his bowl. Once he has eaten the first portion, drop a couple of pieces from the second portion into his bowl and wait until he has eaten it. Repeat this until it's all gone. This simple exercise teaches him that when your hand moves toward the bowl, it is to give – not to take away. If after a week or so he is eating happily and without incident, continue to divide his daily meals into two equal portions, and put the first portion of his meal into the bowl as you've been doing. Once he has finished, pick the bowl up, put a few pieces of the second portion into in and replace the bowl on the ground. Wait until he has finished and then pick the bowl up and put another few pieces in, then place it on the ground. Continue this process until he has finished. You are now teaching him that picking up the bowl doesn't mean taking it away, but rather, more food is coming.

After doing this every day for a month or so, and provided there has been no inappropriate reaction from him throughout the course of the month, you can drop it back to every second day, then once a week and so on. I also suggest that you continue to manage this throughout his development from puppy hood to adult and beyond by randomly going over the above process every so often just to reinforce the positive principles of having people around him when he is eating.