

MOVE THE DOG – YIELDING EXERCISES

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With thanks to the late, great LA dog trainer, Dick Russell

Social, pack-type animals establish hierarchy. Your role in your pack is that of leadership. Leaders lead and control with firm but fair directions. This exercise helps establish leadership and status. It also prevents some of the frustrations of trying to work or move around your home or walk in the door with groceries, etc. with a dog in the way.

Use no treats in this exercise. Have your dog on leash. The leash is only a connection. Don't try to guide your dog using the leash. Start in a narrow hallway or walkway (between two cars works). Stand facing your dog. Move quietly and calmly toward your dog with small shuffling-type footsteps. Use a command that you will remember easily and that doesn't sound like any other command words. "Move" or "back" work well. Lean toward the dog. Your body language should be suggesting that you are being assertive. If your dog does not move back, continue to move toward him/her and repeat the chosen command word firmly (no corrections at this stage). If necessary, physically move the dog backwards with your knees and/or feet (do not kick or hit the dog with your knee), but continue forward shuffling your feet in small steps. Your hands should remain neutral. Do not step around the dog and do not allow him to slide past you. It's very important at this stage that your dog "gets it" to move back from you. If you are not physically able to do this exercise, see if someone else can do it for you, but you should be present for it (maybe behind the helper) and use the command word yourself part of the time. This exercise can be done for up to 10 minutes a couple times a day for at least a week or until the dog readily moves back on command. Then it should be practiced in other areas until the dog is reliable. After reliability has been established, it should be practiced once a day or so, then at random intervals for the rest of the dog's life. The dog may, once s/he is reliable on command, move to the side or just get up and out of the way rather than move directly back.

WARNING: *If your dog has bitten or seriously threatened you, do not attempt this exercise. If your dog appears aggressive during this exercise, immediately stop and ask your dog trainer for assistance.*