

Behavior Modification: Getting it **RIGHT!**

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**Common Behavior Modification
Techniques
in Practical Applications**



Avoid Casual Interactions

- The dog is constantly being rewarded (often for unwanted behaviors)
 - This technique is to change the OWNER'S behavior for the dog
- Owners seem very inconsistent and unpredictable
- Creates a calming effect
- Decreases hyperexcitability
- Command-Response-Reward
 - NOT “Nothing-in-life-is free”
 - Different goal



Command - Response - Reward

- To be used anytime the owner wants or needs to interact with the dog
- The owner becomes more consistent in all interactions with the dog
- Avoids an aggressive situation / trigger

Avoid Triggers

- Management tool
 - Keeps the animal from continuing to learn the wrong coping skill and gain more confidence in performing the inappropriate behavior





Ignoring (Extinction)

- Ignore unwanted conditioned behaviors
- Attention getting behaviors
- Can not ignore self reinforcing behaviors
- Some behaviors can not be ignored because they cause the owner discomfort
 - RS but chaining may occur
- Some dogs are easily rewarded



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Taz - Conditioned Hyperexcitability

Practical Counter Conditioning



To Create a Conditioned Stimulus

- Order must be correct
- Occur every time stimulus is presented
 - Novel stimulus
- Decrease competition of other environmental stimuli





R.G.S. (Really Good Stuff!)

- R.G.S. is something very, very special that the dog adores – food, attention, etc.
- Dog does not receive the R.G.S. any other time

Problem: Fear of Large Dogs

- Large dog in the distance (far enough away the hors d'oeuvre does not react)
- Bar Opens - Really Good Stuff (R.G.S) appears
- Large dogs leaves
- Bar Closes - R.G.S. disappears
- Large dog = R.G.S.





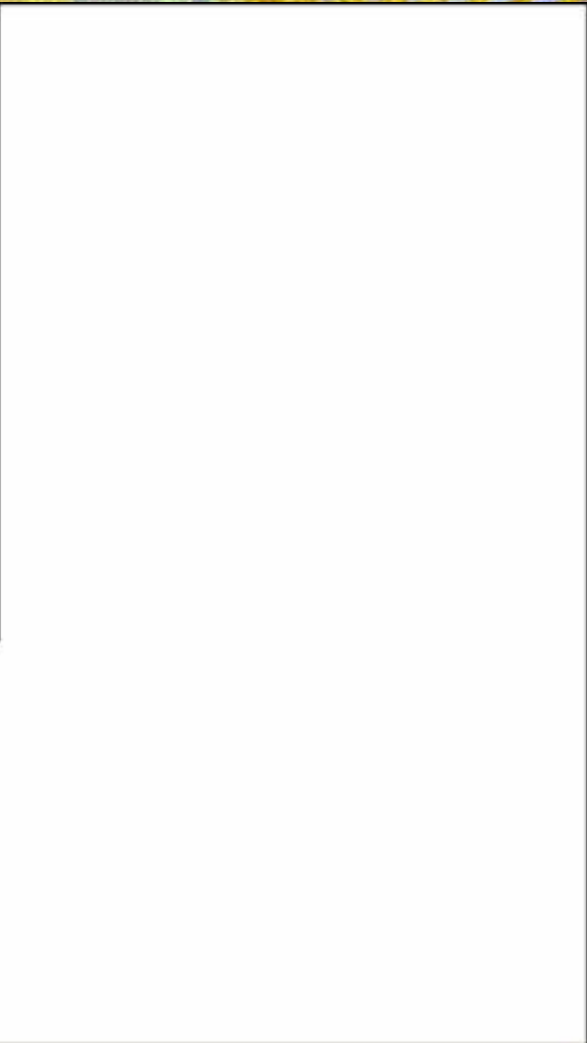
**You CAN NOT increase
(reinforce)
a fear reaction with food.**

Practical Application of CC

What a good
dog, what a
good boy!







PC CER hair dryer

Clicker Training



Response Substitution



How Do I Get the Dog to Stop _____, and Instead _____?

- ...Pulling his foot away... teach him to “shake”
- ...Moving while I brush her... teach “stand-stay”
- ...Running to the back of the run... teach “come”





Response Substitution

- Choose a behavior that won't allow the inappropriate behavior to occur
- Begin training in a quiet environment with no distractions
- Put the behavior on cue
- Begin adding the least distracting stimuli first
- Capitalize on any lack of generalization



Response Substitution

- A Head collar is often necessary to get the dog's attention away from the stimuli
- Do not allow the dog to continue to look or focus at the stimuli
- Be confident
- Be pre-emptive
- Be quick



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No Picture



Generalization

- Dogs don't generalize non-emotionally laden behavior well (training skills)
- They DO generalize high emotion situations
 - Fear of men, noises
- USE the lack of generalization when possible
 - Train sit at the door at the back door instead of the front door





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consult door instructions





RS at the dishwasher



Barnes R5

Systematic Desensitization



To Desensitize Properly You Must Be Able To:

- Identify the stimulus
- Reproduce the stimulus
- Identify a non-stressful starting point
- Control the intensity of the stimulus
- The stimulus does not occur at other times (control exposure to the stimulus)



Determine the Characteristics of the Stimulus That Influence the Animals Response

- Distance
- Loudness / sound
- Speed / movement
- Characteristics of people or object (sex, age, size)



Prioritize the Characteristics

- Place the characteristics that bother the dog the most at the end of the list

1. Distance away from person
2. Size of spider
3. Ugliness
4. Movement



Determine a Non-stressful Starting Point

- Determine what contexts or interactions the animal can tolerate with out a stress reaction
- What would that look like??



Create “Practice” Situations

- Each characteristic should be increased individually, not simultaneously
- As one characteristic is intensified, another characteristic may need to be temporarily lessened
- Stimulus intensities should be increased gradually
- Progression to the next level of intensity should be accomplished without eliciting undesirable behavior
- Clicker training can be a very valuable tool in the desensitization process





Helpful Hints:

- Longer Sessions are Better
- Smaller the Steps the Faster You Will Go
- “Think about what you are about to do and decrease it by 50%”

The Curves



**Unemotional Behaviors
(Training Process)**

**Emotionally Laden Behaviors
(Desensitization Process)**



Implications of the “curve”

- Situations of high fear, anxiety, etc. require much greater investment of time than training/manners issues – slower pace than training issues
- Often little initial visible results
- Greater technical expertise to apply (than training)
- Management is critical

**Implementing systematic desensitization
inconsistently or too rapidly can cause
the problem to worsen.**





ture

desensitization to vacuum




Barnes DS before RS



Barnes DS



DS ear cleaning Hero



Response Substitution



Abandonment Techniques

- Used when it is determined that the behavior has been significantly conditioned by the owner or is in response to the owner's presence
- Utilizes -P
- Should see a response after only a couple of attempts if the technique is going to be effective



Abandonment Technique

- Dog is tied on a short leash to something solid (post, furniture) with the owner standing next to the dog
- Stimulus is presented. The instance a reaction is seen the owners gives a cue (“Leaving”!) and goes out of sight of the dog
- The stimulus stops moving at the same time
- When the dog calms the owner may return and give attention
- The owner watches and rewards any moment where the dog does not show an aggressive reaction



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abandonment home visit