



## Chasing/Running Away

- The dog chases another dog
- The dog chases a child or an adult.
- The dog chases a car.
- The dog chases a bicycle, a jogger, etc.

### Chasing

In their natural habitat, dogs must sometimes chase to survive. The instinct of chasing is deeply ingrained in the dog's subconscious. Though certain dogs were trained to work with herds of animals, all dogs possess this trait to a degree. In the wild, a terrified moving target that is flying away awakens the instinct to chase. A domestic dog with these same strong tendencies will react in a similar fashion, no matter what the moving target is : another dog, a cat, a squirrel, or even a car. A dog unable to spend excess energy will find a way to sublimate it.

Dogs chase either to get rid of an invader on his territory, by pure instinct to chase, or to play. For example, you are outside and you want to take a walk with your dog. He will be obedient until a bicycle passes by and disturbs him; his urge to chase will be stronger than his will to obey your command. Because of unfortunate consequences which can result from a dog that chases and is completely out of control, such as someone (or the dog himself) getting hurt, the behavior must be modified.

## **Running away**

The running away issue must be addressed. As in the case of destruction, a dog that runs away is not necessarily disobedient. He does not act this way to defy your authority. It could very well be that the dog runs away because he is afraid of somebody or something, or that he is just plain anxious. Where these dogs are concerned, the fear must be identified and eliminated. The dog, without necessarily running away, could develop behavior patterns in reaction to these fears, such as barking and wailing, even destruction. No matter why the dog runs away, it is imperative that you not scold him when he returns home. Nothing will be solved in this way, and catching the dog will become more difficult. In order to obtain a precise diagnosis, you must discover why the dog runs away

## **Procedure to counter chasing**

1. When the dog begins to pursue and that you cannot get his attention, give him the VW "HEY!" + SHORT SPRAY. If the dog does not stop, switch to the long spray.
2. Once you have gotten the dog's attention with the device, redirect him with a basic command, while waiting for him to leave his territory once more.
3. If he returns to your side, congratulate him by giving him the "SOUND and GOOD", but withhold the treat. Whenever the dog shows his predatory instincts, it is strongly recommended that you use the command "NAME + COME" + SHORT SPRAY. If recall doesn't work, give the command "NAME + STAY".
4. Each time the dog shows signs of wanting to use his predatory instincts, the behavior must be redirected towards the "COME / STAY" combination of commands.
5. If you interrupted his pursuit with the long spray, nothing more needs to be said or done. Remain neutral, as there is a risk of reinforcing the very behavior you wish to avoid.
6. After the dog has remained 5 minutes without using his predatory instincts, you can practice certain obedience exercises before congratulating him ("SOUND +

GOOD!") and giving him a reward.

7. Practice the exercise when your dog thinks that you are absent. Set your dog free and hide. Make sure that the offending stimulus is well within the dog's sight. As soon as the run runs towards the target, trigger the long spray (without using the VW).

**Here is the procedure which you must follow if you have mastered the 10 basic commands". Before you begin, you must create a pursuit scenario for your dog.**

1. Then, use the "NAME + STAY" command for short distances. Give the command, and congratulate the dog if he stops moving (SR SOUND + GOOD!), then reward him.

2. Combine "NAME + STAY" with the "COME" command; surprise the dog regularly with this combination of commands. If he doesn't react appropriately, use the VW "HEY!" + SHORT SPRAY simultaneously.

3. If the dog doesn't master the command "STAY" from a distance, just use the "COME" command. However, it is more efficient to use the "COME" and "STAY" combination.

Notes:

- \* It is imperative to congratulate the dog if he returns by your side.
- \* For practice, go to a place where the dog is likely not to hear you.
- \* The command "FETCH" is recommended to help your dog expend his excess energy.
- \* Practice desensitisation and counter-conditioning.

In order to determine the cause of his running away, ask yourself the following questions :

- \* What does the dog do when he leaves his territory?
- \* Does he stay around the house?
- \* Does he visit the neighbour's dog?
- \* Does he travel considerable distances?
- \* Does he chase people?
- \* Does he chase animals?
- \* Does he display other behavior? Which one(s)?
- \* Does the running away occur in the master's absence?
- \* Does the dog escape as often when the master is present as when he's absent?
- \* Could the running away have been caused by a change in the family's schedule or habit patterns?
- \* As far as sporadic running away is concerned, could it be caused by fear of a noise or a person?
- \* Does the problem show up in a precise pattern, or is it unpredictable?
- \* How often does the problem occur - once a month? Once a week, or more?
- \* When the dog returns after running away, is he punished for it?
- \* How is he punished? Is he verbally reprimanded?
- \* Is he struck? Do you use other punishment techniques?
- \* Does the dog get any exercise? Do you play with your dog?

## ***Typical causes for running away or chasing***

### 1. Running away

- \* Separation anxiety
- \* Fears and phobias
- \* Sexual drive
- \* Games, investigation, social contact

### 2. Chasing

- \* Territorial protection
- \* Predatory instincts

## **Separation anxiety**

Excessive attachment to the master incites the dog to run away in order to find him. The dog usually attempts to escape within thirty minutes after the master's departure. An exception to the rule occurs when the master is in the yard, or is out getting the mail, and the dog wants to join him. If the dog escapes, whether the master is present or not, the behavior probably does not emanate only from separation anxiety, but rather from other related causes.

A typical case of separation anxiety would have the dog sitting by the door, waiting for his master to return. If the design of the house and yard does not allow for escape, the dog will vent his anxiety by barking, wailing, or by destroying his environment (digging up the fence, for example). Other signs of separation anxiety will show up, like a dog following his master all over the house, overreacting when greeting people, or by panicking when the master is no longer in view. Before a departure, the dog becomes nervous. These dogs are very attached to their masters and will demand more attention, such as being petted and stroked on demand. Furthermore, they become very anxious when interaction with the master is impossible. The dog's anxiety level must be reduced, especially when he is

alone. Please consult the pages in this manual which deal with separation anxiety. Increasing exercise and education time, and modifying your fence will ensure that the dog will have little chance of escaping.

## **Fears and phobias**

Some dogs escape when they are afraid. One of the stimuli which trigger fear is a loud noise, such as thunder, or a firecracker. The dog wants to hide in a safe place to get away from the stimulus. At first, the noise will trigger the escape. If the source of his fear (the noise) occurs on his turf, he could come to think that the yard itself is a bad place, and will come to fear the yard instead of the noise. For many dogs, only a few experiences in a specific area are enough to trigger a generalization effect. In a few extreme cases, the dog will be afraid to go outside even though the family is present; he will go out briefly and will want to go back in right away.

To solve this problem, the fear-causing stimulus must be isolated. This fear will then be diminished by reverting to the desensitisation and counter-conditioning approaches described at the beginning of this chapter. We suggest that you consult a behaviorist veterinarian. You must make sure that the dog cannot escape by reinforcing an existing fence, or building a new one if necessary. You must avoid having the dog come into contact with the unwanted stimulus. If necessary, medication should be given to the dog.

## **Sex drive**

Running away caused by the sex drive is a type of problem found with non-spayed males that roam around, looking to join a female during a period of receptivity. If the dog gets severely scolded for running away because of his sex drive, aggressive behavior could ensue. Types of running away patterns vary from dog to dog. If the dog can sniff a female in the area, he will run away more often. The dog will escape whether the master is there or not. However, if the dog is scolded for escaping, he will then wait for the master to leave to run away. The dog must be prevented from leaving his territory during heat period. To increase the effect, practice the exercise when the dog thinks you are absent, although it is probable that the dog will not be 100% reliable when left alone.

## **Game investigation social contact**

Running away can occur simply because the dog believes that it is more interesting to be outside his own territory. Dogs that are deprived of play, social interaction and exercise are more likely to run away. A dog that is neglected for long periods of time will display this behavior only to change environment. A dog that gets all excited at the sight of another dog walking on the street, that jumps over the fence to join his friends without showing any signs of territorial protection or predatory behavior only wants to play, investigate, and avail himself of new social contacts. Observe the differences between the behavior of your dog inside and outside of his territory. It is not enough to correct your dog when he leaves his territory; you must also make sure that your dog benefits of many periods of play and exercise.

## **Territorial protection**

When dogs see people or other dogs near their territory, they get the urge to pursue because they perceive them as a threat. They adopt the stance of a guard dog and will bark, even growl at passers-by. It is possible that these dogs lack socialization. The urge to "manage" the territory is related to the pursuit of a stimulus - the letter carrier, for example. The problem can occur as much when the master is at home as when he is absent. Obviously, the problem will occur more often when the master is absent, as he is not there to control the dog. The protective behavior must be decreased by desensitising the dog to the stimuli, and by correcting any attempt to chase.

## **Predatory instincts**

Some dogs leave their territory to attack a pedestrian or another animal, such as a cat or a bird. A dog that catches its prey could bite it, kill it, and bring it home. The dog must follow procedure to counter chasing. The urge to chase must be countered by reprogramming his reactions. This behavior is very difficult to modify, as predatory instincts are very strong in dogs. It is dangerous to allow a dog to chase vehicles, people or other animals, since the dog has a tendency to bite the object of his chase. The dog possesses a very strong instinct whether to

defend his territory, direct a herd of sheep, or to follow a moving target. His instincts can sometimes push him to make aggressive moves, such as snapping, growling or biting.

The animal must be prevented from acting this way right from the start. The master must develop the ability to anticipate faulty behavior and recreate problem situations, with the collaboration of "drivers" and "joggers". If said situations are recreated within prepared sessions, the training will be improved by showing the dog that chasing is not acceptable behavior in a human's world.