



Aggression in Dogs Towards Their Human Pack

Dogs are pack animals, and as such, maintain a very delicate Alpha order. This order must be understood and respected by humans when it deals with dog-on-dog behaviors; however, it must be curved when it deals with dog-on-human behaviors. If you understand the Alpha concept, then, it's easy to understand that most conflicts are truly about maintaining dominance over the pack.

If you're reading this article, it's because your consultation with us determined that your dog may be having an "Alpha Struggle" with its human pack. These are typical in dogs that are strong dominant personalities to start with; they will then attempt to take over the humans in their pack. These conditions must be well diagnosed, and then dealt with in the correct way to ensure the behavior systematically changes.

When dealing with these conditions, the conceptual rule is to PROMOTE all the humans in the household, while DEMOTING the dog (but not below the other dogs). Below are some general ideas as to how to systematically proceed in doing both of these tasks effectively.

PROMOTING the Humans

- Obedience: Immediately start by doing a well structured obedience program. Even if the dog has obedience presently, make it faster, stricter, more reliable.
- Provide praise and positive attention with every demonstration of affection; however, be ready for a negative response, and be ready to interrupt the wrong behavior. If you are worried about them hurting you, wear protective clothing. Thick gardening gloves and coats with strong sleeves are great for protecting your arms and hands. Even if they try to stop you from asserting yourself, they will not succeed.
- Praise from above, not at eye level. Remember that Pack Leaders look down at their subordinates. Straddle your dog while you praise.
- Interruption
 - Interruptions should never be painful; it should be consistent, precise, interruptive, and assertive. Using a "STOP" command assertively, while using an interruption tool such as a spray bottle or noise maker. Anything that causes the dog to stop and think will be a good interruption.
 - These interruptions should always be followed by praise to ensure they understand the 'good' from the 'wrong'.
- Bond: Repeat Obedience, and interruption techniques, this will build a bond with your dog. Be the *Alpha Pack* leader. All dogs want to be in the good grace of their leader. Did you act like a leader today?
- Do setup sessions: Repeat conditions that you know would typically yield an assault from the dog, so that you may have an opportunity to interrupt the bad behavior and then praise the good behavior.



DEMOTING the Dog (rock his world)

- Do not allow your dog to sleep on a bed, or even get on it.
- Do not allow your dog to sleep, or even get on couches, chairs, or you. This includes sitting on your feet or lap.
- Never allow your dog to be physically raised to your eye level. He should have to look UP at you. You are the leader?
- If your dog has a favorite location in the house, change it. Don't allow them in that room or location at all.
- Do not allow them access to toys or treats. They are privileges, and you can take them away.
- Set-up a very defined eating schedule and location. No table scraps. Give him 30 minutes to eat, then remove the dish until the next meal (done or not). You giveth, and you taketh away !!!
- Controlled Feedings: Evenly divide their normal meal into 5-10 smaller cups. Place their empty food bowl so you are standing with it between your feet. Then make sure you reach all the way into their bowl as you give them the first small cup of food. Only after they have finished all the food, then do the same procedure with the next cup, and so on until all the food is gone. If at any point the dog walks away, then the meal is over. If at any point they grumble, growl, or try to assault, then the meal is over. Put the remaining food away and they will wait until the next meal time.
- Don't over excite the dog. No need to add this stimulation while conditioning training.
- Be consistent. No mixed messages
- Reward good behavior always.
- Don't lose your temper. It's not their fault you didn't communicate properly. If you lose your temper, they view this as the ultimate pack leader joining the fight; the dominant dog will become more aggressive towards the antagonist in the future since they learn from the experience.

The intent in this procedure is to give the reader a set of guidelines to follow after the consultation visit, and not in lieu of one.

Give this process an ample 2-3 weeks try, and be consistent. Do not deviate from it, even for a minute. Your dog has to understand that there are new rules in the castle, and that you are the King/Queen/Alpha.

When was the last time you were in 100% control of anything? – Smile, you'll like the feeling.