The Happy Dog Training Academy

**Dominance In Dogs: Recognizing Dominant Behaviour**  
  
  
Dogs are known as pack animals whose dominance’s rooted in their territorial instincts. In the wild, this behaviour serves as a key to survival, but when it’s displayed in a domestic environment, it can develop into unwanted behaviours and dangerous aggression. Knowing the signs of dominant behaviour gives dog owners the tools they need to work with their dog or get help through Dog Training Classes that’ll stop the behaviour from progressing.  
  
**Common Signs of Dominant Behaviour in Dogs**  
Dogs show dominance in a variety of ways, often leading to aggressive behaviours that could cause serious injuries to children or other pets. An important sign of dominant behaviour in dogs, involve aggression towards children. Often biting at the heels, of children adults, other pets in an attempt to “herd” them. Any dog owner that notices aggressive behaviour in their pet should seek out Dog Training to correct this behaviour. Our own Dog Training Classes offer training that can deal with aggressive behaviour effectively and in a safe, controlled environment.

**Some other common signs of Dominant behaviour include:**  
Guarding their owner from other dogs or people  
Leash Pulling  
Inappropriately mounting dogs or humans (seen in males and females)  
Stealing attention from other dogs  
Refusing to move off furniture  
Demanding play by putting toys in their owners lap  
Must walk in front of other dogs or owner while on a leash  
Constant licking of owners.  
  
Another important sign of dominant behaviour is the refusal to listen to their owners commands and respond by growling, jumping, barking, nipping, or other inappropriate behaviours. Additionally, they can commonly develop a high level of food and toy aggression, also known as resource guarding. Causing them to growl, bite, or nip at other animals, children, or their owners when they get to close to the items they’re guarding.  
  
**What Causes Dominant Behaviour in Some Dogs**Despite speculation, dominant behaviour is not a normal personality trait in any breed of dog. There are several reasons why a dog displays dominant behaviour, none of which, owners or breeders should consider as “okay” or “normal”. In many cases, breeders and pet owners unknowingly create the behaviour by failing to discipline them when they first show signs of dominant behaviour towards children or other animals. By failing to discipline them, their behaviour gradually escalates.

**Other causes for dominant behaviour include:**  
Lack of socialization with other animals,  
Lack of proper or appropriate training,  
Environmental Factors  
Another important reason dogs display dominant behaviour is in response to an underlying health condition. Underlying health conditions can cause a dog to have hormonal or mood imbalances and poor eyesight or hearing. These conditions can cause a dog to displaying dominant behaviour such as biting, growling, and barking in respond to the pain and irritability these conditions cause.  
  
**What Breed Of Dog is Prone To Dominant Behaviour**  
Dominate behaviour can occur in any breed of dog and it can occur in both males and females, though it’s more common in males. When males take the leadership of a pack. However, if the behaviour occurs in females. In most cases in females the dominant behaviour begins at sexual maturity and for the breeding rights. Breeding right dominant behaviour can quickly become aggressive. In most cases, dominant behaviour occurs when a dog has reached maturity, somewhere between one and three years old. However, it’s not uncommon for dominant behaviour to occur in older dogs or puppies. It’s important to note that dominant behaviour displayed by puppies proves easier to correct then older dogs if the owner applies proper disciplining techniques and gets the puppy in Dog Training Classes.  
  
  
**How to Correct Dominant Behaviour**Treatment for a dog who shows dominant behaviour depends on several factors. Every pet owner should have their dog examined by a veterinarian, to determine if they suffer from any underlying health conditions. The veterinarian will treat any health conditions to see if it improves their overall behaviour. In some cases, by correcting medical issues and combining it with Dog Training Classes, the behaviour’s easier to correct.  
  
For dogs who do not have an underlying health condition, dog obedience training and proper training guidelines for the owners to follow at home, offers an effective solution. We offer Dog Training that not only corrects dominant behaviour, but it helps pet owners’ bond with their pet and learn new techniques to keep the behaviour at bay.

BELOW ARE SOME BEHAVIORS OFTEN FOUND IN DOMINANT DOGS.

* The dog will try to push through a door before you. He will knock you out of the way to get outside first.
* The dog will try to prevent you from petting him on the top of his head. The dog may rase there head.
* The dog will attempt to move you out the way when sitting or lying with you.
* While playing, the dog will growl or bark at you.
* The dog will not release food or toys when you command him to do so.
* When the dog wants something that you have, such as a treat or toy, he will bark or try to snatch at you until you give it to him.
* The dog will jump on the furniture before you have given your permission or may jump on the furniture as you begin to sit.
* The dog will not obey basic commands such as “no”, “sit”, or “get down”.
* Instead of obeying when you give a command, the dog may try to begin to play.
* The dog will mark your personal items, such as clothing or shoes, it may not urinate on them but rub/roll on them.
* The dog will mouth you. Even during play this is a dominant behaviour.

The above list includes some examples of dominant (NOT aggressive) behaviour but is not an exhaustive list. If your dog displays any of the above behaviours, he may be dominant. Again, it’s not necessarily a bad thing, just something that must be managed.

You have to take control back from your dog. He must know that **YOU** are the leader and that he/she is a follower. The techniques you use to accomplish this should never be physical and should not put the dog in a position where he feels the need to become aggressive. The also includes excluding them, with time out of caging.

The first step in taking back control from a dominant dog is basic obedience training. This training is, of course, a good idea for ALL dogs, but is particularly necessary with a dominant dog. In addition to basic obedience classes, below are some tips to help you re-establish your role as leader of the pack. None of these tips should be applied with anger towards your dog. Do everything in a calm, non-confrontational manner.

* Ask about conditioning from a behaviourist one of the important things is to condition a dog to you.
* Recognize one of your dog’s favourite places. This could be his bed or a favourite chair etc. Stand in that place for a couple of minutes many times during the week.
* Do not pet your dominant dog unless he has done something, such as obeying your command, to earn your attention.
* If you play games with your dog, especially a game with a clear winner, such as tug of war, YOU must always be the final winner. You should only play tug of war with certain dogs in general not the guard breeds, Rottweilers, Staffordshire bull terriers, etc.
* Make the dogs food and leave it on the work top, for a few minutes before giving it the dog, establish the food is yours the leaders before it becomes there’s
* Do not allow your dog on furniture without permission. Also, the dog should get off of the furniture on command. If he doesn’t, ask them with a treat, then have them sit before giving the treat, do not use unnecessary roughness.
* If your dog sleeps in your bed, move him to the floor or to a dog bed in your room. Or, move him from the bedroom completely.

Again, **DOMINANCE IS NOT AGGRESSION**. The tips here will only work with a dominant dog, not an aggressive one. If you think that your dog is going to harm you or another person or animal, it’s important to seek professional help right away.

A dog that thinks he is the leader of the pack is not going become too submissive to you in one day. You must be consistent in your training to re-establish your dominance. As long as you are consistent, you will soon be viewed as the leader of the family by your dominant dog. Rather than being a negative thing, this will help your dog to feel more secure as he/she will be crystal clear about where he stands within the family.