

Food Bowl Exercises

Standard Prevention Exercises for All Non-Guarding Dogs and Puppies

Approach dog while eating and add bonus to dish – something much more palatable than his food. Approach from all angles and at different points in meal and get others to do likewise. Hide bonus and add from pocket, pouch or behind your back so it is not “previewed.” If dog okay, remove bowl to add bonus and then give back.

This exercise is also a maintenance spot check for former guarders.

Signs of Guarding

- Accelerated eating
- Cessation of eating/“freezing up”
- Glassy or hard eyes
- Growling
- Lip lifting
- Snapping
- Biting



Rehab Exercise 1

- 1) At mealtime, put down empty food dish
- 2) Approach dog and empty dish and add a few pieces of kibble
- 3) Withdraw and repeat until entire meal fed in this manner
- 4) If dog guards, end meal-time: “too bad”
- 5) Feed 2-3 meals this way
- 6) On 4th meal, gradually begin to reduce the time between approaches and increase the amount of kibble per installment so that overlap develops: dog is eating while you re-fill
- 7) When you have reached the point that you are giving meal in 2-3 installments without any guarding, switch to bonus-addition, as per prevention instructions above (adding bonus while eating and removing bowl to add bonus)

Rehab Exercise 2

- 1) Approach dog while eating to “safety distance” (pre-guarding distance) and flip bonus at bowl (don’t worry about accuracy), repeating several times in a row
- 2) Do this for 2-3 meals
- 3) On 4th meal, decrease distance slightly after first flip
- 4) If successful (no guarding), continue gradually decreasing distance until you can approach bowl and drop bonus in
- 5) Switch to prevention exercises

