



NBN

Survival Guide!



abs^{olute} dogs

NAUGHTY BUT NICE!

A Naughty But Nice (NBN) dog is exactly how it sounds - they are nice, beautiful, loveable dogs underneath but sometimes they make bad choices! These bad choices might be because they are easily **overexcited**, **overaroused**, **reactive**, **frustrated**, **worried**, **scared** or **anxious**! They might make these bad choices because they find it **impossible to be calm**, need to be calmer or maybe have a **high desire to chase, hunt, sniff** or **herd**! Naughty but nice dogs are often termed **aggressive**, **angry**, **overconfident**, **EVIL** - but - you know your dog isn't any of those things really, they just need to be taught to make better choices and be happier about the things in their life! In fact, many of the things that NBN dogs do are often motivated by **FEAR**! You may feel alone, but you aren't! We have been through it, we know you can turn this into a strength and, most importantly, we know it can be **FUN**!

**MY DOG IS AGGRESSIVE, ANGRY, EVIL,
OVERCONFIDENT? NO! FEARFUL!**



EXAMPLES OF **NBN** DOGS AND WHAT THEY MAY DO!

- Overexcitable
- Overaroused
- High chase/prey “drive”
- High “drive” to hunt or sniff
- Can’t be calm
- Totally distracted
- Reactive
- Easily frustrated
- Anxious or a worrier
- A pessimist
- A dog that may growl, bite, lunge, etc.
- A dog that may switch off, find it difficult to learn or continually bark in training
- A dog whose learning may not transition from training to the competition environment
- **WE COULD GO ON AND ON!**

HERE ARE 5 KEY AREAS TO FOCUS ON IN TRAINING, LIVING WITH AND ENJOYING YOUR NBN DOG!

1. LEAD WALKING SKILLS!

Pulling on the lead or leash can be a common source of increasing frustration, excitement/arousal, worry or fear for the Naughty but Nice dog. Teaching loose-lead walking is, therefore, one of the many lead walking skills we develop that are fundamental to surviving and progressing your Naughty but Nice dog! What is loose-lead walking?

Loose-lead walking involves your dog walking on-lead without the lead becoming tight. This means that the dog does not pull and walks at the same pace as you. While loose-lead walking, your dog is free to look where they want



*“Individually, we
are one drop.
Together, we are
an ocean.”*

- Ryunosuke Satoro

and do what they want as long as they maintain the pace you are walking and do so always with a loose-lead.

Further to this, depending on your own preferences, we can add some behaviours to this:

- Offered eye contact
- No sniffing
- Shoulder targeting to your leg
- Default sits on stopping
- Default eye contact when distraction appears
- Etc.

It's crucial that you decide the behaviours you want included in this loose-lead walking behaviour chain for training success. Without clear criteria, we can't effectively reinforce our dogs or ourselves when things are going well!!

TASK: Write down how you want your loose-lead walking to look and the behaviours you want included and let us know!

Why is loose-lead important? Loose-lead walking is one of the most important behaviours you can teach your dog:

- It is a matter of safety when walking near road!
- Pulling on lead can be seriously relationship-damaging!
- Walking nicely on lead ensures you and your dog are not prone to injuries!
- It makes walking way more fun!
- It seriously enhances the relationship you share with your dog!
- It further allows you to take control of distractions and put the value into you!
- It is fundamental for working with reactive dogs effectively!

- It is a great indicator of arousal!
- It keeps your dog level-headed and having fun!

What skills are involved? There are many skills to develop for great loose-lead walking. The best bit is that developing these skills is so much fun and they don't all involve a lead!

- Fitness
- Focus
- Reinforcement strategy
- Premack cue!
- Proximity value!
- Lead value!
- Body awareness and proprioception!
- Calmness!
- Impulse control!
- Motivation!



2. CALMNESS!

"A calm dog is a happy dog!"

The way I see the perfect "dog's life" is to be in a state of default calmness. When in doubt, we want them to choose calmness as you transition from place to place (whether that be in a trial environment, a trip to the park or journey to the vet). When we want motivation, high arousal and the peak learning and

performance head space, we then trigger it! AND we already have that trigger - it's the on-switch cues/behaviours/predictors that I have talked about before! How cool is that!



The key is that our dogs are not only calm but that, when in doubt and no direction/cues are given from us, they default to a calm emotional state and in turn choose behaviours associated with that calm state. I'm sure you can see that the boundary games we have discussed previously are key to this but equally we want calmness to be the default both in and out of the boundary.

How do I get calmness? Well, I'm going to share with you my calmness protocol that has worked on severe behaviour cases (right from completely



generalised anxiety to repetitive behaviours such as tail-chasing and fly catching) through to the top sports dogs and owners that I coach.

CALMNESS PROTOCOL

1) Offer your dog a **medium-value treat** when they are settled and relaxed. If they get up from position after you have walked away, ignore them. If they have stayed settled and relaxed, then return and give them another one.

Do not use a clicker or other excitable marker for this - we find that silence is most effective! Give the treat calmly and deliberately.

Don't be disheartened if your dog does get up or gets excited afterwards, the calm behaviour is what has been reinforced!

In complex, especially distracting or dangerous environments, play this on lead in an easy location to start with and then increase the difficulty.

Make sure to be rewarding your dog when their body is relaxed and they are not focussing on the food. **Don't create a "calmness faker!"**

2) **Ignore** your dog (especially for attention-seeking behaviours), wait for him to settle and relax and call him over for attention. Do not do this too regularly or you risk the dog yoyo-ing between the floor and you!

3) Time the rewards (treat or attention) with **external distractions**. For example, a person walking past the house, a noise outside, a dog barking in the distance, someone cheering in the next agility ring, etc. This will reward your dog for remaining calm in the face of distraction and also change their emotional

response from a negative one of anxiety or increasing arousal to a positive one of calmness (low arousal) with the external distractions.

TOP TIP: Use a reward dispenser (a toy containing treats, e.g. a kong or dried hoof), especially in the face of distraction, as a long-lasting reinforcement! The chewing action will further promote calmness and relaxation. These are especially useful when your full attention can't be on your dog and rewarding calmness. Suitable fillings might include meat or coconut oil!

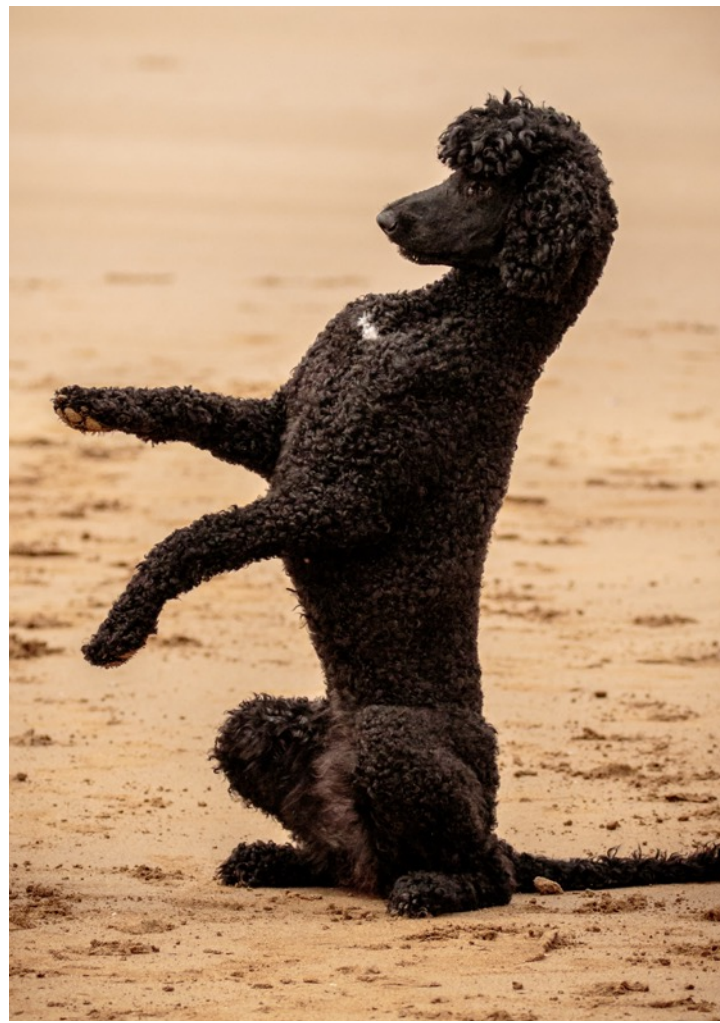
3. **FOCUS!**

Focus, by definition, means to pay particular attention to something. This might not necessarily be the trainer - in fact we might not want it to always be the trainer. Take an agility course, for example, where we want forward focus.

Focus in your dog training makes up the series of behaviours that you consider a “focussed” dog would do. These might include, for example, offering eye contact to you the trainer or an agility obstacle. It's a fluid concept in dog training that we can develop.

Here are some of the things we think constitutes a focussed dog!

- Default eye contact and orientation to the trainer (with distractions)



- Eye contact and orientation to obstacles, dead toys, etc., in very specific contexts where we can use arousal cues and restrains to cue forward focus
- No sniffing - head up from the ground
- Offering of focus behaviours for premack cue
- Offering of focus behaviours as invitation to the trainer for work

SO - how can we develop focus in our every day lives?

Well, we all know that dog training is 24/7! Dogs learn whether we are in a training session or not. So it's really important to get the optimum focus framework to be training in a fluid and progressive way throughout each and every day.

How would this look? Well let's say you see your dog give you a glance when outside in the garden or on a walk you could mark that behaviour and then give an appropriate reinforcer. Equally you could do this for orientation towards you.



This is a really valuable opportunity because you can capture those moments when your dog shows intense focus on you. For example, dogs show increased interest in their owners after returning home from work or after being out the house. You can use this to your advantage by marking and rewarding behaviours that you deem to represent a focussed dog.



Another reason why taking a fluid and progressive approach to training a focus framework is generalisation. It aids generalisation of the framework to everywhere and anywhere because the variety of times of day, environments, and other components of your dog's life in which you are building value into your focus associated behaviours helps them in learning that these behaviours are valuable and valid choices everywhere and anywhere.

Further to this, adopting this 24/7 dog training point of view, you can better transition your dog from cued focus e.g. using their name or asking for specific behaviours, to default behaviours which are uncued, because you capture those moments when your dog offers them naturally.

So just to recap! Reinforcing focus-associated behaviours that are offered throughout the day you can:

- capture moments of exuberant focus when they occur
- promote generalisation to focus everywhere and anywhere
- better transition from cueing focus to offering of focus

4. RELATIONSHIP!

You really can't stop investing in the relationship with your dog! We like to look at relationship as a bank account - positive interactions (like play, training, affection) pay into the account and negative ones withdraw from the account.

What shape is your bank account in and how much can you invest now?





5. **BOUNDARY GAMES!**

A very important aspect of both managing and training Naughty but Nice dogs is boundary games. These are games where your dog has to stay in a designated area until released - this may be a mat, a crate, a tent, a platform - you name it!

Boundary games have numerous benefits:

1. They promote and develop impulse control
2. They are key to working with reactivity
3. They can increase arousal and boost motivation
4. They can decrease arousal and promote calmness (yes they can do both!)
5. They clean up your training sessions.



So what do boundary games look like and what criteria do they involve? To your dog they mean this:

- You go in this area on cue
- You stay in this area and are calm
- You do not move from these until you hear your release cue
- Your release cue means leave the area and interact with me



They seem simple right? But they teach a number of important concepts to our dogs. Here are just a few that playing these simple games can convey:


- When you leave an area, you orient to me and work with me
- You switch off (lower arousal) and then switch back on (high arousal) when I signal



- Your release cue means go interact with something fun (and that fun thing is ME most of the time unless I signal otherwise!)
- The world is not going to enter the mat/crate so there is no need to be worried!

You can see that in training the simple rules of the game to our dogs, we actually convey so many other messages that, with a little help, can generalise to a variety of situations. That's pretty special!!!

This game really is something magical when it comes to arousal. In our experience, it pitches nearly every dog's arousal levels at their optimum point - that sweet spot of peak learning and performance. Furthermore, this game conserves their energy levels so that they can perform and learn to their maximum!

A brown dog with floppy ears is running towards the camera on a sandy beach. It is emerging from under a large, bright purple tarp that is partially unrolled. The background is a dark, solid color.

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