



# How to Socialize Adult Dogs, Aggressive Dogs, & Shy Dogs



# Socialization

## Why is Socialization Important?

# 1

We've all heard that dogs are naturally social creatures. That's why many pet owners are concerned with the way dogs interact with other dogs and other people. Socialization is an important part of healthy development in dogs. If practiced properly, your dog will be noticeably happier and well behaved around other dogs and humans. So when do you start? All sources recommend socializing your dog as a puppy. In their sensitive period (between 3 and 20 weeks) you should begin exposing your puppy to many new things. Get them comfortable being in new places, meeting new people, and playing with other dogs. The more new things you can introduce them to at a young age the better! Introduce them to men and women in uniform, men with big beards, women will long dresses, ducks, small mammals, gadgets and gizmos, and places with lights and sounds. As your puppy ages it becomes harder for them to be accepting of new experiences. Adult dogs are much more skeptical of other dogs, people and noises in unfamiliar circumstances, which leads to more stress in daily life. Socializing an adult dog isn't impossible, but it will be much more difficult and require training and patience.



# Adult Dogs

## Socializing an Adult Dog

# 2

Laura VanArendonk Baugh, CPDT, KPACTP and owner of [Canines In Action, Inc.](#) says that socializing adult dogs requires private training before group training. Often, pet owners recognize bad behavior when their dogs are around other dogs, and immediately want to put them in group training classes. Interaction with other dogs, however, is only one part of socialization. Laura writes:

**“Recently I had a client who did not want to waste time on a foundation lesson, who wanted to have the first lesson in the trigger situation. I explained that this was equivalent to taking a brand-new student driver onto the interstate and then trying to explain gear shifts, turn signals, and left and right pedals—all at 65 mph. It’s essential to have skills under stress; therefore, you have to learn them before you’re under stress.”**

Adult dogs will be much more successful and less stressed in group situations if they learn the basics first. Your dog will know how to react better in stressful situations if he learns what to do before these situations occur. It will also be better for you and your dog when you BOTH know what to do in uncomfortable social situations!



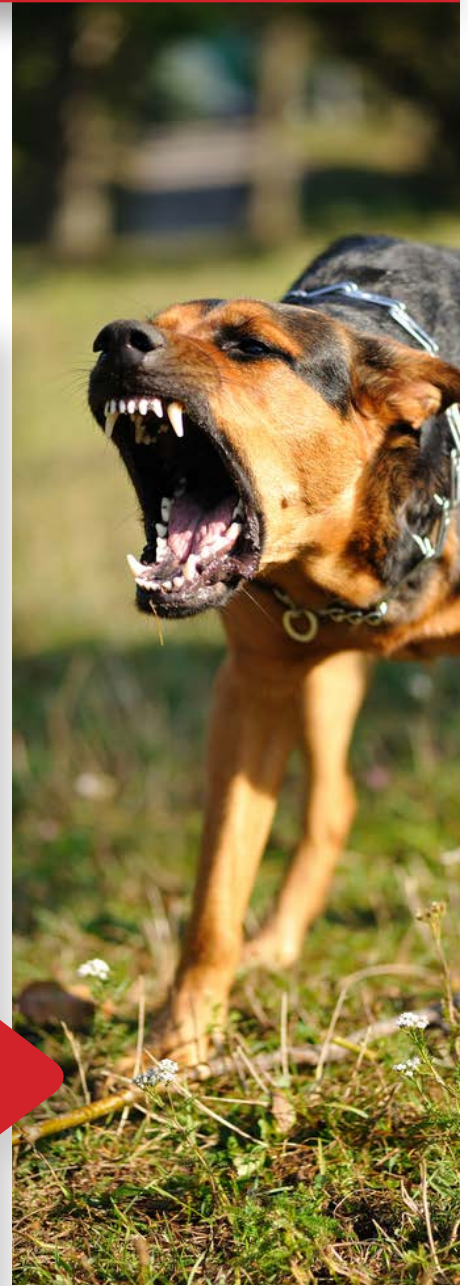


# Aggressive

## Socializing an Aggressive Dog

### 3

A dog that is fearful and anxious around other dogs will often become aggressive and it's not uncommon. Dogs may have triggers for aggression that you didn't know about. First, it is of the utmost importance that dogs with aggressive propensities be given a safe haven or place of escape. In every potential social situation they're confronted with, there should be a place you can easily remove them from a stressful situation. This can be a bed, crate or even the car if the temperature permits and its parked in a safe location. Make sure the dog recognizes his/her designated safe zone and is comfortable in it. Private training classes with a professional are strongly recommended for aggressive dogs. When training them to become more comfortable around other dogs and people it's important to start small, and for them to learn the basics AWAY from stressful situations. Always reward good behavior and speak in a high-pitched voice to let them know they've done well. Conditioning them to associate your voice as familiar and comfortable will be a valuable training asset.



# Shy

## Socializing a Shy Dog

# 4

Shy dogs are often fearful of social situations the same way aggressive dogs are. These emotions both stem from fear. You'll want to make sure your shy dog has a safe haven (he/she will often find one without hesitation). It's okay to keep them separated from other animals and unfamiliar people during training, but not from daily household activities. Here is a bit of useful advice when training shy dogs from savethehounds.org:

**"Our first instinct is to nurture and comfort them, but loving attention, although well-meaning, is the last thing these dogs need. Instead, look for ways to be in their presence without pressuring them to interact."**

Remember that patience is key. They need a comfortable space where they can be in your presence without feeling anxious. Leave out some treats to encourage them to feel more comfortable in places outside of their comfort zone. When they begin responding to treats and engaging you and other members of your household repeat the process in similar situations, and outside of the home. It's important to start small with a shy dog. This means that their first outing with you shouldn't be a stimulus overload. No carnivals, festivals or antique shopping on busy streets! Start with a small gathering of friends and family to let them become acquainted and work up to big gatherings of people.





# Boarding

## Socialization & Boarding

# 5

If you're considering going on holiday or vacation and need to leave your dog behind it is best to know your dog's personality in various social situations so you can let the caretaker's know. Dogs may be professionally trained, have had mixed training between owners or no training at all, but that's okay. Some dogs don't need the training if they've been socialized since day one. We operate a doggy daycare and boarding facility for dogs and have seen many dog personalities and ages come and go. That's how we developed our interview process that is designed to detect your dog's triggers right away so that we can adjust the environment to make it safe for him and other dogs. You can bring your dog in the morning for an interview where we'll take him around the grounds and let him become familiar with his surroundings. During this session, we assess his personality around the other dogs and staff. When you return to pick him up we'll give you the results and take another tour around with you so you can see where he'll sleep, eat and play! We are concerned with creating the most comfortable space that we can for your dog, so we encourage you to bring in his toys, bed and blanket. When we started Pawderosa Ranch we recognized the importance of socialization to overall health and happiness. That's why we decided to create a space that would delight dogs and owners alike in a safe environment while encouraging socialization.

**We love talking about this stuff! Start a conversation with us online today!**

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# Resources:

<http://www.asPCA.org/pet-care/virtual-pet-behavior-ist/dog-behavior/socializing-your-puppy>

<http://www.animalhumanesociety.org/training/library/socializing-adult-dog>

<http://www.wikiHow.com/Socialize-a-Fearful-Aggressive-Dog>

**SavetheHounds.com on shy dogs:**

<http://www.savethehounds.org/shydogs.html>

**Laura VanArendonk Baugh's blog article:**

<http://www.clickertraining.com/node/3953>

