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**asoundbeginningprogram.com**

## **COUNTER CONDITIONING**

Avoidance is the first step over the first few months of treatment of fearful behavior - but since things will happen that may frighten your dog beyond your control, counter conditioning can be used to decrease a fear response in these situations. Each time something unavoidable and scary happens (there is a scary sound), immediately offer small treats of **high value** to your dog. The goal is to gradually decrease the intensity of the fearful response to the stimulus by changing the dog's perception of the situation from one that is scary to one that predicts something pleasant (food).

*Counter conditioning is used to decrease fear responses and change the emotional state of fearful dogs.*

Immediately after something frightening happens, drop or toss **high value treats** to your dog. REMEMBER THE DOG DOES NOT HAVE TO DO ANYTHING for the treats to appear. This is pure associative learning.

## **BOOM = CHICKEN**

Want to help your dog tolerate fireworks?

Follow this EASY advice from Dr Jokela, [Chicagoland Veterinary Behavior Consultants](#)

\*\*\*\*TODAY - Go to the deli and buy a rotisserie chicken.

During the daylight hours prepare the chicken by cutting the meat up into tiny pea size chunks. As you do this in your kitchen, your dogs will take in the wonderful aroma and probably all circle around you with pleading eyes as you work.

\*\*\*\*\*Give your dogs a few tiny teaser pieces (do this separately if there is any food guarding) during the afternoon as you are preparing for the evening. While you are at it, chop up some tiny cheese chunks or other high value treats your dogs love.

\*\*\*\*\*We want the dogs to be "oh-so" anticipating of that scrumptious chicken all afternoon with great longing! We also recommend cutting their dinner meal into a half portion so that hunger and anticipation of that wonderful chicken is really working for you. Continue to give just a few teaser pieces until dusk falls and then suddenly.....a BOOM is heard! Then WOW...You pull out that prepared chicken and hand out a jackpot to everyone.

\*\*\*\*\*Then stop until the next BOOM and then once again that wonderful chicken should start falling from the sky! Every single Boom means more chicken! Soon the dogs are listening in great anticipation for the next BOOM because it now means something wonderful is about to happen.

\*\*\*\*\*You have successfully created a POSITIVE ASSOCIATION and replaced fear and worry with anticipation of reward.

**Of course you want to prepare in other ways like drawing the drapes, closing windows, playing the Sound Beginning CD, and your essential oil Sniff-it collar attachment!**

Here is a video demonstrating the exercise: <https://youtu.be/bl3ubg0G6vY>