

# A SOUND & BEGINNING™

P.O Box 582 | Winfield, IL 60190 | 630-776-8197

asoundbeginningprogram.com

## PUSHY-PUSHY

**Training takes place all the time:** Whether or not you're aware of it, every time you are with your dog, you're either training your dog to behave nicely or you are unintentionally teaching your dog that bad behaviors are ok. For instance; you reward your dog for sitting to greet you when you come home...GOOD DOG! But later in the day he runs to you and you pet him when he excitably jumps on you. So what does he understand?

By paying attention to him when he's being pushy, you're negating your earlier training at the front door. In one instance you're training him to politely ask to be petted; in the second case you're training him that it's ok for him to jump and be pushy.

If you're unaware of what you're doing, you may be spending more time training bad behaviors than good behaviors.

***OK so with that in mind, what do you do if your dog does come to you while you are sitting at the computer and tries to paw at you for attention?***

First, just try standing up, saying nothing, so dog is not reinforced for being pushy\* Remember that eye contact is a reward to your dog, so avoid looking at him when standing up. No need to be angry, just don't reward rude behavior.

Once your dog has four feet on the floor **Begin your substitution routine. (see below)**  
**Do so for at least ONE FULL MINUTE (3-5 minutes is optimal)**

THEN – go to **Plan B** which is:

Either give your dog a stuffed Kong or special chew toy and go back to what you were doing, OR have a play session with your dog.

\*If your dog does not stop being pushy when you stand up, move to a different room and when your dog follows, ask for a sit. When your dog SITS, begin the Substitution Routine - then go to Plan B.

The reasons why your dog "pushed" can be varied, but the procedure to stop that from re-occurring is the same. It's advisable to make sure that before you go back to what you were doing, that you have addressed your dog's needs for attention and exercise BEFORE you have to go into the Substitution Routine & "Plan B".

And if you don't have time to throw the ball, play tug, etc., that is the time you bring out the food-toys such as the stuffed Kong, or one of those treat-dispensing balls!

It's a great way to entertain your dog while you take care of your own needs. It gives your dog a job, and in keeping them occupied they will release some of that energy in a productive manner.

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## What is the Substitution Routine?

It is a string of obedience behaviors that your dog can do reliably. They need to be simple ones that your dog responds to quickly so you can set your dog up for success. Sit – Down -- Watch me – Touch -- Shake, are all examples.

## The Routine:

Interrupt the behavior before it escalates.

Example: Your dog responds quickly when you say SIT.

So if your dog jumped up, simply stand still and ask for a SIT.

THEN you will begin the routine.

## Why use the Substitution Routine and how can you begin teaching it?

You need to be able to reward for a different behavior other than the pushy behavior, and this is why your dog must know and can respond easily to cues you have already taught.

You will reward EVERY time you ask your dog for each behavior.

Example: Your dog reliably can SIT, do a DOWN, and WATCH (eye contact)

Your routine could be to ask dog for a SIT = C/T (click and treat or YES and treat)

Then ask dog for a DOWN = C/T  
WATCH = C/T  
SIT = C/T  
WATCH = C/T

Just use behaviors that are reliable and easy for your dog to respond to. Repeat and rotate them in no specific order, doing so quickly and in rapid succession for one-two full minutes (3-5 minutes is ideal).

When your dog is focused on you, then you can end the session with a release. Say something like “all done”, “free”, to indicate the end of that session. Then try going back to what you were doing. If your dog starts the problem behavior again, repeat this routine again. You are trying to establish this new routine as the choice you want your dog to pick rather than what he is choosing now.

## What if your dog is tugging at your clothing or nipping at trousers?

1. Stop moving.
2. Freeze all body movement and turn away your eyes.  
Once you stop moving, your dog should stop tugging, even if for a split second and at that very moment, quickly cue the SIT. Once your dog SITS, this is when you
3. Do the SUBSTITUTION ROUTINE  
Then follow it up with Plan B.

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## **Summing it up:**

1. Re-direct the undesirable behavior
2. Do “the routine”
3. Repeat as many times as necessary

**NOTE:** IF YOU ARE TIRED OF DOING THE REPETITION, THEN GIVE YOUR DOG SOMETHING TO KEEP HIM BUSY. Make it is something that gives the dog a different focus and allows you to end the session on a positive note.

## **But FIRST - Take time to learn this together.**

Please practice THE ROUTINE 3-5 times at day for 3-5 minutes at a time when your dog is in a relaxed but attentive and focused state. You want your dog to remember the routine and associate that it is fun and highly rewarding. Practice at calm times so that whenever your dog begins to get PUSHY, you will be able to turn off that “reaction” and go into the “action” of the substitution routine.

## **And the PLUS side?**

It's easy to teach and fun for your dog.

By making it positive for both you AND your dog you are building your relationship and strengthening that bond!