

Building confidence with handling is important to allow your dog to feel comfortable with everyday interactions and accept handling from unfamiliar people, such as during a visit to the veterinarian or groomer. A simple classical conditioning exercise helps dogs learn that handling means good things happen!

INSTRUCTIONS

- Step one:** Gently stroke your dog on the chest and side of neck, and then offer a treat immediately.
Repeat over a number of short sessions.
- Step two:** Begin touching your dog's paws and offer a treat. Once your dog is comfortable with you touching his or her paws you can begin to pick up your dog's paw and gently hold for one to two seconds. Offer a treat immediately.
Repeat over a number of short sessions.
- Step three:** Progress to gently running a hand over your dog's ears and muzzle area and offer a treat. As your dog builds confidence you can begin to inspect his ears and mouth.
Repeat over a number of short sessions.
- Step four:** When your dog is comfortable with being touched and handled all over by you, ask a new person to start from scratch with these exercises.
Dogs need to 'generalise' the things we teach them. By asking others to get involved, your dog is more likely to relax when an unfamiliar person, such as a vet or groomer needs to handle them.

TIPS



If your dog displays any signs of stress, for example, panting, trying to move away, rolling onto his back), end your session and commence from a point that your dog feels comfortable next time.

It can be beneficial to have children practice these exercises with your dog under close supervision of an adult.

More questions? Need help?

Email our professional behaviour trainers on
petsquad@dogshome.com

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We rely on public support to run services and programs, including: proactive adoption, foster care, behaviour rehabilitation, low cost desexing and microchipping, and the promotion of better pet ownership through education.