

## STRESS

### **Do Dogs Get Stressed?**

Dogs can get stressed for the same reason's humans get stressed. Dogs get stressed in situations where they feel unable to cope.

When stressed they get more hormones running around and the adrenaline starts pumping. These stress levels together with the activated defense mechanisms are necessary for your dog to survive. It helps them react fast enough and be strong enough to survive danger.

Dogs can show stress in many ways. When stressed, dogs start utilizing "calming signals" to ease the stress.

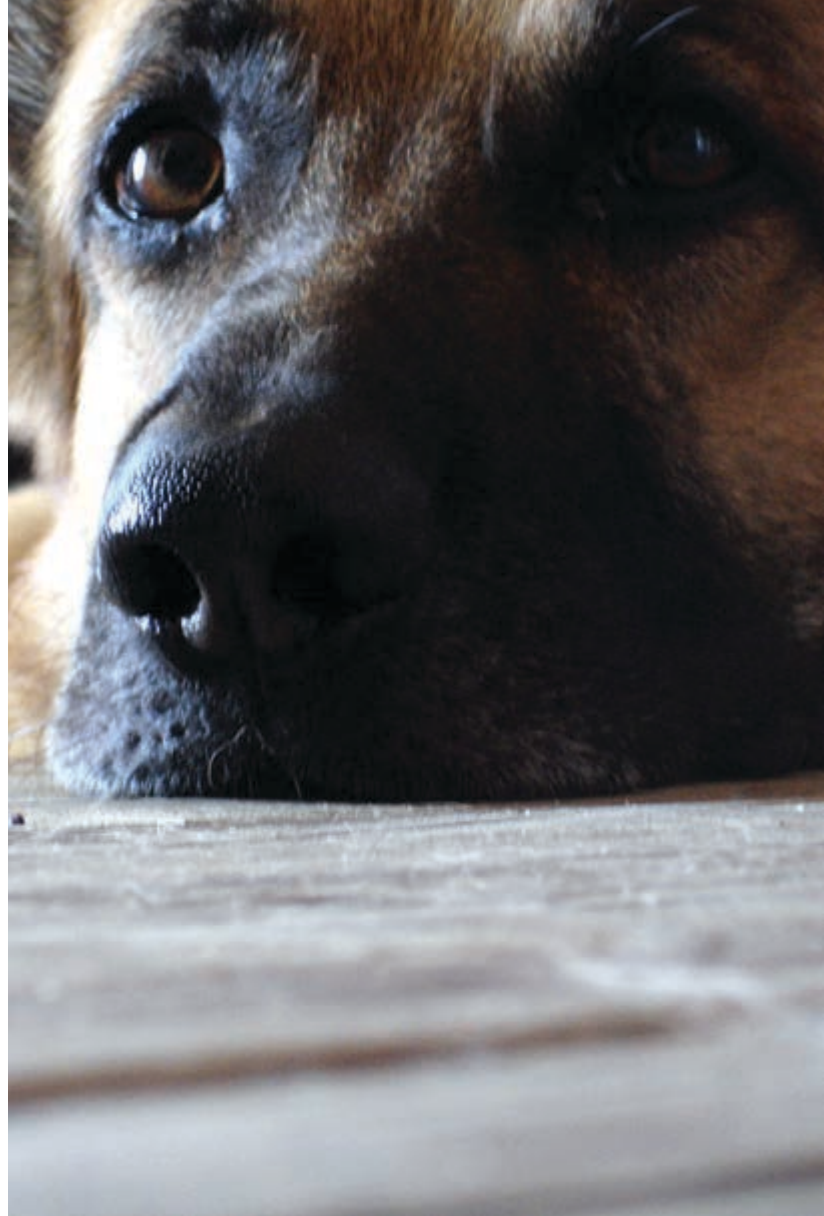
You will usually find the reasons for your dog's stress by looking at yourself and your surroundings. Sometimes it may be helpful to ask someone to help you. This will allow you to see the situation from another point of view.

#### **What Can Make A Dog Stressed?**

- Direct threats by us or other dogs
- Unknown places, noises, odors
- Violence, aggression in his environment
- Pain and illness
- Inadequate diet
- Being alone
- Too little exercise or too much overexcited
- playing with balls or other dogs
- Hunger, thirst
- Sudden changes
- Freezing or being too hot
- Genetic predisposition
- Never being able to relax, always being disturbed

#### **Identifying Stress;**

- Licking or biting himself excessively
- Panting
- Scratching excessively
- Barking, howling, whining
- Shaking as if shaking off water
- Unhealthy looking fur that seems to be hard, breakable, standing on end
- Tense muscles



- Sudden “attack” of dandruff
- Diarrhea
- Looking nervous, hiding behind handler
- Running after his tail
- Losing his appetite
- Learning to identify and use calming signals
- Unable to calm down, restless
- Both mouth and body smelling bad
- Having to eliminate more often than normal
- Allergies, many are really stress scratching
- Behaving aggressively
- Losing concentration – can’t concentrate for more than a very short time
- Refusing to interact with family; previously playful dog not wanting to play

### **What can you do to help reduce stress?**

- Change the environment and routines
- Have the dog do down time in a safe and quiet place
- Find your dog’s balance of exercise he needs
- Avoid putting him in a situation of hunger, thirst, heat or cold
- Make sure he has access to relieve himself when he needs to
- Letting the dog be a part of the pack as much as possible, so he is with you or someone in the family more
- Learning to identify and use calming signals

### **Calming Signals-These are signals that your dog gives off and you can use them as well to help calm him.**

- Your dog turns his head. This can be a swift movement to the side and back, or the head may be held to the side for some time. It may be the whole head or just a tiny movement to the side.
- Your dog does not turn his head, but his eyes look to the side to avert a direct stare.
- Your dog lowers the eye lids and not staring in a threatening way
- Turn to the side or turn your back to the threat
- Freeze, stand, sit or lie still, without moving a muscle
- Play position; going down with front legs in a bowing position. You can do this by resting on your knees and then stretching your arms, straight out in front of you on floor.
- Walking slowly and using slow movements
- If your dog turns his back to you and then sits down or just sits down when approached can be a signal
- Yawning
- Lying down with belly on the ground can be a calming signal
- Sniffing the ground in a swift movement and up again. Or just holding the nose to the ground. This signal is not something we can do
- Going physically between dogs or people is a signal
- Wagging tails; if a dog is crawling towards you, whining and peeing, the wagging tail is a “white flag,” trying to calm you down. Another one we can’t use.
- Smacking their lips
- Licking their lips
- Blinking their eyes
- Lifting their paws
- Making themselves small

Dogs also have threatening signals like staring, approaching a dog by walking straight up to him, stooping or bending over a dog, barking, growling, attacking, showing teeth and more.

Help yourself and your dog by learning calming signals. Use them too.

## Managing Stress

When an individual dog needs assistance or key events trigger stress, the following calming aids and tools are approved for use among dog trainers.

- Lavender Spray- Helps calm dog and owners
- Relocate dog- Place dog in crate away from the source of stress
- Mental Diversions
- Stuff a Kong with treats, soft dog food or peanut butter
- Freeze for good measure
- Take them on a walk
- Give them an interactive treat dispenser
- Have a play session with your dog
- Thundershirt- Placing a tight shirt on you dog creates a calming effect
- White noise-Turn on the radio, TV or background white noise.

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