

Make Rex brave

A science-based and dog-friendly method for a confident pup

By OhMyDog!

PRINCIPLES

WHY BOTHER?

So Rex behaves like a gentleman around horses, kids, joggers, etc.

WHAT IS THE TECHNIQUE?

“Desensitization and counter-conditioning”

Big words, meaning how to show Rex that (potentially) scary situations are:

- 🐾 *Safe: No nasty surprise (loud sound, sudden movement, unwanted cuddle...)*
- 🐾 *Fun: Rex gets a treat every time he puts himself in the situation.*

WHEN TO START?

Ideally, during Rex’s sensitive period (approx. 5 to 12 weeks). Later takes longer.

IN WHAT SITUATIONS?

Every situation you want Rex to get used to, including OhMyDog!’s socialisation checklist (e.g. crowds, veterinarian check-up, stairs, etc.).

Work preventatively. Don’t wait for him to be scared.

CAN’T I PUSH HIM?

Not respecting Rex’s comfort zone might create a life-long aversion.

Some ground rules to reduce this risk:

- 🐾 *Rex decides when to retreat/approach*
- 🐾 *Spot appeasement signals and take Rex away if you see them*
- 🐾 *Try again in easier settings (e.g. smaller crowd, hoover switched off) and work back to real-life in steps.*

TECHNIQUES

We have 2 techniques: Look-at-that and You-can-touch-this

YOU CAN TOUCH THIS

Type of situation: Things Rex can approach.

Example objects: Hoover, shiny floor, umbrella...

What you get: Rex is healthily curious and flexible, not scared of novelty.

Technique:

- 🐾 Place umbrella, fully opened (opened out of dog's sight), on the ground
- 🐾 Walk with Rex towards umbrella, on a loose leash, so Rex controls the distance
- 🐾 Say 'you can touch this'
- 🐾 Touch umbrella with your index finger
- 🐾 Rex touches umbrella (if Rex doesn't want to approach, use 'Look at that')
- 🐾 Say 'good boy'
- 🐾 Give a treat
- 🐾 Walk away from umbrella
- 🐾 Repeat at every potentially incongruous object

LOOK AT THAT

Type of situation: Things dog can't (yet) approach.

Example objects: Horse, loud truck, other dog ...

What you get: Rex looks at you instead of chasing/barking at moving objects

Technique:

- 🐾 Spot a horse/jogger in the distance
- 🐾 Say look at that
- 🐾 Point at the horse/jogger
- 🐾 Rex looks at the horse/jogger
- 🐾 Say 'good boy'
- 🐾 Give a treat
- 🐾 Walk away from horse/jogger
- 🐾 Repeat at gradually smaller distances (but stay in his comfort zone)





YOUR FRIENDLY DOG HERDS IN THE HAGUE

LAST NOTES

- 🐾 Always practice with the dog on-leash or in an enclosed environment.
- 🐾 If you're having trouble getting Rex used to a particular situation, contact us for a quick behaviour therapy session rather than ploughing on.