



pranaDOGS

# Anxious dog exercise

Anxious dogs need us to go slow, but they need so much more than that. They need to learn to trust the world and rebuild their confidence in it. Basic things like a strong routine and low-chaos are keys in helping an anxious dog recover quickly. But they also need us to

- slowly let them experience the world
- slowly expand their world
- be patient while they watch and experience
- protect them from all things crazy, unpredictable or potentially scary
- acknowledge their issues and help them work through them

An anxious dog's world needs to be as predictable as possible. Follow a daily routine where you feed and let them out within the same window of time each day. Go to one or two places over and over again. Keep them away from any crazy sports fans who suddenly yell at the television or radio. By scheduling a basic routine your pup can let their guard down and begin to relax and let their curiosity expand.



White noise helps! When you leave the house, provide your nervous kiddo with some background noise to cover the quiet and occasional scary noise.

One of the best things you can do for your anxious dog is to help them build their confidence. To do that it's important to bring them out to explore the world with you at their side, but be sure to take the time initially to follow a socialization plan. The plan below will slowly acclimate your dog to new places and help them 'get their feet under them' faster than anything else.

## Socialization Plan

first

Working at home with your dog; teach him or her to look at you. Once they understand the cue, ask them to hold the look for longer and longer periods of time

then

Pick a place to bring your nervous dog to; a place that's dog friendly, has large aisles (if inside), has enough people to give them something to look at – but not so many that they're overwhelmed, and isn't too loud or bright (or dark)

**Bring tasty treats - Delicious stuff, like chicken, liver, cheese, hotdogs, etc**

1. Go to the place with your dog for a very short amount of time. If I'm using a store like Home Depot, I'm going to walk the dog inside and to the back of the store, then right back out of again

2. Then let the dog play, relax, chill – whatever they need to do to forget that scary experience! (again if I'm at H.D. I use one of their grassy locations to let the dog chill for a minute). At this point don't treat H.D. like it was scary, instead, ask the dog for a bunch of behaviors and give them a bunch of tasty treats so they forget on their own.
3. Then go back, this time extend the amount of time but try to still protect your pup from anything scary (unpredictable people, noises, etc) my second trip through H.D. is typically 10 min after my first and we go up and down a couple of aisles then go outside again and play in the grass again
4. The third visit is either the same day or within the following 3 days (can't wait too long or you have to start all over from the beginning)
- 5.

**Goal - your pup comfortably accompanies you to places with more and more activity, chaos and noise. Note: you know they're comfortable b/c they eat treats and don't display any distress signals (flicking tongue, ears pulled back, stiff body, etc)**

**NOTES:**

You always have distance...get it whenever your pup is getting anxious/nervous/stressed

How does your dog show stress? All dogs are different, some lick their lips, others take a step back or pull their ears back, some will freeze, most will drop their tails – the key is to know your dog and their clues and to acknowledge and react accordingly

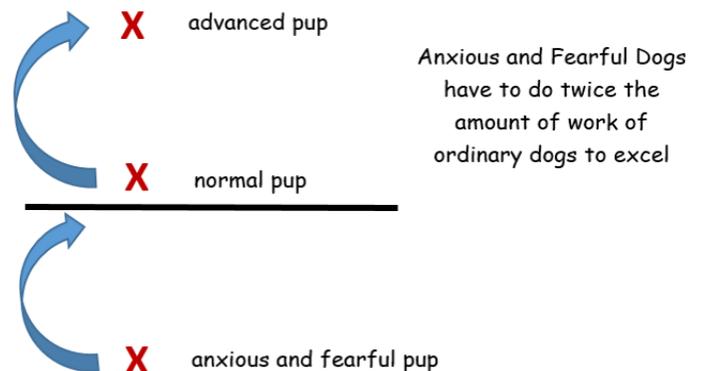
**Frequency = Familiarity**

If your dog won't take a delicious treat – they're too anxious – get some distance

If we're asked to learn something new....let's say a new printer. If we have to use the printer every day for a week, we'll figure it out pretty quickly. But if we only use the printer once a month, chances are we'll be asking for help every time. The same is true for our pups – if we go to one store or place over and over again until they're comfortable, they'll get comfortable much quicker than if you go to a different store/location each time.

**How long will it take?**

The answer, it depends. Some dogs need 20 repetitions while others need 200; the amount of trauma your dog suffered, the amount of time they had to work through things on their own, their personality, confidence, etc all will determine how long it will take.



Take the time to work your anxious pup through their fears and show them that you have their back by paying attention to their cues and the environment and reacting accordingly