

## Balance Unleashed Dogs

### Reactivity

Do you walk on the sidewalk and see dogs on the other side of the road barking or posturing? Do you walk down the road and your dog starts lunging and pulling like their butt is on fire?

These are signs of reactivity. Reactivity can stem from fear, extra energy and previous run-ins with other dogs or wildlife.

To avoid reactivity in puppies your best defense is to do lots of environmental socialization while they are little. The best time to socialize them is when they haven't had all of their immunizations. How do you socialize them then you ask? Take them everywhere you can and be their protector. As long as they are off the ground and don't meet any other dogs nose to end they will be fine.

Companies now offer backpacks, front packs, slings and other items for you to place puppies in to keep them safe while they socialize with the world around them. Socialization in the community so they hear sirens, see construction and smell different scents are all very good for puppies to become strong and resilient to prepare for the world around them.

Doing all this socialization during fear periods can be tricky and you must learn to read your puppy's body language. If they cower or hide, leave the area knowing you need to return another day to work them through the fear. Pushing them that day may cause more damage than anything and something we see as so small can trigger the reactivity you don't want to see.

Socialization is also important for a dog of any age. Whether you've had the dog since it was a puppy or you've rescued a dog that is reactive, socialization is important and can help with the rehabilitation. There are many exercises and tasks you can do with your dog to help lessen their reactivity. If you need help with reactivity in your dog, contact me, I'm here to help.

