

BAT for Reactivity: Aggression, Frustration, and Fear

STOP! Call a certified trainer to help you modify this behavior!

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Basic Steps for Problem Behaviors with BAT

1. **Analyze** to discover the functional reward of the problem behavior.
2. **Expose** to a subtle version of the trigger. Don't go so close or make it so challenging that the dog does the problem behavior, including panic or aggression. Make it obvious what the dog should do, but not so easy that he's not making a choice at all. Breathing should be fairly calm.
3. **Wait** for good choices (ex. look at trigger, then look away or stop pulling on leash or...). If distress increases, abort the trial rather than letting the dog flounder.
4. **Mark** with a word or clicker.
5. Give access to a **Functional Reward** – fulfill the need that triggered the behavior you are trying to change.
6. Optional **Bonus Reward**, like food or a toy, esp. on walks - distracts from trigger.

Steps below assume that the functional reward is an increased distance to the trigger, but you can use a 1-2 foot approach instead for frustrated greeters.



Walks: Stage 1. If waiting for good behavior won't work yet in the real world – the trigger is too close and the dog would be too stressed if you wait there, here's an even easier version. Start off just by clicking the dog for noticing the trigger. This is basically using classical conditioning with a BAT flavor:

1. Dog notices trigger
2. Click
3. Walk/jog away
4. Treat with food or a toy

Walks: Stage 2. When you can't control the trigger intensity (people or other dogs get too close, etc.), bring treats, so you can do the Bonus Reward version of BAT. The order of events is:

1. Dog notices trigger
2. Wait for alternate behavior (if possible), like looking away from the trigger, calm bravery, ground sniffing, shake-off, etc. Keep leash loose, and breathe! ** If the dog starts breathing faster or looks like they're going to bark, say her name and walk her further away, so she can calm down.
3. Click
4. Walk/jog away
5. Treat with food or a toy

Note that you walk away before treating, so the dog notices the functional reward. As time goes on, shift into letting the dog engage more with their environment. Begin to do the set-up version of BAT out in the real world whenever possible, using only functional rewards, not treats.



Set-ups and Stage 3 Walks. Set-ups are ideal. Do them right away. Start with an easy version of the trigger and gradually turn up the heat. That usually means starting really far away from the trigger. Take breaks whenever the dog, you, or the helpers need one.

1. Walk toward trigger (or trigger approaches) only until dog just barely begins to pay attention to the trigger. Breathing should be fairly calm.
2. Wait for alternate behavior, often 'disengagement' like looking away.
3. Say "Yes" right as the dog makes a good choice.
4. Walk/jog away