

Catch a Glance, A tool for teaching passive observation skills

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For some dogs a car, cyclist, or another dog passing by is not a big deal. For many dogs however such stimulus trigger excitement, fear or negative behaviors like lunging and barking.

The goal of Catch A Glance is to train a calm passive response to stimuli such as a glance. Other examples of passive responses include calm observation, glancing, twitching an ear to listen, tail wagging, etc. With training and practice it is possible for a passive response to become your dog's automatic response to stimuli.

Newton's third law: For every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction.

This law applies here. Trying to stop or correct an excited or aroused reaction to a stimulus typically creates a stronger reaction. The dog may even learn to associate the situation or stimulus with correction and thus become more anxious, more aroused or even trigger aggression.

Beginning Catch A Glance

- Set up your training with as much control of the environment as possible.
- At all times work within your dogs learning threshold. This means your dog must be relaxed, able to respond to you and eat treats. If your dog becomes aroused change the training situation. Example: The dog begins to exhibit arousal when the distraction dog walks past at a distance of 10 feet. Change the distance to 12 feet. If the dog remains relaxed begin training at this distance.
- Perform this exercise with the dog stationary and the stimulus stationary or moving parallel to your dog. Stimulus moving towards a dog or a dog moving toward a stimulus typically increases the challenge.

The Steps

1. Observe the dog carefully as the stimulus/distraction is introduced.
 - Watch for the first indication that your dog is aware the stimulus/distraction exists with a passive response. Examples of passive responses include: Glancing, twitching an ear, tail wagging, etc. The dog should remain stationary.
 - **It is important that the dog has not made any motion towards or away from the stimulus.**
2. Mark (with clicker or trained verbal marker) and reward this passive response.
 - Be sure to deliver the reward as your dog looks towards you in response to your marker. If your dog does not look to you increase the distance of the stimulus until the dog offers this response.
 - Keep observing closely as dogs often repeat their passive responses quickly. A mark and reward should be given for every passive response.
5. Repeat several times.
6. Test the behavior by delaying your marker. Watch for the dog to offer a bit or duration of the passive response. This might be only 3 seconds. Mark and reward your dog before she has a chance to move.
7. With repetition the dog is likely to remain relaxed and passively observe the stimulus for extended periods or begin to ignore it. Adjust your marker timing to this increase in duration.
8. Once the dog is repeatedly offering a passive response the distance may be reduced.
 - **Always work at a distance that does not trigger arousal and/or movement towards or away from the stimulus.**
9. Practice this exercise in a variety of settings with a variety of distractions.
10. Once this game is fully trained praise may be offered as reward with treats randomly used as a reward to maintain the behavior.

Items needed:

- ✓ Treats
- ✓ Clicker (or use a trained marker word)

When to use:

- ✓ During class -When other dogs pass by or are acting excited.
- ✓ While walking – For pt
- ✓ assing pedestrians, dogs, cars, cyclists, a yard with a dog, etc.
- ✓ While in the car – while other dogs walk by, cars pass etc. (while parked or with someone else driving).