

Attention seeking

This problem is probably extremely common and is learned quickly by most dogs and taught quite innocently by most pet owners. Taking a few moments to see things from your pet's perspective gives a clear understanding of why this occurs.

It is quite natural for people to stroke their pet as it approaches them. As the dog puts their head gently onto your lap it is very hard to resist displaying your appreciation for them loving you. But inadvertently the dog is learning, that they are able to train you really quite well. After all it is in the dogs best interest to see what effect their advances will have on you, because after all you are their provider. Whilst sat chatting to friends, talking on the phone or whilst watching TV many people will sit and stroke the dog and they are of course quite contented. But when all of a sudden the telephone rings, or something on TV catches your attention, or whilst you are trying eat your evening meal in peace and everything suddenly changes. Your dog will try every strategy he knows to get your attention, barking, stealing items around the house, scratching, chewing and in some cases relieving indoors. This is because you are not providing him with the attention he wants and he is becoming frustrated. This has happened because he has not been allowed to learn to cope with periods of not having attention.

To resolve this scenario will require a change in the way that all members of the family live with the dog. Everyone should adopt a simple and straightforward rule. It is important that your dog's training is consistent so he does not become confused. Whilst at home with the dog, any attempt to seek attention should be met with an opposite consequence. These should include ignoring the dog, leaving the room temporarily, folding your arms and turning away without speaking. It is important not to speak to the dog or touch him as this is still attention and is just what we are trying to avoid. As your dog walks away, lies down or at anytime he is not asking for attention, he is called to you to receive as much affection and attention as you want to give him. You have placed the control of attention on your terms and something that is dependant upon you deciding to offer it. There should be plenty of activity toys for your dog to play with on his own, but there should also be at least one period of his daily routine which is a designated play time for your dog, when he receives 100% of your attention. Special toys can be reserved for tug-o-war sessions or a special ball for throw and catch, so he learns that he still receives attention and all his needs for comfort and interaction are met. Ensure your dog receives sufficient daily exercise, which also leads to a contented dog.