



Understanding Dog Tolerance Levels

A Common Trait that is Fluid and Manageable

Dog-to-dog aggression is not a "one size fits all" behavior. There are four common levels of dog-tolerance that have come to be recognized in a variety of dogs. Dog aggression is something any breed of dog can show and it is completely manageable unless you deny it, misunderstand it or exploit it. Dog tolerance levels are fluid, meaning your dog can move between the different levels. Dog Social dogs can become less social just as easily as the Dog Aggressive dogs can become more tolerant. Your job as a responsible dog owner is to be aware of situations that your dog reacts to by reading their body language and understanding their individual limits. At the same time, working to improve the tolerance of each dog through *appropriate* training and socialization.

4 Common Levels of Dog Tolerance

1. Dog Social



A dog that truly enjoys the company of other dogs. Very easy going; Forgives even the rudest dog manners. Would love to play with everybody and anybody. Dog-social dogs include most puppies and a percentage of socially mature (14 months and older) adults. May have inappropriate play behaviors and may not understand dog body language which could easily get them in trouble. This is the "happy go-lucky" dog.

2. Dog Tolerant



Typically non-reactive on leash and either indifferent (does not seek out play) or friendly to other dogs. Is well socialized and shows relaxed, easy body language in the presence of new dogs. May not 'love' dogs that he doesn't know, but has decent tolerance for rude behavior (a long fuse). Enjoys known dog friends and, in general, succeeds with housemate dogs.

3. Dog Selective



Has dog friends but is more selective. May dislike certain 'types' of dogs and/or is easily offended by rude dog manners. Can be described as the "fun police." Likes to dictate the rules during dog-play. Can succeed with housemate dogs with supervision. This type of dog will need to always be supervised when around other dogs. More of a co-habitater than a player, but can be enticed to play with the right partner.

4. Dog Aggressive



Has a very limited number of dog friends; sometimes, no dog friends. May be opportunistically leash reactive with a weak handler and/or no training. May have a short fuse during play, even with dogs that it knows. Needs heavy supervision during play and a good leader when out on leash. Many live successfully with housemate dogs (usually opposite sex) with proper supervision.