YCA Reactivity Blueprint

Does it feel like your reactive dogs best days are slipping away while you're bombarded with endless, conflicting advice? Are you frustrated because every step forward feels like two steps back? Well, you're not alone, and I'm here to change that!

I'm going to unveil a proven, evidence-based blueprint that has transformed the lives of thousands of dogs, so you can finally say goodbye to the confusion and hello to real progress.

Just a few weeks ago, I shared a video about my dog Ranger and the reactivity challenges he faced. You might have noticed how he now remains completely neutral around other dogs—even when barked at or pestered by puppies! Picture this: he sat calmly in the gloomy Yorkshire weather during one of my reactivity workshops, unfazed by all the barking around him. That's the power of the system I'm about to share with you. After my last

video, I received countless messages asking, 'Is it too late for my dog? 'Well, I'm here to tell you, it's absolutely not too late, and I'm going to give you every answer you need to address your dog's reactivity. But let's be clear: while I can't guarantee every dog

will have a complete turnaround like Ranger, I can assure you that every case can be improved—often more than you might think. The key lies in having a solid plan, and I'm ready to provide that plan for free. So, let's

dive in and get your dog on the path to success!

Step 1

Damage mitigation refers to strategies and practices aimed at reducing the likelihood of a dog experiencing triggers that could provoke a reactive response. It involves proactively managing the dog's environment and experiences to prevent situations that might reinforce or escalate their reactivity. Here are the main components:

Limiting Exposure to Triggers: By avoiding situations where the dog might encounter their triggers (like other dogs, loud noises, etc.), you decrease the chances of them reacting negatively. For example, changing walking routes to steer clear of crowded areas can help.

Creating Safe Spaces: Setting up a controlled environment, such as using a crate or a separate room when unsupervised, allows the dog to feel secure without the risk of reacting to stimuli outside.

Utilising Equipment: Using tools like leads, muzzles, or harnesses can help manage the dog's behavior in challenging situations. For instance, using a lead indoors can prevent the dog from reacting to outside distractions.

Gradual Exposure: Introducing the dog to triggers in a controlled manner and at a distance where they feel comfortable allows them to learn without becoming overwhelmed. This could involve starting in a quiet area and slowly increasing exposure as their confidence builds.

Temporary Measures: Damage mitigation is not a permanent solution but a necessary step while the dog is developing the skills and motivation to cope with triggers. It helps maintain a sense of calm and prevents setbacks during the training process.

Overall, damage mitigation focuses on creating an environment conducive to learning and improving behaviour, laying the groundwork for successful training outcomes.

Step 2 Build Motivation:

Choose High-Quality Kibble: Select a nutritious food that your dog loves to increase

Remove All Treats Initially: This helps to focus your dog on their regular food during training, making it more rewarding.

Weigh Your Dog's Food: This ensures that your dog is getting the right amount and

Feed at Set Times (Twice a Day): Establish a consistent feeding schedule to create anticipation for meals and increase motivation during training.

Start with Bowl Feeding: When your dog eats each meal without hesitation, you can advance to more challenging feeding methods:

Move to Slow Feeder: This slows down their eating and makes them work for their food.

Slow Feeder in a Cardboard Box (Laying Down): Adds a layer of complexity and engagement for your dog.

Hand Feeding Indoors

Then Outdoors: Gradually increase distractions while hand feeding to strengthen your dog's focus on you.

3. Identify Training Locations

Create a List of 10 Locations:

Start with environments where your dog can easily focus on you (e.g., your garden).

Gradually progress to more distracting locations (e.g., a local park).
Ensure your list includes a range from low to high distractions to allow for gradual exposure.

4. Build Your Behavioural Toolbox

Focus on The Big 4 Skills:

Loose Lead Walking: Train your dog to walk beside you without pulling. This keeps them in low-arousal state, reducing the likelihood of a reaction to distractions. Use a collar and lead to practice walking in calm environments before moving to more stimulating areas.

Place Command:

Teach your dog to go to a designated spot (like a mat or bed) and stay there. This provides a specific task to help them focus when stationary.
Use this command to build impulse control over time, making it easier for your dog to manage their reactions.

Recall:
Focus on ensuring your dog returns to you when called. This is vital for their safety and allows for enjoyable off-lead time.

Practice recall in quiet environments first, gradually increasing distractions as your dog becomes more reliable.

Disengagement:
Train your dog to turn away from distractions (triggers). This skill is crucial for managing reactivity.
Use rewards to encourage your dog to look away from triggers and back at you.

5. Incorporate Play

Play Before Training:

Engage in interactive play sessions to release pent-up energy. Include activities that involve:

Pulling: Tug-of-war games can be effective.

Chasing: Use a toy to encourage your dog to chase it.

Contests: Make games competitive but ensure they are fun and controlled.

Finish the Game Just Before Your Dog Gets Bored: This keeps your dog engaged and eager for more.

GET THEM ADDICTED
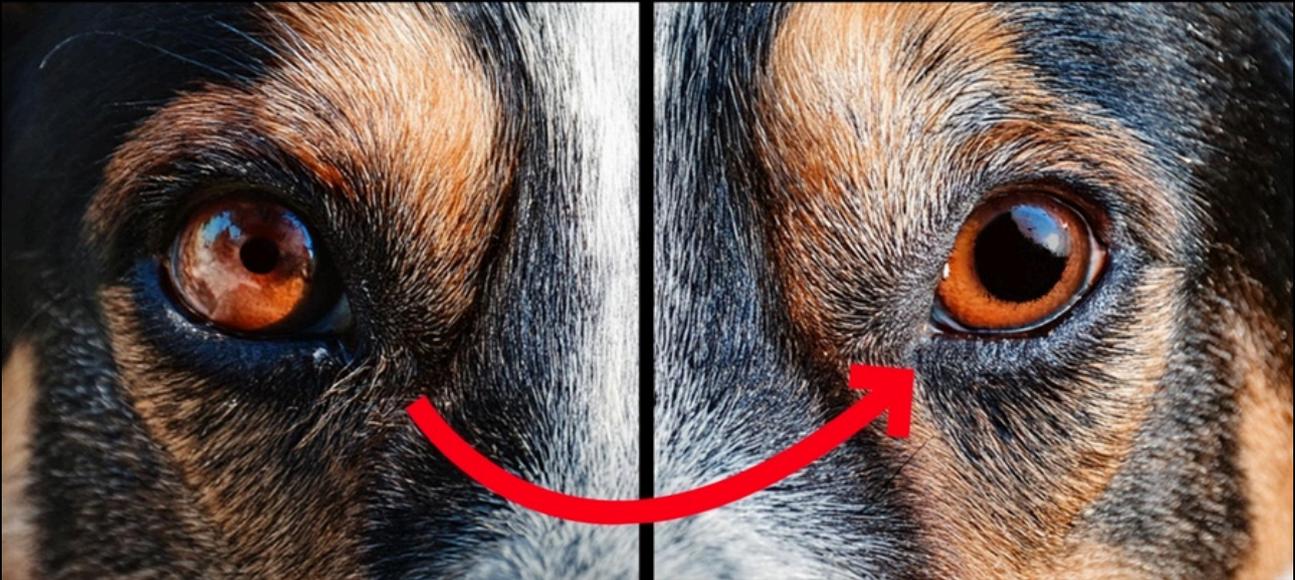
6. Real-World Application Follow a Training Format: **30 Minutes Before Walk**: Schedule a

play session to tire your dog out a bit. **Preparation**: Gather all necessary training gear (leash,

treats, etc.) beforehand. **Calm Down Period**: Allow your dog some time to settle down

before heading out, which
helps them focus better.

Training Session:
Start with disengagement exercises to get their attention on you.
Spend 5-10 minutes on each of The Big 4 skills during your walk.

Gradual Progression: After a successful training session, gradually increase the difficulty
of your next session (e.g., introducing more distractions).

7. Incremental progression

Aim for Incremental Improvements:

Progress is often slow; think of it like training for a marathon. Don't rush into challenging situations; gradually build your dog's skills and confidence.
Celebrate small victories and remain patient as your dog learns.

Final Note

By following this detailed blueprint, you can effectively manage your dog's reactivity, making the process smoother and more successful. If you'd like to see these methods in action, consider subscribing for more tips and practical demonstrations!

Watch this video (if you haven't already) and it will provide step by step guidance on a lot of the steps above: