

Why Dogs Bark and Lunge When On Leash

Does your dog whine, bark, growl or lunge when he's on leash and sees another dog? This common, if unpleasant, behavioral problem in dogs is likely caused by barrier frustration. By nature, dogs are strongly motivated to greet one another. While on leash, they can't always do so.

Barrier frustration is intense frustration on the dog's part at their inability to express normal canine body language and/or interact with another dog. In this case, the restrictive barrier is the leash, but in other instances it might be a window, a fence, or a gate.

On-Leash Aggression vs. Off-Leash Aggression

Although aggression when a dog is on-leash can look vicious, it disappears when the leash comes off and the dog meets other off-leash dogs. If your dog shows aggression toward other dogs when meeting off-leash, that is a serious problem. This may require professional behavioral training

What You Can Do About On-Leash Aggression

Stay calm: Use a happy tone when approaching on-leash dogs, but remain alert. Be prepared to move away quickly if necessary. You could need to move behind a nearby parked car or to cross the street, if you need to avoid the other dog.

Use a humane training collar: If needed, a no-pull front buckle harness or a head halter can provide additional control, without hurting your dog. Choke, pinch or shock collars are designed to punish your dog by causing discomfort or pain. Your dog may stop barking because of the pain, but this will not diminish their frustration. In the long run, causing pain to your dog can create greater aggression.