



RSPCA School for Dogs Information Sheet

Getting used to wheels

Often dogs that are not introduced to wheels of any kind at an early age will be quite worried or fearful of:

- Wheelie bins
- Lawnmowers
- Vacuum cleaners
- Push bikes, scooters and skate boards etc

Their fear may display in different way depending on each individual dog. Some dogs may choose to run away and hide while others see the best defence in 'attacking' the wheels as soon as they are on the move.

Other dogs may simply enjoy the 'chase' of anything that moves making it quite hard for owners to use certain equipment around the home without the dog 'helping'.

There are a few simple steps that can help you introduce the equipment to the dog: Example: kids' bikes

- Bring the bike out and lay it on the ground
- Let the dog investigate the bike
- Using high value treats reward EVERY (even the slightest) interaction
 - looking at the bike, moving towards it, sniffing it
- Continue this until the dog is completely relaxed around the bike
- Pick the bike up and let a person hold it
- Again, reward EVERY interaction with the bike
- Repeat until completely calm and relaxed
- Let a person push the bike just a few centimetres
- At the same time somebody else should be rewarding the dog generously for remaining calm
- Gradually increase the distance the bike is moving while continuously rewarding the dog
- Repeat until the dog is completely calm while the bike is being pushed through the yard
- Ask a person to sit on the bike and pedal VERY slowly while somebody else is rewarding the dog
- step by step build this up until the dog can remain calm when the bike is being cycled through the yard.



It is all about creating a positive association with the equipment.



RSPCA School for Dogs Information Sheet

To introduce the other equipment to your dog use exactly the same technique.

If the equipment is very noisy (like vacuum cleaner, lawnmower, motor bike etc)

- When introducing the noise go back to just leaving the item motionless
- Expose the dog to the sound for a second up to a few seconds
- Reward greatly
- Gradually build up the duration of the noise until the dog can remain calm with the equipment being turned on for a few minutes
- Then start your steps introducing movements
- Ensure that throughout the entire exercise you reward the dog for calm and appropriate behaviour

When that is achieved we can start pairing it with the behaviour that we like the dog to show. It could be that you like your dog to go to his/her bed when the kids ride the bike or when you mow the lawn or simply just sit and stay while you are bringing the wheelie bin to the road.

- Every time the bike is being picked up ask your dog to go to his/her bed
- Reward using very high value treats
- Repeat, repeat, repeat until the dog will choose to go to the bed without being cued
- Reward greatly!!!

Trouble Shooting:

If your dog runs away at any stage during this exercise you may have to break down the steps into even smaller increments or start with the equipment further away.

How long should each training session be?

Practice for very short periods to start with. Maybe only seconds or at most a minute or two. As your dog is desensitised they will be able to tolerate longer periods of time without reaching the threshold where they need to react.