

Is your dog hand shy?

Does he or she flinch when you reach toward them?

Do they jump when you move too fast or drop something?

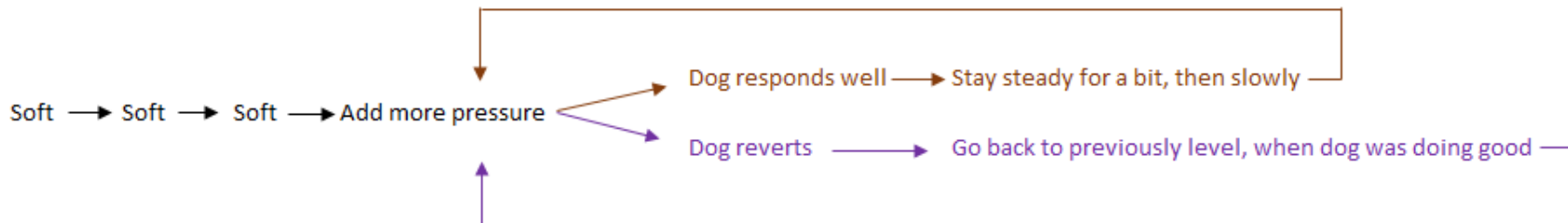
If so, try the following exercise to cure your dog of this reactive behavior



Hand Shy Exercise

- ❃ To stop a flinching behavior, you must practice – a lot of practice, in a safe environment (hundreds of times!)
- ❃ Since your dog trusts you, you’re the only one that should be practicing this
- ❃ Also, practice the first few times when your dog is relaxed or already in a playful mood - not stressed in any way – and no clickers (at least in the beginning, they can be as scary as a hand for some dogs)

- ❃ With a treat in one hand, reach toward your dog and drop the treat. Slowly at first, increasing the speed only if your dog is actively (and comfortably) eating the treat. *Gradually* increase your speed.
- ❃ Repeat this over and over and over again, until your dog is having fun playing this new game and has forgotten all about being nervous. This is not about petting, or even touching, just getting close repeatedly.
- ❃ Then it’s time to start generalizing – or making the dog comfortable in any situation



Soft	- Reach towards
Medium Soft	- Lean towards and reach towards
Medium	- Stand up and reach towards
Medium Hard	- Walk slowly toward while reaching out
Hard	- Walk quickly toward while reaching out

This takes time! For example, I adopted Boondock at 6 months old from an animal shelter. He was extremely hand shy. Anytime I reached toward him, he’d jump backwards. If there was any tension on the leash, he’d immediately pull in the opposite direction. If I walked toward him too quickly, he was gone. Now 4 years later there’s barely a glimmer of his old self. But it took years and LOTS of practice before he was able to get through his fear.