

Signs a dog is scared

Sometimes dogs fear things we don't even notice. You can avoid this fear escalating into aggression by being aware of these signs of fear, and stepping in to help them calm down BEFORE their emotions get out of control.

1 Stiffening their body. Dogs often stiffen up and stare if they are scared of something. Also known as freezing, it is one way they react to stress and perceived threats.

2 Toileting indoors can be a sign of illness, allergies, malnutrition, poisoning...or fear. Have you heard of the fight or flight response? When the body decides on flight, it dumps everything that may help you run faster. Incontinence can mean they're getting ready to flee.

3 Pacing can be a coping strategy for many dogs. It is a self soothing behaviour in response to feeling emotions like anxiety, agitation, or being nervous. Pacing is a way to try expel nervous energy, people do the same thing too!

4 Panting is a normal response for dogs when things are emotional-such as stress. It can also be when they have pain! Take note of the rest of their body language to see if they seem otherwise happy or something is upsetting them.

5 Drooling. Dogs often drool when they're nervous, as stress can cause an excessive production of saliva. If you cannot remove the stressor, ensure you keep them hydrated as they'll be losing fluid.

6 Hiding makes sense if something new and scary is happening. Dogs don't understand the world the same way we do, and until something new or scary has shown itself to not be harmful, it makes sense to go somewhere away from the scary thing.

7 Whining or barking is another sign of trying to expel pent up energy, they're also trying to communicate! They're pack animals and are genetically wired to alert their pack of issues, so they're letting you know there's something wrong.

8 Shaking or trembling with dogs is a physical manifestation of intense emotion. This can be excitement, but is also stress or anxiety. The rest of their behaviours should tell you which!

9 Trying to escape, or escaping can happen when a dog is suddenly faced with something scary. Even usually happy and chill dogs can get into a panicked frenzy and injure teeth, nails, and other body parts when scaling fences and jumping through windows or screen doors.

10 Destructive behaviours are common during emotional distress. As mentioned throughout, trying to get rid of nervous energy or being panicked can lead to abnormal behaviours.



If your dog is constantly fearful, they could have pain. A treatment with me often resolves behaviours that look like attitude, but are often fear or pain responses!

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