

Chasing Cars

Contributed by Admin
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Imprinting left from centuries ago still triggers the chase reflex in many dogs. To run after and take down a noisy car, van, or motorcycle seems preposterous to us but possible to a dog. The key to eliminating the vehicle-chasing habit is to make the car such a fearful prey that the predator turns and runs away.

Ask a friend or relative to use his car as "prey." Your dog must not be familiar with this car! Eliminating this behavior pattern cannot be done quickly so your friend must be willing to drive by several times over a period of several days. Your role will be to act fearfully. Your dog will sense your fear and will stay with, and protect, you, his leader.

The first step is for you to walk with your dog toward the street and in the area of the starting point he uses to begin the chase. Next, your friend drives by. You allow your dog to break into a run. The driver slams on the brakes as soon as your dog begins the chase. The tires squeal. Your friend jumps out of the car dressed in a scary disguise and runs screaming at your dog and flailing his arms. You, acting and sounding fearfully, grab your dog by the collar and run with him toward the house. Upon reaching the house you act relieved and praise him for turning and coming with you. The vehicle is then driven away and the next set-up begins. For some dogs, just the squealing of the tires with the driver remaining in the vehicle and the owner retreating with the dog is enough of a learning experience. For others, the addition of an air horn wailing after the dog is necessary.

This process must be repeated until you no longer need to reverse direction, grab your dog and retreat back to your house. This may take several set-ups. When this much is accomplished, the same set-up must be made with you absent from the scene to test the degree of success. If your dog regresses, the procedure should be started anew until success is achieved.

Periodic reinforcement may be necessary. Do not give up on this as it may save your dog's life someday.