

It is normal to be alarmed if you hear your dog or puppy growl at you, a family member, another person, dog or pet. We often fall into the trap of reprimanding a growling dog, as our first thoughts are of surprise, embarrassment, disappointment and sometimes, anger.



### Facts about Growling:

- 🐾 Growling is a normal canine behaviour
- 🐾 Growling is a warning signal that indicates the dog is feeling uncomfortable, threatened or worried.
- 🐾 Growling will often come after more subtle distance increasing signals such as lip licking, head turning, showing the whites of the eyes, staring, and freezing.
- 🐾 Growling will often precede a snap or bite.
- 🐾 Growling is your dog saying that the previous, subtle signals, have not been noticed and haven't worked, therefore escalation to a more obvious signal seems necessary

### **Growling is a good thing!!**

### What to do if your dog growls at you

1. STOP whatever it is you are doing
2. Don't punish your dog
3. Analyse what happened – what caused your dog to feel threatened
4. Work out a training plan with a professional accredited trainer
5. Don't put anything into place just because you saw it on television

### Time For The Vet?

If your dog starts growling at you and hasn't ever before – please make sure you visit your vet to investigate medical causes such as pain, illness and/or injury.

### Don't Punish Growling

It is important not to punish your dog for growling. If your dog learns that each time they growl, they will get punished (remember, what is punishing is in the eye of the beholder), they may learn to suppress growling and go straight for a snap or bite.



### Thank Your Dog

You need to know when your dog is uncomfortable so he is not pushed past his ability to cope. Learn to read subtle dog body language signals so you can change the situation for your dog to help them cope.

Thank your dog for communicating they are uncomfortable or scared! Stop what you are doing and contact an accredited positive reinforcement trainer to help you.

### Growling at other dogs

Dogs do growl at each other during play, but this is where you have to learn to read the dog's body language as a whole.

Many dogs growling during play will still have relaxed bodies and tails and their face will still be relaxed. Dog's often play with teeth showing (we call it 'bitey face'!) but their faces are relaxed. If you are seeing stiff body language and distance increasing signals as listed above, interrupt the interaction to give the dogs a break.

**If you are unsure about why your dog is growling, and what to do about it, please contact us for some professional assistance.**

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