



Exposing Your Dog to Sights, Sounds and Surfaces: What to Do When Your Dog Doesn't Pass the ATT

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The AKC Temperament Test

Historically, temperament has been viewed as predictive.

In a predictive temperament test model, results of the temperament test are thought to predict the dog's temperament in the future.





The AKC Temperament Test

We view the ATT as a prescriptive test. If a dog does not pass a test item, instructors (or the dog owner) can work with the dog on issues such as refusing to walk on unusual surfaces.

As a result of training on items the dog did not pass on the ATT, it is not expected that the dog's basic temperament changed, but rather, behaviors related to temperament (e.g., fearful reactions) have been modified.



The AKC Temperament Test

In this module, we'll give you some tips for working with a dog who doesn't pass an ATT item.

You shouldn't simply teach the test items- think of this as a chance to provide your dog with a comprehensive program to expose your dog to a wide variety **“sights, sounds, and surfaces”** in the real world.



The AKC Temperament Test

What to do when your dog doesn't pass the ATT....

You're going to be shaping on behavior, so finding an effective reinforcer is important.

*As a reminder, a **reinforcer** is a stimulus when presented following a behavior makes it more likely that behavior will occur in the future.*



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A Reinforcer Sampling Assessment can be used to find the most effective reinforcer for a dog.

A Reinforcer Sampling Assessment assesses the effectiveness of a particular reinforcer.

After trying a variety of treats to identify your dog's preferred reinforcer (e.g., steak, dried liver, ham, string cheese, commercial soft treats, etc.), you're ready to start training.





The AKC Temperament Test

What to do when your dog doesn't pass the ATT....

Here are some training protocols that dog owners and instructors can use when dogs don't pass an ATT item.

Let's look at the **SOCIAL** category.

SOCIAL (do this section first)

- S1. Greets handler, pets dog
- S2. Evaluator approaches, brief exam
- S3. Approach standing person who pets dog
- S4. Person approaches (carrying item), pets

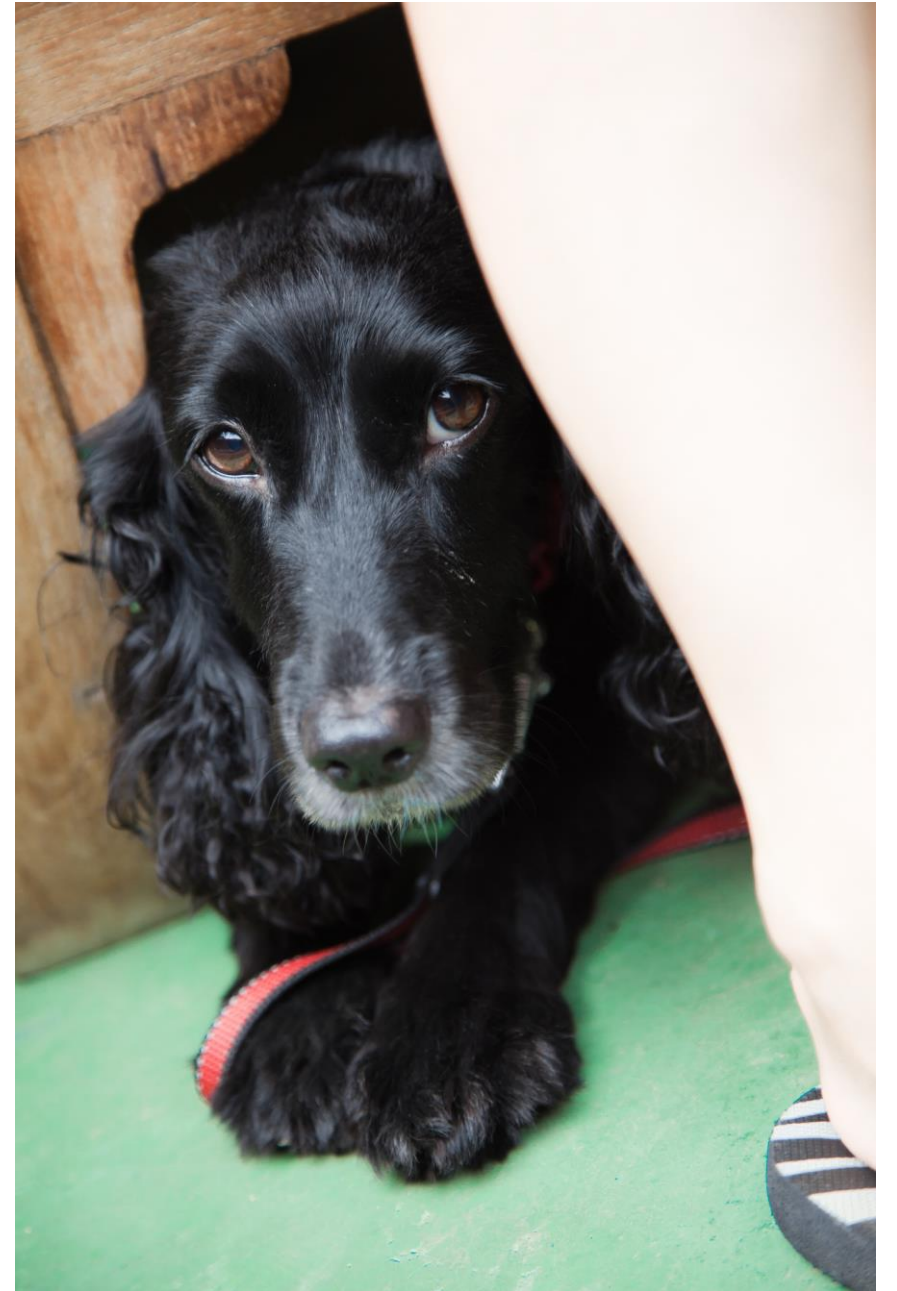


SOCIAL

Problem: The dog refuses to let a person touch it; hides behind owner.

Idea: Teach the dog that good things come from other people.

The task analysis for addressing the problem is on the next page.



SOCIAL



TASK ANALYSIS: S1. Greets handler, pets dog

1. Start with a helper who can be the “friendly stranger.”
2. Helper begins by sitting on the floor and holds out dog’s preferred treat.
3. Handler (w/ dog on leash) approaches helper; dog takes treat. Handler and dog walk away.
4. Helper kneels, holds treat, dog takes treat, handler & dog walk away.
5. Helper stands, leans over, holds treat out. Dog takes treat, walk away.
6. Handler and dog stand still, helper approaches, holds out treat. As dog takes the treat, helper pets dog.
7. Helper approaches dog & handler, pets dog, gives treat after pet.

Repeat with 2nd and 3rd person. Try starting later in sequence.



AUDITORY

When a dog does not pass an auditory test item, it is likely to startle and not recover when a sound is activated by the steward in the ATT.

AUDITORY

- A1. Shake large plastic bottle w/coins
- A2. Vacuum cleaner (hand held)
- A3. Loud whistle
- A4. Bike horn (bulb)

The key behavioral principle used to treat this problem is called desensitization (or exposure therapy).

Desensitization uses a hierarchy ranging from the least to the most problematic situation.



AUDITORY

When using desensitization, you will begin with sounds at a level and distance the dog can tolerate.

Then gradually, you will decrease the distance between the sound and the dog as well as making the sound gradually louder.

AUDITORY

- A1. Shake large plastic bottle w/coins
- A2. Vacuum cleaner (hand held)
- A3. Loud whistle
- A4. Bike horn (bulb)



AUDITORY

Problem: The dog startles when it hears an unexpected noise and does not recover (within 30 seconds).

Idea: There are many sounds in the world and dogs should be able to recover to unexpected noises.

The task analysis for addressing the problem is on the next page.



AUDITORY



TASK ANALYSIS: A2. Vacuum cleaner (hand held).

1. Helper walks in front of dog at 20-ft and activates the noise (dog can see noise stimulus). Handler rewards dog (food) for acceptable reaction.
2. Repeat - 15 ft.
3. Repeat - 10 ft.
4. Repeat - 5 ft.
5. Handler walks by dog 20-ft and activates sound (dog can not see noise). Repeat at 15, 10 and 5-ft.
6. Handler and dog walk by handler, handler activates sound at distances in ATT.

Repeat with 2nd and 3rd noise. Try starting later in sequence.



VISUAL

As with Auditory test items, if a dog does not pass the Visual stimulus test item, the behavioral technique of desensitization (exposure therapy) is applied.

For example, if the dog is extremely afraid of a wagon, it might pull away, hide behind the handler, or climb on the handler for assurance.

The task analysis for addressing the problem is on the next page.

VISUAL

- V1. Umbrella opened (REQUIRED)
- V2. Roller bag, wagon, crate dolly, cooler
- V3. Streamers on stick
- V4. Shake hand towel

VISUAL



TASK ANALYSIS: V2. Roller bag, wagon, crate dolly, cooler

1. Start with handler standing with dog. Dog is on leash.
2. Helper pulls wagon in front of dog. (20 ft., 15 ft., 10 ft., 5 ft., 3 ft.)
3. At each distance, handler gives dog treat if dog is not responding to wagon (by pulling away, etc.).
4. Helper circles the dog with the wagon. (15 ft., 10 ft., 5 ft., 3 ft.)
5. At each distance, handler gives dog treat if dog is not responding to wagon (by pulling away, etc.).

The idea is to start at a distance the dog can tolerate and gradually move the visual stimulus closer to the dog.

Repeat with 2nd and 3rd visual stimulus.



TACTILE

Dogs sometimes refuse to walk on unfamiliar or unusual surfaces. They might pull away from the surface or crouch down and refuse to move.

TACTILE

- T1. Walks on wire grate (REQUIRED)
- T2. Plastic tarp
- T3. Plastic lattice over memory foam
- T4. Pegboard over air mattress

When the dog refuses to walk on an unfamiliar surface such as grating, behavioral procedures such as *shaping* and *backward chaining* can be used to address the problem.



TACTILE

As a reminder, ***shaping*** is reinforcing successive approximations to a desired behavior.

Backward chaining starts with the last response in the chain and moves backward to the first response.





TACTILE

Let's look at the Tactile ATT test item "walks on a wire grate." In the ATT, for the wire grate test item, 6 connected sections of an exercise pen (ex-pen) are used to form one long section of grate.

Option 1 (small dogs)

For a small dog (e.g., Yorkshire Terrier, Chihuahua), you can use backward chaining to teach the skill.

The dog is going to walk on the last step of the last section of the grate first.



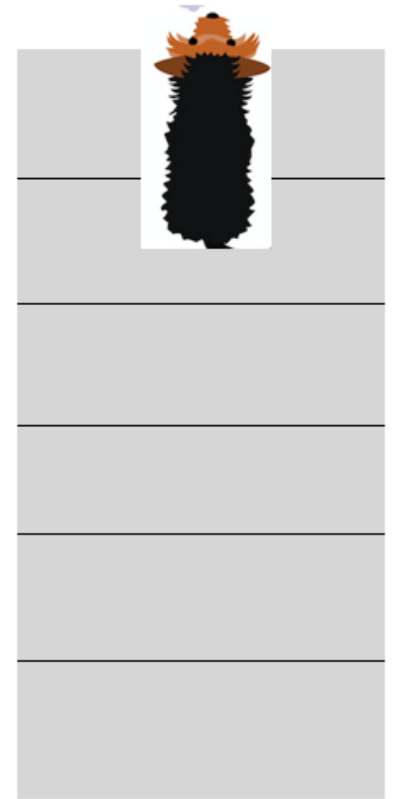
TACTILE

Tactile ATT test item “walks on a wire grate” (T1). In the ATT, for the wire grate test item, 6 connected sections of an exercise pen (ex-pen) are used to form one long section of grate.

Option 1 (small dogs)

1. Pick the dog up and place it so it only has to take one step to get off the grate.

Call the dog if necessary. When the dog steps off the grate, reward.



**DOG USUALLY
ENTERS HERE**



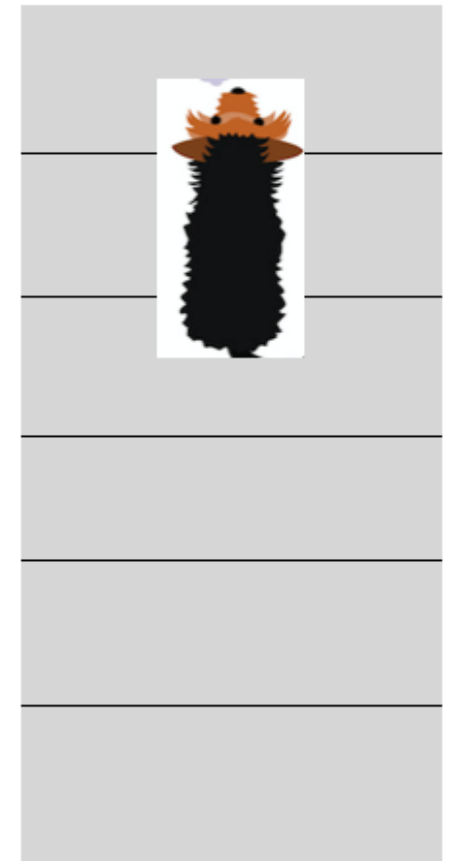
TACTILE

2. Next, place the dog on the grate so she has to take two steps to get off the grate.

Call the dog if necessary. Reward the dog as soon as the dog off the grate.

3. Continue with small distances added each time until the dog can start at the beginning of the grate.

4. Have the dog walk the entire length of the grate and reward.



**DOG USUALLY
ENTERS HERE**

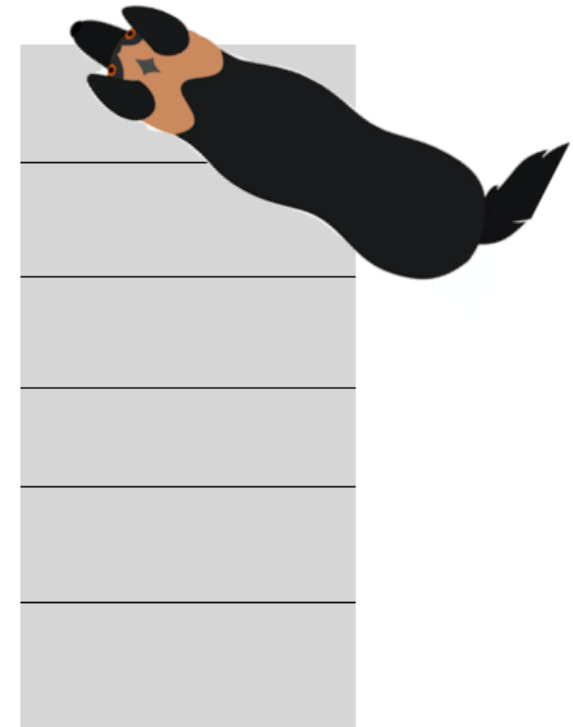


TACTILE

You can easily pick up a tiny dog and use backward chaining by placing the dog at the end of the grate to begin, but this certainly won't work for a large breed such as a Mastiff or German Shepherd.

Option 2 (medium to large dogs)

1. Walk at an angle across the corner of the grate so the dog only has to take one step to get off the grate. Reward the dog when it has walked on and steps off grate.
2. Move the dog so the distance across the grate is longer. Reward the dog when it has walked on and steps off grate.



**DOG USUALLY
ENTERS HERE**



TACTILE

Option 3

For instructors, another option for teaching the dog to walk on the grate is to:

1. Disassemble the ex-pen and start with the dog only having to walk across 1 section. (reward the dog for walking on and exiting the grate).
2. Next, add a section of grate so there are two sections. Reward the dog for walking on and exiting the grate.

Continue to add sections until the dog walks the full length of 6 sections.



PROPRIOCEPTIVE

In the ATT, proprioception has to do with the dog moving its body through space. When there is a problem with proprioception, you sometimes hear trainers say about the dog, “He has no idea where his back feet are.”

- PROPRIOCEPTIVE** (motion, position)
- P1. Cavaletti (pvc ladder or low bars)
 - P2. Intersecting hoops (8)
 - P3. Low teeter
 - P4. Up and over low platform (e.g., Klimb ™)

When a dog does not pass a proprioception test item, it usually refuses to walk on, over, or through the test items.



PROPRIOCEPTIVE

Problem: Dog refuses to walk through the ladder.

Technique: You will use the behavioral principle of shaping to address the problem.

The task analysis follows on the next page.



Ladder from domorewithyourdog.com

PROPRIOCEPTIVE



TASK ANALYSIS: P1. Cavaletti (PVC ladder or low bars)

1. Dog is on leash at handler's side.
2. Using bars and cones, start with 1 bar, place it on the ground.
3. Handler has dog walk over (1) bar. Reward dog for walking over bar.
4. Add a 2nd bar. Place the bar on the ground. Dog walks over both bars, reward.
5. Add 3rd bar, then 4th.
6. Next, you will begin to raise the bars. Raise bars 1 inch off the ground. Dog goes over bars, reward.
7. Transition from bars to ladder. Dog walks through ladder. If there are problems, repeat with deconstructed ladder with bars removed from the center, so the dog steps over 1 bar, walks to the end, steps over last bar. Gradually fade in cross bars.



UNEXPECTED STIMULUS

In the ATT, a person (the Unexpected Stimulus) will come out from behind a screen from 20-ft. away, will walk toward the dog, and at 5 ft. from the dog, will turn and walk away.

UNEXPECTED STIMULUS

- U1. Approach, carries large box & objects
- U2. Approach, drops chair
- U3. Uses walker, crutches, or wheelchair
- U4. Approach briskly - unusual clothing

To address problems with the Unexpected Stimulus, you can use the behavioral procedure of ***desensitization*** where you begin with with stimulus at a distance from the dog and gradually move closer.



UNEXPECTED STIMULUS

Problem: The dog trembles and hides behind the handler when a person in unusual clothes (rain coat, hat, etc.) approaches.

Idea: Dog should tolerate people who are wearing unusual clothing, using a wheelchair or walker, or carrying something.

The task analysis follows on the next page.





UNEXPECTED STIMULUS

TASK ANALYSIS: U4. Approach briskly – unusual clothing

1. Start with the dog on leash at handler's side. Unexpected Stimulus (US) walks 20 ft. in front of dog.
2. Repeat at 15 ft., 10 ft., and 5 ft. (their own #)
Reward the dog for tolerating the US.



Handler/Dog
stand here



UNEXPECTED STIMULUS

TASK ANALYSIS: U4. Approach briskly – unusual clothing

3. When the dog tolerates the US walking by, start at 20 ft. and walk forward 5 ft. toward the dog (US will stop, turn around and walk away when 15 ft. from dog). Reward the dog.

4. Next, start at 20 ft. and come forward 10 ft. toward the dog (US will stop, turn around and walk away when 10 ft. from dog). Reward the dog.

5. Start at 20 ft. and come forward 15 ft. toward the dog (US will stop, turn around and walk away when 5 ft. from dog). Reward the dog.

US walks toward handler/dog



Handler/Dog stand here



Summary

Behavioral procedures can be effectively used to address problems your dog has related to stimuli (e.g., sights, sounds, surfaces, social) in the environment.

Teaching an item on the ATT does not change the dog's basic temperament; you have simply modified behaviors related to temperament.

You should not only teach ATT test items. Instead, provide your dog with training and exposure to a wide variety of stimuli in the community, including many stimuli not on the ATT.

We provided examples of how to address some problems. Instructors may have their own techniques for teaching skills and breaking them down to maximize learning.



For more information on the ATT, see www.akc.org/akctemptest