

Resource Guarding: Behavior Modification

It is best to contact an animal behaviorist or positive reinforcement trainer with knowledge of scientifically based techniques to assist you with training. If you need help on finding a local behaviorist or trainer, call us at 937-898-4457.

Please read Resource Guarding: Management before beginning these training steps.

Steps to behavior modification:

- Find out what items your dog guards and items they do not guard and make a list of each.
- Find out what treats they like better than what they guard. Every dog is different, some might really love cheese, others might like chicken. Once you find out what that item is, do not give them that treat except during this resource guarding behavior modification.
- Practice teaching commands like “Drop it” with only their non-guarded items. Use normal treats for this, not their special treats.
- Set up a location to practice:
 - Keep lots of treats to have on hand, we suggest getting a treat pouch or fanny pack to carry them in.
 - Designate a room that does not have other dogs or people in it during practice time.
 - If needed, tether the dog on a long, loose leash to the wall or sturdy piece of furniture.
 - At the end of practice, use the leash to lead the dog out of the room without going near the item.
- Give the dog an item that they guard and leave the room.
- Re-enter the room with the favored treats after 30 seconds to 1 minute. Stop BEFORE you think the dog will react to you. This might be just inside the doorway. If the dog is guarding when you enter, you may want to set up a baby gate and increase the distance. While the dog is not reacting, toss a treat right by their mouth. Repeat once or twice, then leave the room. If the dog comes up to you for treats, ignore the dog and do not give the treat. The dog should learn that they only get the treat when they have the item and you are nearby. Repeat this process for a few sessions.
- Next, do the process described above, but take one step forward, toss the treat, then walk away. If the dog starts guarding, take smaller steps. Repeat for a few sessions.
- Slowly start decreasing the start distance. If you started at 5 feet away, go to 4 feet away, repeating the process for a few sessions. Keep decreasing distance in this way, but ONLY if the dog remains calm. If the dog starts guarding, go back to a spot where they did not guard.
- Once you can stand next to the dog without the dog guarding the item, you can practice asking for “Drop it”, and tossing a treat for the dog leaving the item on the floor and ignoring it. Practice this a few times, never actually taking the item away from the dog.
- Seek professional help to go beyond this step.