

Dog Fight Emergency Handling

All dog fights must be considered **extremely dangerous**. Even dogs that are intending not to hurt each other could cause serious damage. Dogs can significantly vary in size so a large dog can even accidentally fatally injure a small dog.

Never follow the very poor advice of "letting the dogs work it out." It is unclear where this unprofessional, and unethical advice originated but it is a guaranteed path to mental and/or physical injuries.



Common Dog Fight Triggers

- **Food**
- Access to a **human**
- Access to a **smell**
- **Toys**
- **Tight spaces** and two or more dogs pushing to get to a common **entry or exit point**
- Dogs with issues that have **low frustration thresholds** often can be more likely to start dog fights

Dog fights are not about establishing dominance, scientifically dominance refers to two dogs fighting over a resource, so many dog fights can be over resources.



Prevention

The most important piece of information for dog fighting is prevention. If you know situations that make your dogs tense, then **avoid those situations**. Do not attempt to train in these situations unless you are working with a professional dog behavior consultant.



Breaking up a dog fight

There is no safe way to break up a dog fight. Anecdotally **most injuries are to humans attempting to stop dog fights**. Never put any body part, hands, arms or legs in between two fighting dogs. Fighting dogs often times are not even aware of what they are biting human body parts suddenly appearing will likely be bitten.

If a dog fight starts remain calm, breathe and assess the situation. If there are children or elderly in the area they must first be removed for safety. Next, rapidly approach the two dogs and assess if the fight is ritualized or if one or both dogs are clamping on each other.

Ritualized Fight

Dogs are air snapping around each other's necks and faces

Spit may be flying out of one or both dogs' mouths

Loud vocalizations usually on both parts

Clamping Fight

One or more dogs are clamped on another dog, meaning they have grabbed hold of the dog and they are not letting go

Often the aggressor is silent since they are clamped on the dog

Often the victim is screaming, as they are mentally and physically under severe stress

If you are dealing with a **ritualized dog fight** you can many times **interrupt** the dog fight with clapping of your hands, loudly asking the dogs to move to another area, "let's go outside". A more dangerous but often also successful strategy is to **gently touch** one of the aggressing dog on the rump, this can often snap that dog out of his anger and redirect his focus on you. This also means that the dog may "redirect" their anger on you, use this only if the dog does not have a history of redirecting aggression. To assess this work with your dog behavior consultant. As a last resort a ritualized dog fight may also be stopped with the use of a product called **spray shield** which emits a citronella scent stream of fluid that is considered to be extremely offensive to most dogs. If you use this product be aware it usually only lasts for two uses so mark the bottom of the canister so you know if it has been used one time so that you do not attempt to use it in an emergency and it turns out to be empty.

Interrupt



If you are dealing with a **clamped dog fight**, again remove children and elderly immediately. Next, focus on the **aggressor** and grab their tail or hind leg, lift UP. Do not pull back as this will likely cause more injury to the victim. If necessary, take both hind legs to **wheelbarrow** the aggressor, putting the aggressor in a handstand position which is very uncomfortable and less effective for fighting. If this is not successful you can turn the wheelbarrowed dog upside down which will make clamping impossible. Please note this takes a lot of strength and may not be possible for every human. This is why dog fights must be prevented and why it is ideal to have a plan of which human will grab which dog. Again the spray shield may be an effective tool but it is impossible to predict in what situations it will work and when dogs will simply ignore the bad smell and continue fighting. Realistically however fights can break out when there is only one human available and this leads to the final recommendation.



Lift up

Wheelbarrow



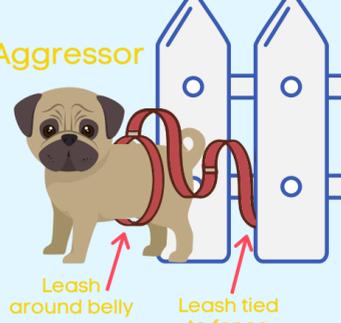
Two Leash System

If you are alone and a dog fight breaks you can use the two leash system. Use one leash around the belly of the aggressor and secure the end to a heavy piece of furniture. This does mean that you will need to pull back on the aggressor which is not ideal but the alternative is letting the fight continue which with every passing moment could lead to more or fatal injuries.

After securing the aggressor with their leash, use the second leash to secure the victim. In all clamping dog fights the goal is to make it physically uncomfortable for the aggressor which is not ideal but the alternative is letting the fight continue which with every passing moment could lead to more or fatal injuries.



Aggressor



Any dogs that have been in a clamping dog fight need to receive medical first aid and professional veterinary attention. Dog bite wounds are at extreme high risk of infection and thus always require medical attention. Any humans injured as a result of a dog fight must seek medical attention. Please do not minimize the severity or the risk to you and your dogs if you are having dog fights.

We hope that you will never need the information in this handout!