

Having more than one dog is fun and something we recommend for Siberian Huskies. Huskies are pack animals and tend to prefer to have a friend or more to live with. It is your responsibility as the human to be a good manager of their interactions. Here are some important tips for making it work.

Rock Solid Multi-Dog Management:

- **Select** your pets with care. Some dog pairs have great chemistry while others are do not.
- Maintain a **strong leadership** role so the dogs know and respect the house rules.
- Especially while dogs are getting to know each other, **separate** before you leave the house and manage all interactions.
- Know the most common **fight triggers** and work to prevent them.
- **Involve everyone** in the household in multi-dog management.
- Understand that dog dynamics can and do shift along with **life changes**.
- Give each dog **individual attention** to strengthen bonds.



Look for Good Chemistry

Dogs are like people - Some hit it off immediately, some take time to develop a friendship and some will continue to push each other's buttons. If you are actively searching for a new companion for your existing dog, look at several dogs and let a rescue group or shelter pro help you.

Opposites attract: Most times, opposite sex pairings tend to have the easiest intros and best long-term success. Plenty of same sex housemate dogs do great together too but can require slower intros and much more management. Think of each dog as an individual and make decisions based on their preferences.

Know your dog's limits.



A dog's tolerance for another dog's antics varies by individual dog. Some are easy going, and some will not tolerate any shenanigans.

It is our responsibility as dog owners to keep our pets out of situations that may cause an altercation. We do that by reading their body signals, understanding their individual limits, and setting them up for success.

It's so important to work to improve the tolerance of each dog through appropriate socializing opportunities. Because dog aggression is not a "one size fits all" trait, outlined below are four common levels of dog-tolerance.



1. Dog Social

A 'Dog Social' dog is one that truly enjoys the company of other dogs, including housemate dogs. This dog is very easy going; forgives even the rudest dog manners.

2. Dog Tolerant

A Dog Tolerant dog is mostly non-reactive on leash and either indifferent or friendly to other dogs. This dog is well socialized and shows relaxed, easy body

language in the presence of new dogs. This dog may not 'love' dogs that he doesn't know but has decent tolerance for rude behavior and enjoys known dog friends and, in general, succeeds with housemate dogs.

3. Dog Selective

The Dog Selective dog has canine friends but is selective. This dog may dislike certain 'types' of dogs or may be easily offended by rude dog manners. This dog might be leash reactive with a passive handler and/or no training and is what we call "pushy", this dog likes to dictate the rules during dog-play and may need reminders to use good manners. This dog can succeed with housemate dogs but will require supervision.

4. Dog Aggressive

The Dog Aggressive dog has a very limited number of dog friends if any at all. This dog might be aggressive towards other dogs without discretion and might be reactive on leash. This dog might have a short fuse during play, even with dogs that he knows. The 'dog aggressive' dog needs heavy supervision during play and a good leader when out on leash.

NOTE: It can be harder for dogs with short fuses to succeed in multi-dog homes, they can go from zero to 60 in nothing flat! In some cases, it is better for everybody if he shares his home with only one dog or none at all. For savvy dog management owners, a short fuse dog might have a separate space in the house, maybe a "home office dog". That is okay, not every dog is going to get along with other dogs and some dogs will just be best as an only dog.

Be the Job Boss



Your current dog(s) should be nicely trained before bringing a new dog home. This will set the stage for a smooth transition and help the dogs know what you expect from them. Trained dogs can also serve as mentors for newer dogs and teach them good manners.

Your role as a leader is critical if your dogs decide to have an argument. If your current dog does not have the best house manners, your workload may double. A good obedience positive reinforcement training class plus lots of practice outside of class can help you instill better manners in a month's time.

TIP: Reinforce house rules by working each dog a few minutes every day, especially at mealtime. Mealtime is a good time to do short sessions that include 'Down,' 'Look' and 'Wait.'

Separate dogs before leaving the house

This can be one of the hardest must-dos for new multi-dog owners to accept: Dogs can be the best of friends BUT they may still find something, someday, that will cause an argument.

Small arguments are usually easily ended when you are home with a sharp verbal warning, but what if this happens when you are not there to stop it? That same argument can escalate and potentially cause injury. This is easy to avoid by separating dogs when you are not home and utilizing crates, baby gates or just separate rooms.

Dogs are creatures of habit, so once this routine's established, they will accept it as perfectly normal.

Identify triggers to avoid conflict

Dog fights and disagreements happen from time to time. To prevent smaller, harmless arguments from escalating into full scale battles, humans need to stay on top of things. Dog owners should become dedicated students of dog body language and be diligent about identifying and reacting to the types of triggers that can spark tensions to prevent altercations. It is natural for canine house mates to develop a noticeable pecking order; this hierarchy should never take the place of your role as Boss.



COMMON FIGHT TRIGGERS:

Resource Guarding: The presence of prized chews, toys, food and even attention can send arousal levels up and spark conflicts in some dogs. Do not overlook the smelly goodness in the trash or that lone piece of kibble that rolled under the counter.

High Arousal: Play sessions and tug games that get too exciting can cause problems. Charging to the door to greet the doorbell or chasing a squirrel in the yard can rile two dogs up to the point where they may clash and redirect on each other. If you see your dogs getting overly aroused, it is time to step in and make everybody settle down, with a distraction or a rest time in the crate. Determine what your “house rules” are going to be and be consistent. If you do not allow rough play in the house, then work to stop the play when it starts and teach them that they need to go outside to play.

Breaking Up a Dog Fight

The best way to deal with fights is to commit to prevention, what we often refer to as **Dog Management**. But when (not if), something slips past you and a scuffle breaks out, it can help to shout a VERY loud and convincing "NO!"

If that does not work, your next best move may be the hardest to accomplish: **Take a deep breath and count to five**, pay attention and observe what is happening. This gives you time to think about your options rather than react impulsively.

Some fights can be stopped quickly by grabbing the dogs' back legs and pulling them apart, some will end with the use of the hose if you are in the backyard, in some cases you can throw a blanket over one of the dogs to surprise them into stopping.

Read through the following tips as you would any safety plan for you and your family. Discuss with all members of the household and talk about it:

- Remain as calm as possible, so you can think in an orderly manner, and so as not to excite the dogs more with your frantic behavior.
- Call for help if someone is nearby. Say something like, “I need help with a dog fight in [specific area].” If you remember nothing else, remember to STAY CALM
- Do NOT grab the dogs’ collars or put your hands anywhere near their mouths to try to separate them. You are most likely to get bitten that way, and your skin is usually a lot thinner than a dog’s skin.
- Do NOT put your face near the dog during a fight or anytime you do not know that dog
- STOP, look around and stop your tunnel vision. When you do not stop and look around you will follow your instincts and grab the dogs which could result in a bite.
- While you stop, look around and see what is readily available for an auditory interrupter or if there is something else you can use to break up the fight rather than your hands.
- Initially, try an auditory interrupt, that is, a startling noise. For example, clap your hands together loudly, whistle at full volume, clang a metal bowl against the fence or two bowls together, sound an air horn or mugger alarm, anything that works to surprise the dogs and interrupt the fight.
- If the auditory interrupt is ineffective, douse one or both dogs with water from a bucket or hose or spray Direct Stop (citronella spray) near the dogs’ noses. Another option is to place a chair or other large object between the fighting dogs.
- If you have a second person, you can have each person place arms or a leash under a dog’s inguinal region (area where the rear legs meet the belly), wait for the dogs to loosen their grip, and then pull dogs away. It is important that you DO NOT pull dogs away if one or both has a tight grip on the other dog, as that could cause much more damage (in terms of tears and rips) than waiting for the dogs to release. Also, the legs and stomach area can be sensitive on a dog. Use caution if grabbing this area.
- As soon as the fight is interrupted, immediately separate the dogs, both physically and visually, to prevent them from starting the fight again. Each dog needs time for their adrenaline level to lower. Next, check each dog for injuries which may need veterinarian attention. If you suspect injuries, or after an intense fight, see a veterinarian, who will examine each dog for hidden wounds and internal damage. Keep in mind the dog still has left over adrenaline as well as possible pain, be very careful when handling or examining for injuries.

- Finally, witnessing and breaking up a dog fight can be a shocking, traumatic experience for people, so make time for you to unwind. Go to a quiet place, sit down, and breathe deeply to relax. This is very important; dogs may react differently to you if you are not yourself due to stress.
- If you are injured during a dog fight, calmly seek medical attention

LEARN FROM EXPERIENCE: If your dogs have a spat, do not get down on yourself. Instead, use it as a learning experience to help prevent a repeat performance. Ask yourself:

- What contributed to the scuffle?
- what little signs should have told me that I needed to intervene earlier?
- Have my dogs been getting enough exercise?
- Is my female in heat? (Another good reason to spay and neuter; less dog-dog conflict!)
- Am I spoiling one of the dogs and setting up a grudge?
- Did somebody raise the stakes during a wrestle session?
- Did the new toy make somebody too possessive?

By understanding what might have caused a problem, you can change the way you do things with the dogs and nip most issues in the bud before they escalate. If you just are not sure of what might have contributed, talk with a trainer to see if they can shed some light.

When Dogs Fight

It is fine to scold your dog(s) just after a scuffle and let them know that their behavior was unacceptable and it's probably a good idea to separate for a bit – but soon after, try to find an opportunity to end the moment on a positive note with the dog doing something that you ask of them. Most huskies can enjoy dog friends and avoid conflict with the help of your guidance and supervision. After an argument, it is time for more structure in the home to remind your dogs who calls the shots.

What dogs do when you are not around may be a different story though. We recommend separating pets from each other when you are not there to manage their interactions, especially when a new pet has joined the household.

All hands-on deck

Your friends and family - and even the neighbors that like to pop over to say 'Hi' - should all be made aware of your dogs' limits and any potential dog-dog issues they may have. Everyone should share in the responsibility of keeping the peace, this includes picking up prized toys and monitoring the dogs when they get rowdy. We hear often from people that experience dogfights while their pets are in the care of someone else (pet sitter, friend, etc). Managing your dogs involves managing the

people who interact with them and making sure everyone is on board with your rules and wishes.

Changing dynamics with life changes



Dynamics between pets can and do shift as young dogs mature into adulthood and later, when a senior dog begins to decline in health. Be very aware of any smaller frictions that may crop up between your pets so you can get on top of things immediately and ensure that transitions go smoothly. Shifts in the pecking order after life changes are common and requires your diligent monitoring and good leadership.

Special one on one time



Multi-dog households benefit greatly when each dog has a strong bond with his owner. To deepen your bond with each of your dogs, take time out for individual attention away from everybody else. A ten-minute fetch session, a ride in the car when you go on an errand, a quick walk around the block that's outside of his normal routine can help each dog feel more connected to you and improve their listening skills when they're with the others

The rewards of having multi-dogs are obvious. When you've chosen carefully and have committed to common sense management, the potential for conflict is minimized and you can truly enjoy your pets. The dogs enjoy the benefit of extra socialization, mental stimulation, fun play sessions. Enjoy your beautiful pets!

