



Training plan for Body Sensitivity

Sometimes, being touched in certain places can upset dogs a lot. If you have a dog who's developed sensitivity about having his feet, or his ears, or his mouth, or any other part handled, the following overview may help you. Remember not to try to proceed to a new step until your dog has mastered the one you've been working on.

Touching Ears

For three minutes twice a day, sit with your dog and feed him delicious treats from your hands. Do not attempt to touch him or reach for him. It's best to use chunks of very delicious soft treats, like chicken, cheese or hot dogs, so your dog can nibble at a treat while you hold it in your fingers. Move on to Step 1 after five days of feeding your dog treats by hand.

1. Sit with your dog and repeat the following sequence. Move one hand (let's assume your left hand) toward your dog's head. Your palm should be flat and facing the side of your dog's head. Stop a few inches away, *just prior* to the point at which your dog would normally get stiff, turn to look at your hand or cower away from your hand. Hold your left hand there and, with your other hand, reach out and feed him a treat. Then pull your left hand back, away from your dog, while he's eating the treat. Wait a few seconds and repeat the whole sequence of reaching and feeding. Repeat this sequence several times until you are confident that your dog sees your hand reaching for him, but he doesn't appear to be concerned or frightened. Stay at this step until your dog sees your hand reaching toward him and immediately looks to your right hand in anticipation of the treats. This step might take a couple of days or as long as a week or two.
2. Over a period of days and many repetitions, gradually move your hand closer to your dog's head whenever he becomes comfortable at the current distance. Each movement closer will be small, just an inch or two. Continue the sequence of reaching, feeding and then withdrawing your left hand while your dog's eating the treat.
3. When you can touch your dog's ear while he remains calm and relaxed, do so very briefly and then feed him. Make sure that you're touching your dog's ear *while* he's eating a treat from your other hand and that you stop touching him *just before* he stops eating. The timing of these sequences is important for them to be effective. Once your dog seems comfortable with this step, change things a little. Touch your dog's ear first and *then* feed him the treat. Withdraw your hand as your dog finishes the treat. Now prolong the time it takes for him to eat the treat by holding it so that he

has to lick and chew at it for a few seconds before eating the whole thing. At the same time, prolong the length of time your hand remains touching your dog's ear.

4. When your dog's comfortable at Step 3, begin delaying the treat. For example, touch your dog's ear while counting silently to two, and then give him the treat. Then touch your dog's ear while counting to five, and give him the treat. Gradually increase the number of seconds that you delay giving your dog the treat while touching his ear. Practice until you can stroke or massage your dog's ear for several seconds before offering the treat. Then incorporate other things you might need to do to your dog's ear, such as flipping back the ear flap, touching the inside of his ear, and so forth.
5. If you anticipate needing to apply ear ointment, include the sight of the ointment tube in these treatment exercises. At first, just place the tube next to you while you touch your dog's ear. Then hold the tube in your right hand while you touch your dog's ear with your left hand. Then hold the tube next to your dog's ear as though you're applying the ointment—but don't apply any yet. Finally, when you do have to use the ointment, apply a small amount, rub it in and immediately follow up with a tasty treat. Only apply ointment about once out of every 10 to 12 times that you handle your dog's ears. This means your dog won't expect you to put that yucky stuff in his ears, and he'll be more tolerant of having his ears handled.
6. The final step in this treatment is to touch your dog's ears when he doesn't expect that you have a treat. The best way to do this is to grab a few treats randomly throughout the day and hide them in your pocket when your dog isn't looking. Then touch his ears briefly while feeding him a treat from your other hand. Do this only once every few hours.
7. If you want your dog to tolerate a variety of people touching his ears, such as family members, friends and veterinary staff, practice with several people in various situations, like in your home, at the park and at the veterinary clinic. Dogs learn very specifically, so if you don't practice with other people, your dog won't learn to feel comfortable with anyone but you touching him.

Touching Eyes

For three minutes twice a day, sit with your dog and feed him delicious treats—like small cubes of chicken, cheese or hot dogs—from your hands. Do not attempt to touch him or reach for him. It's best to use chunks of soft treats so your dog can nibble at the treat while you hold it in your fingers. Move on to Step 1 after five days of feeding your dog treats by hand.

1. Sit with your dog and repeat this sequence: move one hand (let's assume your left hand), with palm open, toward your dog's head. Stop a few inches away, *just prior* to the point your dog would normally get stiff, turn to look at your hand or cower away from your hand. Hold your left hand there and, with your other hand, reach out and feed him a treat. Pull your left hand back, away from your dog, while he eats the treat. Wait a few seconds and repeat the whole sequence of reaching and feeding. Repeat several times until you're confident that your dog sees your hand reaching for him, but he doesn't appear to be concerned or frightened. Stay at this step until your dog sees

your hand reaching toward him and immediately looks to your right hand in anticipation of the treats. This step might take a couple of days or as long as a week or two.

2. Over a period of days and many repetitions, gradually move your hand closer to your dog's head whenever he becomes comfortable at the current distance. Each movement closer will be small, just an inch or two. Repeat the sequence of reaching, feeding and then withdrawing your left hand while your dog's eating the treat.
3. When you can touch your dog's face next to his eye while he remains calm and relaxed, do so briefly and then feed him a treat. Make sure that you're touching your dog's face *while* he's eating a treat from your other hand and that you stop touching him *just before* he stops eating. Once your dog seems comfortable with this step, change things a little. Touch your dog's face first and then feed the treat. Withdraw your hand as your dog finishes the treat. Now prolong the time it takes for him to eat the treat by holding it so he has to lick and chew at it for a few seconds. At the same time, prolong the length of time your hand touches his face. Vary where you touch around his eyes. Your eventual goal is to place your index finger on your dog's upper lid and your thumb on his lower lid.
4. When your dog's comfortable at Step 3, begin delaying the treat. For example, touch your dog's face near his eye while counting silently to two and then give him the treat. Then touch your dog's face near his eye while counting to five, and give him the treat. Gradually increase the number of seconds that you delay giving your dog the treat while touching his face near his eye. Practice until you are able to place your index finger on your dog's upper lid, place your thumb on his lower lid and open his eye wide for a few seconds before offering the treat. Then incorporate other things you might need to do to your dog's eyes, like wiping them with a cloth, clearing away hair, removing a tick, and so forth.
5. If you anticipate needing to apply eye ointment or drops, include the sight of the tube or bottle in your treatment exercises. At first, just place the tube next to you while you touch your dog's eye. Then hold the tube or bottle in your right hand while you open your dog's eye with your left hand. Then hold the tube or bottle next to your dog's eye as though you're applying the medication. Right after each of these steps, remember to give your dog a tasty treat. Finally, when you do have to apply ointment or drops, be sure to give your dog a few extra-tasty treats afterward. During the period that your dog needs medication, continue to do the treatment exercises about 10 to 12 times per day. Open your dog's eye and put the tube of ointment or the bottle of eye drops right next to it—but don't actually apply the medication. Then give your dog a treat. If you repeat this, your dog won't always expect you to put yucky stuff into his eyes (even though you do sometimes), and he'll be more tolerant of having his face handled.
6. The final step in this treatment is to touch your dog around his eyes when he doesn't expect that you have a treat. The best way to do this is to grab a few treats randomly throughout the day and hide them in your pocket when your dog isn't looking. Then widen his eye briefly while feeding him a treat from your other hand. Do this only once every few hours.

7. If you want your dog to tolerate a variety of different people touching him around his eyes, such as family members, friends and veterinary staff, practice with several people in various situations, like at home, at the park and at the veterinary clinic. Dogs learn very specifically, so if you don't practice with other people, your dog won't learn to feel comfortable with anyone but you touching him.

Touching Feet

For three minutes twice a day, sit with your dog and feed him delicious treats—like small cubes of chicken, cheese or hot dogs—from your hands. Do not attempt to touch him or reach for him. It's best to use chunks of soft treats so your dog can nibble at the treat while you hold it in your fingers. Move on to Step 1 after five days of feeding your dog treats by hand.

1. Sit with your dog and repeat this sequence: move one hand (let's assume your left hand), with palm open, toward your dog's paw. Stop a few inches away, *just prior* to the point your dog would normally get stiff, turn to look at your hand or pull his paw away from your hand. Hold your left hand there and, with your other hand, reach out and feed your dog a treat. Pull your left hand back, away from your dog, while he eats the treat. Wait a few seconds and repeat the whole sequence of reaching and feeding. Repeat several times until you are confident that your dog sees your hand reaching for him, but he doesn't appear to be concerned or frightened. Continue at this step until your dog sees your hand reaching toward him and immediately looks to your right hand in anticipation of the treats.
2. Over a period of days and many repetitions, gradually move your hand closer to your dog's paw whenever he becomes comfortable at the current distance. Each movement closer will be small, just an inch or two. Continue this sequence of reaching, feeding and then withdrawing your left hand while your dog's eating the treat.
3. When you can touch your dog's paw while he remains calm and relaxed, grasp it briefly, give him a treat, and then let go and withdraw your left hand. Make sure that you're touching your dog's paw *while* he's eating a treat from your other hand and that you stop touching him just *before* he stops eating. Once your dog seems comfortable with this step, change things a little. Touch your dog's paw first and then feed him the treat. Withdraw your hand as your dog finishes the treat. Now prolong the time it takes for him to eat the treat by holding it so he has to lick and chew at it for a few seconds. At the same time, prolong the length of time your hand remains touching his foot. Vary what you do when you touch—wiggle a toe, hold his paw, massage between his toes, and so forth.
4. When your dog's comfortable at Step 3, begin delaying the treat. For example, touch your dog's paw while counting silently to two, and then give him the treat. Then touch your dog's paw while counting to five, and give him the treat. Gradually increase the number of seconds that you delay giving your dog the treat while touching or massaging his paw. Practice this until you are able to wiggle each toe individually for a few seconds before offering a treat. Then incorporate other things you might need to

do to your dog's feet, such as bending each toe, extending the nail, holding the nail for clipping, and so forth.