



### ***My Dog Was Just Attacked, What should I do?***

It is all too often I hear a dog attacked one of my client's dogs. Sometimes the attacking dog is on leash, other times it is off leash. Either way the emotional and physical trauma sustained by both the owner and the dog can cause major problems.

Some attacks result in no physical damage to the owner or the dog. Other attacks result in damage to the owner, the dog or both. Before contact is made, there are steps that can be implemented to deter the attacker and can minimize damage.

1. Shout, "No Sit", surprisingly some dogs will comply.
2. Use a product such as Spray Shield that deters the attacker.
3. Walk Away – more useful if the other dog is on leash
4. Have your dog sit and step between the two dogs.
5. If you have a small dog, pick it up

Despite your best efforts the dog may not be deterred and you may be in the position of needing to break up a dogfight. The most important aspect of breaking up a dogfight is that people do not get hurt in the process. If a hose is available, by all

means spray down the dogs. Feel free to yell for them to stop as you do so. It might not have an impact on the dogs, but it could bring you the human help you need to get things under control. You can also look to see if there is something you can use to insert as barrier between the two dogs (an empty garbage can or its lid, a piece of ply wood etc.) And if all else fails you can physically separate the dogs. Grab the tail (or the hips of a tailless dog) of the aggressor and elevate the dog's hind-end off the ground. Don't grab the collar or any other part of the dog. With the hind-end elevated the dog no longer has traction and will not be as effective. The dog you have a hold of can still whip round and try to grab you, so be ready to counter its move by rotating away from its mouth. At the moment in which neither dog has its mouth on the other, take a number of steps away from the other dog. Now hope that the other dog, really would like to move away and not continue the fight. If the free dog still wants to fight, keep backing away and try to get a door or gate between the two dogs.

Regardless of whether there is damage to anyone or not, you need to keep your head. At some point something is going to break up the fight. That could be the other dog runs off or help arrives. Stay Calm! Quickly check your dog for injuries, but try to not be overly solicitous or show concern. If you can manage it, act happy. I know it is not easy. The emotion I'm going to feel at the time is anger, but to minimize the chance of your dog developing fear based aggression due to the attack try to act happy. Make sure

you get contact information from the owner. Damage might not be immediately obvious. If the owner is not on the scene check with other people and see if you can track down the owner. Get medical attention for you and your dog as soon as possible and make sure you get dated receipts.

Believe it or not most people don't follow through with some type of communication with the owner of the attacking dog after a fight has occurred. I know it is embarrassing to have to, but it is very important that you do. You have options if you remembered to get contact information. If the person shows some type of concern over their dog's behavior and is not defensive, by all means recommend a trainer that handles these types of issues. Let them know if they pursue training that you will not turn them into Lane County Animal Services. Then check in to make sure they followed through. If they are defensive or did not follow through with training within a couple weeks, turn them into Lane County Animal Services. These are the people who are not going to change their behavior, their dog will attack another dog and the problem will continue. These dogs need to have a record and the owner needs to have consequences just to get them to make the necessary changes. So be brave, protect all the dogs out there by standing in a fashion that is truly uncomfortable for you, but is the best protection and support you can give all dogs.