

Food Bowl Safety

It is important to teach your dog to enjoy someone approaching his food dish. The following steps will help you to accomplish this. Start slowly, don't push it. If you get a warning signal from your dog, like a freeze, a hard stare or a growl, consult a professional. Whatever you do don't yell at the dog. Remember that a growl is a warning. If you yell at him for growling, you might simply teach him not to growl at all and he may instead go straight to a snap or bite.

1. For the first few days, hand feed your dog his meals.
2. Next, with you sitting next to his dish, drop a small amount of food into the dish. When he finishes, put a bit more into his bowl. Feed him his entire meal this way, allowing him to clean his dish in between each addition.
3. Once the dog is happily awaiting you coming to his bowl, start to add the food while he is eating. Do this over another few days until he is completely relaxed about this next phase.
4. Next put down the entire meal. If you have a dog that eats really quickly you can slow him down by putting a couple of big rocks into the dish. This way he will have to move the rocks around to get at the food and it will take him more time. As he is eating, drop in a chunk of something really tasty like a piece of cheese or chicken. Do this 5 times during each meal. Do this for a couple of days.
5. Now your dog is ready to have you pet him while you drop in the goodies. Do this for a couple of days.
6. As your dog is eating, pick up his dish, add some tasty treats and then put the dish back down in front of him. Stay and pet him for a few moments.
7. Once he is comfortable with all of this begin putting your hand in his dish as he eats.

Still relaxed? Try this a few times:

- Run towards the bowl and drop in a treat.
- Gently bump him while he eats and drop in a treat.
- Roll toys near him and lunge to retrieve them-imitate a kid. Even if your child is well-mannered, your child's friends may not be so prepare your dog for all eventualities by teaching him that people may be a bit annoying and bumbling, but they mean well and bear good things.