

Stress Release

Day One

Inspired by The Canine Emotional Detox by Diane Garrod



Stress hormones can take 72 hours to be eliminated by your dog's body. For dogs who are chronically stressed, these excess hormones can have ill effects on their brain and body systems. Stressors can also pile up and cause the dog to have an over-threshold response to even mild triggers. This is called "Trigger Stacking".

This 3-day Stress Release Program is designed to give your dog a break from continued stressors and to promote healthy relaxation.

Before we begin your behaviour modification work, this Stress Release Program will help your dog be better prepared and more receptive. You may also choose to repeat the Stress Release Program on a regular schedule (such as once per month).

1

Begin Day One by taking your dog outside to eliminate after waking. Take note of any stressors in or on the way to the potty area.

Go the extra distance! Take a photo of your dog's poo to compare as they de-stress. Gross, for sure.

2

Go the extra distance! Feed your dog a bland diet for the de-stress period. Choose a single meat protein such as chicken, turkey, or fish. Add pureed pumpkin for fibre.

Time for breakfast! Use a slow feeder bowl, lick mat, or muffin tin to feed. This will help them slow down and eat in a more relaxed way.

Note: Do not change your dog's diet if they are on a vet or nutritionist recommended food.

Diane Garrod's Meal Plan: Day 1- one meat source, cooked or raw (be sure raw food has been well frozen for 48 hours!). 2 servings per day. Serving size: 1/8 - 1/4 cup small dogs, 1/2 - 1.5 cups medium-large dogs, 2-3 cups giant dogs. Add a fibre source such as canned pureed pumpkin, pureed sweet potato, quinoa, or steel cut oats. Fibre portion size is half that of the protein.

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Rest.

Encourage your dog to rest for 20 minutes after eating. This can be in their crate or pen, or on their bed, mat, or the sofa. Anywhere they are comfortable!

4

Rotate through periods of enrichment, problem-solving, sniffing, play, and movement, with periods of rest in between. Aim for rest periods of 20 minutes to 2 hours. Listen for deep sighs as they rest. You can begin their rest periods with soft, slow petting and massage, but then let them sleep for a solid hour.

Enrichment

Fun and engaging - NOT frustrating.
Stuffed Kong toys, raw bones, digging in a sandbox, sniffing in the yard, puzzle toys, tearing up cardboard, etc.

Problem Solving

Keep it light and fun.
Shell game, puzzle games, nosework searches (treats in a box).

Play

Dump out a large number of toys into the room. Watch to see if your dog engages in play on their own. Put the toys away afterwards until the next session.

Sniffing

Scatter feed, sticks brought from the park, snuffle mat/ball, sniffari, etc.

Movement

Sniffari, obstacle course, interactive play, massage, walks *if appropriate*.

Note: Do not engage in any activity that brings stress to your dog. Walks are okay during the stress release period only if they are not stressful!

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Time for Dinner! Use a slow feeder bowl, lick mat, or muffin tin to feed. This will help them slow down and eat in a more relaxed way. Rest for 20 minutes after eating.

6

Have some outdoor time together if it isn't triggering for your dog (and if the weather allows). Play, sniff around, or just hang out together in the yard. Choose indoor enrichment and play if the outdoors isn't a stress-free environment.

7

Settle with a stuffed, frozen Kong if your dog enjoys this.

8

Bedtime! Aim for at least 8 hours of uninterrupted sleep.

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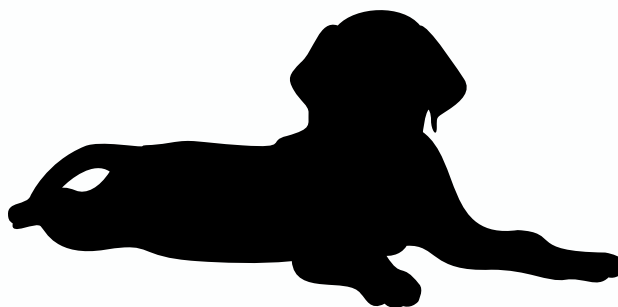
If your dog is used to having a high level of physical activity to tire them out, you might find they're a little agitated today. This can also happen as the stress leaves their body... your dog might be starting to feel a little different! Keep with it!

1

Begin Day Two by taking your dog outside to eliminate after waking. Take note of any stressors in or on the way to the potty area. Can you shift things to remove these stressors? Be sure to take another poo pic if you're tracking that!

2

Time for breakfast! Use a slow feeder bowl, lick mat, or muffin tin to feed. This will help them slow down and eat in a more relaxed way. If you're doing the bland diet, note the change for today! Rest for 20 minutes after eating.



Note: Do not change your dog's diet if they are on a vet or nutritionist recommended food.

Diane Garrod's Meal Plan: Day 2- one meat source, cooked or raw (be sure raw food has been well frozen!). 2 servings per day. Serving size: 1/8 - 1/4 cup small dogs, 1/2 - 1/5 cups medium-large dogs, 2-3 cups giant dogs. Add a fibre source such as canned pureed pumpkin, pureed sweet potato, quinoa, or steel cut oats. Fibre portion size is half that of the protein. Add an orange carbohydrate such as sweet potato or pureed carrot. No change needed if you were using pumpkin or sweet potato on Day 1. Adjust portion sizes if your dog seemed hungry or too full yesterday.

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3

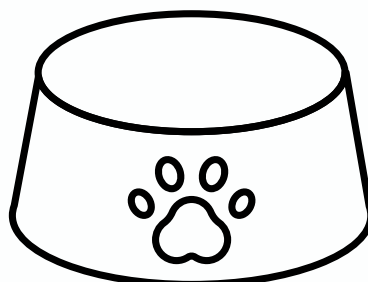
Rotate through periods of enrichment, problem-solving, sniffing, play, and movement, with periods of rest in between. Aim for rest periods of 20 minutes to 2 hours. Listen for deep sighs as they rest. You can begin their rest periods with soft, slow petting and massage, but then let them sleep for a solid hour.

4

We're adding something new to the rotation! Be sure to include Suzanne Clothier's Really Real Relaxation Protocol at least once today. You can find the handout here: <https://www.dogwittraining.com/lr-wk-1.html>

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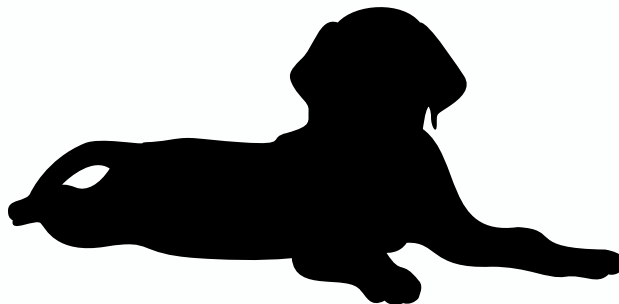
You're in the home stretch! One more day of the stress vacation. What shifts and changes do you see?

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Note: Do not change your dog's diet if they are on a vet or nutritionist recommended food.

Diane Garrod's Meal Plan: Day 3- one meat source, cooked or raw (be sure raw food has been well frozen!). 2 servings per day. Serving size: 1/8 - 1/4 cup small dogs, 1/2 - 1/5 cups medium-large dogs, 2-3 cups giant dogs. Add a fibre source such as canned pureed pumpkin, pureed sweet potato, quinoa, or steel cut oats. Fibre portion size is half that of the protein. If you added carrot yesterday, replace it with a pureed green vegetable today such as broccoli, green beans, kale, or lettuce. Adjust portion sizes if your dog seemed hungry or too full yesterday.

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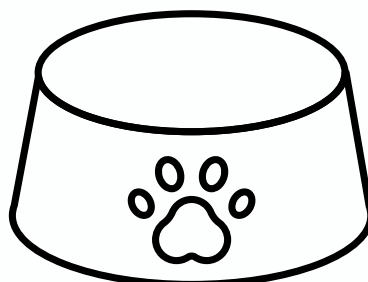
Rotate through periods of enrichment, problem-solving, sniffing, play, and movement, with periods of rest in between. Aim for rest periods of 20 minutes to 2 hours. Listen for deep sighs as they rest. You can begin their rest periods with soft, slow petting and massage, but then let them sleep for a solid hour.

4

Practice Suzanne Clothier's Really Real Relaxation Protocol at least twice today. You can find the handout here: <https://www.dogwittraining.com/lr-wk-1.html>

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